

The Messenger



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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The Adversary

by Ferrell Jenkins

Christians are involved in a life and death struggle for existence. We have the most formidable adversary the world has ever known. He is “more powerful than a locomotive!” Indeed, more powerful than all the nuclear weapons of the world. He seeks nothing less than our complete submission to him. Our adversary is the devil. Peter described the devil as prowling about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (I Peter 5:8). In this article we wish to identify this adversary in such a way that we will not fail to recognize him at any time.

The most common names of our adversary are “devil” and Satan.” The name Satan is translated from the Hebrew word *shn*, which means adversary. Satan is personally identified with the devil in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. The Hebrew word is transliterated as Satan in a few places in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), but is most often rendered *diabolos*. In the Greek New Testament we have Satan 36 (or 37) times and *diabolos* 38 times. There is no material difference in terms.

The devil is also identified in several other ways which reveal his malicious character. He is called Abaddon (Hebrew) and Apollyon (Greek), each meaning destroyer (Revelation 9:11). He is the serpent of old (Genesis 3); the great dragon; the deceiver of the whole world; the accuser of our brethren (Revelation 12:9-10). Jesus used the term Beelzebub, the ruler of demons as a synonym for Satan (Matthew 12:24ff). Paul called the devil Belial (Greek, Beliar, II Corinthians 6:15). He is an enemy (Matthew 13:28, 39); the evil one (Matthew 13:19, 38; I John 5:18); the father of lies and a murderer (John 8:44). He is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); the tempter (Matthew 4:3; I Thessalonians 3:5). With names like these, who can doubt the intentions of our adversary?

Satan apparently is a created being. He is not equal with God. Since Jesus is said to have created all things (Colossians 1:16-17), we conclude that the fall of the devil must have come at some point after his creation and prior to the appearance to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

There is no doubt that Satan is a spiritual being of great power (Job 1, 2; Jude 9), ruling over a powerful kingdom of evil (Matthew 12:26), and has other spiritual beings, “his angels,” who serve him (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:7). He directs an organized host of wicked spirits (Ephesians 6:12), and rules the domain or realm of darkness (Colossians 1:13). No wonder he is called the god or prince of this world.

Satan gained the power over death and holds men in this fear (Hebrews 2:14-15). He is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Through the sin of Eve and Adam he brought death upon the human race (Genesis 2:17; 3:4). His power is limited, and we are assured of his ultimate defeat (Matthew 25:41; Matthew 12:29; Revelation 20:10).

Our adversary is Satan, but most men probably would not recognize him if he showed up. In fact, he disguises himself as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:13-15). His servants or “angels” may not always be easily detected.

One of the agents used by the devil to accomplish the destruction of Christians is the world. The word world is used in three ways in the New Testament. It is used of the created universe, of humanity and of evil forces which stand opposed to Christ. It is in this last sense that we can say that Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). This “world” consists of the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life (I John 2:15-16). The world is our adversary (John 17:14).

The concept of a real devil is unacceptable to many modern minds, but the word of God assures us that he is a real being. Let us never forget that he is our adversary.

News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16