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The Authority of the Believer

Total Restoration

Set the Captives Free

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER

(Total Restoration)

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To my wife Teresa and children for their love and support

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us:
for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
(2 Cor. 2:11)

THE ARCH-ENEMY

As we review the pages of Scripture, among its many characters, we find the arch-enemy of God. Yes, God has enemies. As Creator of the universe, God holds the right to establish law and demand obedience. When His creatures choose to live contrary to His Law-Word and will, they join the rank of those considered an enemy. In eternity past, the arch enemy, was known by the name of Lucifer. He was said to be a high ranking angel who chose to rebel against God’s will. Due to his rebellion, he lost the prestigious position he held and was forfeited the privilege of access to the court of heaven. He was cast to the earth along with others who followed his example of rebellion.

THE FIRST DREADFUL DEED & THE HUMAN CONDITION

God’s enemy became known as Satan. His first dreadful deed is recorded in Genesis. There, he takes the form of a serpent and deceives the lord and lady of the garden, Adam and Eve. It is there that he plants seeds of doubt regarding God’s good intention. As a result of his influence, the first couple is plunged into open rebellion against the Creator and become servants of a creature. The human race exchanged the blessing and bliss of God’s glory for the curse of sin. The enemy cast the whole of creation into chaos and darkness and severed the creature from a relationship with the Creator.

THE ENEMY’S CHARACTER

As the enemy continues his work, he becomes known as a thief, an adversary, a father of lies, and a roving lion. He becomes the enemy of righteousness, a false angel of light, the accuser of brethren, an old serpent and the great dragon. He establishes a kingdom comprised of both angelic and human beings. He reserves a privileged seat in his own congregation called the Synagogue of Satan. He gains worshippers who sacrifice and angels who are under his rule. He

has a fellowship of men who are said to eat at his table and drink from his cup. Jesus calls them “children of the devil.” Beside a synagogue, he also has a foot hold in places identified as the habitation of demons. Satan’s apostles are those who are called wizards, charmers, consultants, and necromancers. He is able to transform himself into a minister of righteousness and has perverted the ways of the Lord.

THE ENEMY’S DEVICES

The devil and his horde have manifested themselves in various ways. Their work has always included the disruption of God’s activity and destruction of God’s plan? The tools used by the enemy are varied. They include the lie, deception, accusations, condemnation, half-truths, temptation, snares, wiles, and sin. They corrupt the mind through the agency of evil thoughts and the sowing of bad seed. They use the lust for possessions, pleasure, popularity and power in order to sever the creature from the Creator. The enemy derails the human race through the lust of the eyes, the pride of life and the love of money. They have the ability to transform themselves and take possession of both human and animal subjects. Among his human followers are those who live contrary to God’s Law-Word as well as those who call themselves wizards, charmers, mediums, necromancers and idolaters.

THE ENEMY AND HIS PATH TO DESTRUCTION

The enemy’s hatred for God’s creation has set him on a path to destruction. The results of his work are evident throughout Scripture. We are informed that he has come to kill, steal, destroy, oppress, vex, torment and snare. Scripture provides many examples of the effects of his work. He takes bodily possession of individuals. At times, multiple demons house the same body. Those possessed by these foul spirits as characterized by filthiness, the inability to speak or hear, weakness, sickness, nakedness and lunacy. He not only isolates, but also plunges men into a mental state of confusion. At times, he provides super-human strength or abilities such as is evident in the case of the wizard, charmer, consultant, necromancer or those who practice divination. Many things that plague the human race can be traced to the enemy’s twisted activity. He is said to seduce, deceive, enslave, hinder and devour those who yield to his temptations. Those under the power of his influence are said to be thrown and torn. When the Word of God is

preached, it is the enemy who steals the seed so that it does not flourish. It is the enemy who hides the truth from those who would believe. It is the enemy who accuses the believer before God, uses guilt to weaken faith and introduces evil thoughts to rob the believer of union with Christ. Even though the picture is dark, it is important to remember that the enemy operates only under the permissive will of God and holds limited power.

THE DIVINE SOLUTION

Jesus often interacted with the enemy and his followers. In the Old Testament, we find Satan in a garden tempting the first Adam and causing his demise. In the New Testament, Satan lurks about in the wilderness tempting the last Adam – Christ. The record indicates that unlike the first Adam, Jesus rejected Satan’s offer and overcome his temptations by using the Word of God. Repeatedly, throughout the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples are involved in the task of casting out demons and spirits identified as unclean, deaf, dumb, and foul.

Though they inflict pain and terror on the human race, Satan and his angelic servants are terrified at the presence of Jesus and often beg Him for mercy. They know that Jesus is the Son of the Most High. When addressed by Him, they not only obey, but tremble. They often prostrate themselves and beg for mercy because they know that everlasting torment awaits them on judgment day.

Jesus is fearless when in the presence of the devil and his demons. With power and authority, He rebukes, charges, and commands the enemy to flee. He is said to cast out demons by three means:

- 1) By His word
- 2) By the Spirit of God
- 3) By the finger of God

He does not permit them to speak and often gives specific instructions that they are not to re-enter or return to the possessed or oppressed individual. Even though the devil and his servants have momentarily succeeded in depriving the human race of God’s glory and inheritance, Jesus has manifested Himself to destroy the works of the devil. Through his death,

He is said to destroy the devil who had the power of death. Jesus has come to heal the oppressed.

THE FATE OF THE ENEMY

When Adam and Eve embraced Satan's deception, the human race came under a curse. Satan was cursed as well. God told the serpent that it would crawl on its belly and eat dust. Satan and his angels were all cast out of heaven. Jesus later states that He beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. God's enemy will pass out of the land. He is condemned to walk in dry places and remains in a state of unrest. He knows that his time is short. He will command a beast that will war against God's people. He will grant the beast power, but both will be conquered by the brightness of God's presence. In the end, Satan will be dethroned, bound and cast into prison for 1000 years. After returning to the earth for a short while, he and his followers will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OPPRESSED

What are some of the characteristics evident in someone who is being oppressed by God's enemy? Barring those with chemical imbalance or born with defects, there are several characteristics evident in those being vexed by God's enemy. The context of those oppressed is often characterized by death, deception, and the inability to worship. There is persistent confusion, painful loneliness, chronic depression, a sense of desperation, emotional oppression, gripping fear, isolation, despair, anger, violence, condemnation and a sense of powerlessness. Those under the sway and influence of the enemy are often described as chained, fettered, sick, dumb, deaf, blind, unclean, thrown about, overwhelmed, cursed, fleeing, devoured, tempted, possessed, robbed, torn, abused, betrayed, mad, trapped, enslaved, imprisoned, diseased, tormented, lunatic, palsied, infirmed, plagued, naked, lame, leperous, and wounded.

THE CALL TO RESTORE THE OPPRESSED

As believers, our source of authority is foreign. The authority and power we exercise is made available through Christ. Scripture makes clear that we have overcome by the blood of the

Lamb and the word of His testimony. It was Jesus who declared, "... these signs shall follow them that believe – they shall cast out devils." The enemy will be subject to us in the name of Jesus. At times, even the very shadow of a believer will deliver those vexed with evil spirits. Handkerchiefs and aprons may become instrumental in delivering some from the oppression of a demon. Those who believe are granted a gift of discerning of spirits. There are times in which an evil spirit will refuse to flee, it is then that we are called upon to pray and fast. We are to anoint the sick with oil and pray the prayer of faith that healing may ensue. It is God who bruises Satan under our feet.

THE CALL TO EXERCISE THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

The Scripture provides counsel in regard to the process of dealing with God's enemy. **Do not** allow the enemy to beguile you from the simplicity that is in Christ. Do not allow unrighteousness to steal your power in battle. Do not allow the enemy to sow bad seed in your heart. Do not allow the enemy to steal the good seed of God's Word when you hear it. Do not bow to his demands - he is a defeated foe. **Be aware** that the enemy is motivated by great wrath because he knows his time is short. He is fighting a losing battle and his fate will be a lake of fire and brimstone. **Heed the warning.** Be sober and vigilant because God's enemy walks about seeking whom he may devour. Do not give place to the devil, fall into his reproach, or snares. Do not allow your pride to make you his captive. Do not fall into his condemnation. **Remember**, nothing is impossible to those who believe. You are only a tool in God's hand. The enemy does not fear you. He fears the indwelling presence of Christ. He shudders at the name of Jesus. Only Jesus can heal all those oppressed of the devil. Remember that wonder working power flows freely through a clean vessel. Divine work requires divine power – allow it to flow through you. You are never alone when you go into battle. Ensure that you submit yourself to God so you can have the power to resist the enemy. The enemy flees from those who submit to God. Remember that you do not have to be present to exercise your authority in Christ. You can pray and deal with the enemy from a distance. You have been granted power to cast out the devil and his servants from any context. Use the Scripture to battle against the enemy. Put on the whole armor of God. Keep an open mind as to the methods God will use.

Remember, the Son of Man was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. That is also our mission. The oppressed, vexed, possessed, bound and tormented are waiting to be released and delivered through our ministry. When casting out a spirit, ignore the accusations of the devil by declaring the provision Christ has made for your sins. Remember that the enemy wields only what power is permitted by God.

While speaking to His disciples, Jesus informs them that the devil has come to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus declared, "I have come to give life in abundance." Though there are multitudes that are currently being tormented by God's enemy, provision has been made. The believer has been called to reach out to those taken captive by the enemy. The believer has been empowered to cast out devils and restore order.

EXERCISING AUTHORITY TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW

What happens when God's enemy is expelled from any context of human life? The results are immediate and positive. There are many examples of this in Scripture. The demon-possessed man in the synagogue is made whole. Mary Magdalene is delivered from seven devils and immediately serves Christ. The man possessed with a legion of demons is clothed and in his right mind. A woman, bound by Satan with an issue of blood 18 years is fully restored. A young daughter at the point of death is healed. A boy who is vexed with a dumb and deaf spirit regains his ability to speak and hear. The boy who is thrown and torn by a demon and is often cast into the fire is made complete and returned to his father.

The four accounts of the gospel record that when God's enemy is removed from the equation of human existence, the dumb speak, the deaf hear, the lame walk, those oppressed are delivered and the dead are raised. When the enemy and his demonic forces are expelled, the effects of the curse are diminished and the door that provides entrance to all that ails the human race is forever shut. The writer of the Revelation describes the new state of being that we will enjoy when the enemy is finally removed to his place.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new..." (Rev. 21:4-5)

While in a synagogue, Jesus declared, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4:18-19)

The passage spoken by Jesus describes the ministry of every believer. We are to be a channel of God’s blessing, power and life. When we introduce Jesus Christ into the context of any human situation, the devil and his horde will tremble and flee in fear. Go, plunder the camp and restore what the human race has lost to the enemy.

OTHER BOOKS AND QUICK READS

BOOKS

The Narratives of Christ (Gospel)
Is God Speaking? (Minor Prophets)
God's Life-Changing Curriculum (An Agent of Change)
Worship (In the New Testament)

QUICK-READS

The Authority of the Believer
Transforming Power
Redeemed from the Curse (Entitled to the Blessing)
Emotional Intelligence (Models: A Brief Review)
Why He Came
The Kingdom (13 Parables)
Divine Transition
Divine Expectation
Unclaimed Wealth
Times of Refreshing
Unlocking God's Diary
The House of James
The Will of God (In James)
The Pure Gospel (Galatians)
Paul's Vision of God (Ephesians)
The Journey

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