

THEN COMETH THE DEVIL

Luke 8:12 *Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*

Many Christians are of the opinion that the Devil comes on special occasions to create major havoc before he leaves for an extended period of time. On the contrary, the Bible makes it clear that the Devil comes very regularly as often as the word of God is preached. Whenever I mow the lawn of our house, I expect magpies, sparrows, larks and other birds to follow behind me at a safe distance to pick up the worms that are uncovered. These birds never fail my expectation. In fact, when the farmer ploughs his field just behind my house, you can be sure many seagulls will follow behind the tractor because there is a feast of worms. Unlike Christians who miss church now and then, the Devil never misses church. He is the most punctual attendant because he comes to take away the seed of the word of God from the hearts of those who take it lightly. Let us take these birds, whether they be magpies, sparrows or larks, seriously because, while they may look cute and harmless, spiritually speaking these are the unclean spirits who are sent to distract and take away the seed of the word of God.

Matthew 13:15 *For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

Did you know that agriculturalists have developed a multitude of methods to ward off birds and other creatures from stealing their seed? Farmers use various methods to prevent birds from taking seeds. Some common strategies include: visual deterrents (scarecrows), auditory deterrents, netting, chemical repellents, alternative food sources for the birds, ultrasonic devices and planting crops at times when bird activity is lower to name a few. Why go through all this trouble? Because without food, humans perish and without the word of God, we will all die spiritually. Such is the preciousness of the word of God that we must be as creative as farmers to invent ways of scaring off the Devil and his companions. We have our scarecrows when we are in prayer combating evil spirits and we have the auditory methods when we shout and rebuke these spirits in Jesus name. But do we know what the greatest deterrent is?

James 2:19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

Let us call this revelation the “nuclear bomb” of all revelations. You see the world is petrified at the thought of rogue states such as Iran acquiring a nuclear bomb because that would change the entire calculus of power. A country that is a nuclear power becomes virtually untouchable. It is for this reason that Israel famously (or infamously for Israel’s enemies) carried out a surprise airstrike on the Osirak nuclear reactor, located near Baghdad, Iraq, in 1981. The reactor, officially named Tammuz-1, was under construction and was perceived by Israel as a significant threat due to its potential to produce nuclear weapons. Israeli F-16 fighter jets, accompanied by F-15s, flew over 1,000 miles to reach the target. In a precise and daring mission, the aircraft successfully bombed and destroyed the Osirak reactor. On the spiritual dimension, the Devil is terrified of Christians acquiring the “nuclear weapon” of the One God doctrine. This is why he is punctual and attends meetings religiously because he must stop Christians from acquiring the truth that is destructive to his kingdom. The Devil never forgets his history. Egypt was doing “very well and untouchable” until a man called Moses came with nothing but the weapon of the one God and a staff. When he left, he took 2 millions slaves with him, and Egypt was destroyed. The biggest mistake Satan made at the time was to mock the one God of Israel.

Exodus 3:14 And God said unto Moses, *I AM THAT I AM*: and he said, *Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

Exodus 5:2 And Pharaoh said, *Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*

The Devil comes to church and goes straight for the heart because the word is deposited in the heart, not the head. “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12). The Devil doesn’t care what goes into our heads, but our hearts. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10).

In conclusion, this sermon encourages believers to be aware of the consistent and strategic efforts of the Devil, to take seemingly minor distractions seriously, and to delve into profound doctrinal truths as a powerful defense against spiritual attacks. The narrative reinforces the need for continuous spiritual vigilance and a robust understanding of foundational truths. Let us remember the Lord’s admonition to Martha. “And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41,42).

