

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Zac Poonen

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INTRODUCTION

This book contains messages that were given to a large group of young students. The messages have been retained in their spoken form.

Young people are the target of Satan's attacks in these days. Satan is going all out to ensure that today's young people are polluted by impurity, bitterness, jealousy, selfish ambition and materialism, and if not by any of these, then at least by pride, self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

We must not be ignorant of any of Satan's schemes or wiles.

Satan was defeated on Calvary by our Lord Jesus. Our calling now is to register that victory over the forces of darkness everywhere we go.

If you are interested in doing that, read this book.

CHAPTER ONE

WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW YOUR ENEMY

I want to show you some truths from God's Word that many of you young people may never have known before. It concerns the enemy of our souls.

You have heard a lot about salvation and about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. But you may not have heard much about Satan, because most preachers don't like to preach about Satan.

I want to speak about Satan, because the Bible tells us in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

One of the most important principles of warfare is to know your enemy. If you are fighting a war and you have a lot of information about your enemy, it makes the battle so much easier. If you know very little about your enemy, the battle will be more difficult.

Or, to use another illustration: If you know in advance all the questions that are going to come for your examination, the examination will be so much easier for you.

It is exactly the same with the Christian life. If you know your enemy, you can overcome him and be more than a conqueror in every temptation.

There are many Christians who struggle throughout their whole lives trying to follow Jesus, but fail. I think one of the main reasons is because they know nothing about their enemy.

We all know that the study of medicine is important. Medical science has healed millions of people from diseases in our generation and saved many from premature death. This has been possible only because medical scientists studied all about the enemies of the human body and their methods of attack on the body. It was through intensive studies of bacteria and viruses - the enemies of health - that man's health has improved. Scientists discovered medicines that could kill the enemies of health and remove them from the human body.

What is true in our physical body is much more true of our inner spirit. We need to study about Satan too - the enemy of our spirit - if we are to dislodge him from our spirit, and keep it pure for God.

The Bible tells us a lot about Satan. In fact, immediately after God created Adam and Eve the very next thing the Bible talks about is Satan. The Bible tells us nothing about what Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden. But it straight-away tells us that Satan came into that garden and brought sin and confusion, leading Adam and Eve away from God. The cause of all the sin and violence and evil that there is in the world today is found there in Satan's entry into Eden (Gen.3)

Why does the Bible tell us about Satan, immediately after it tells us about the creation of man and woman? Because God wants us to know about Satan, so that we are alert. We saw that Satan roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. If the newspapers reported that a lion had escaped from the zoo and was roaming the streets of your city, wouldn't it be a help to know which area of the city he is in, so that we can avoid that area? Certainly. In the same way, if you know the areas in which Satan is active, that can save you from a lot of problems.

Many believers have frequent periods of discouragement. We must realise one thing: That discouragement never comes from God. It always comes from the devil. In the same way, strife, violence, hatred, jealousy, bitterness, evil speaking, complaining, murmuring, rebellion against authority, and every other form of evil have their origin in Satan. It is good to know about our enemy, so that we can overcome these evils in our lives.

In the opening pages of the New Testament, we read about Satan. Immediately after we are told about Jesus being baptized in water and being anointed by the Holy Spirit, we read about Satan confronting him in the wilderness, and tempting Him. That is the measure of importance that the Bible gives to describing Satan's activities. Why? So that we might not be ignorant of the wiles or the strength of the enemy of our souls.

It is important for young people to know about Satan, because once you know what the Bible teaches about Satan, you will be careful. And you won't be afraid of him any longer, like many people are. Many are afraid of Satan, because they don't know what the Bible teaches about him. They are afraid of people doing black magic or witchcraft on them, because they don't know that Satan was defeated by our Lord Jesus on Calvary. You will never again be afraid of Satan, once your eyes have been opened to what the Lord has done for us all on the cross.

Satan sometimes tries to interrupt Christian meetings through demon-possessed people, like he did in the synagogues where Jesus preached. But Satan must never be allowed to do so. Once in the middle of a Bible-study meeting in our meeting-hall, a demon-possessed man crawled up the aisle like a snake, towards the front, trying to disrupt the meeting. When the demon was rebuked in the Name of Jesus, the man immediately fell sound asleep right there on the floor. After the Bible-study was over, when we had all said the final 'Amen', he woke up. Then we spoke to him. We were not going to allow Satan to interrupt our Bible-study, through any of his agents.

At another large public meeting that was being held outdoors, a man suddenly began to dance in front of the pulpit, just as I was saying something very important. When I requested him through the interpreter to sit down, he ignored my request. Then we rebuked the demon in him, in the Name of Jesus, and the man went and sat down quietly. Yes, demons have to obey when they are commanded in Jesus' Name, because they have all been defeated by Jesus on Calvary.

It is important to know that there is power in the mighty Name of Jesus Christ Who defeated Satan on Calvary's cross. You need never be afraid of Satan. It is when you don't know your enemy, that you live in fear that he may do something or the other to you. But he cannot touch you, if you allow Jesus to be Lord of your entire life - for Satan's power was stripped completely from him, when Jesus defeated him on the cross.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGIN OF SATAN

We know that God existed from all eternity. The Bible begins with the statement, "In the beginning God....." (Gen.1:1). Those are the first four words in the Bible. That is referring to the ages of eternity past - so far back that our minds cannot even understand it, because our minds can only comprehend time. God existed before time began.

But Satan did not exist before time began. Satan is a created being. But does that mean that God created an evil being? No. That would be impossible. God can never create anything evil. Everything that He creates is perfect. Even Adam and Eve, when they were created were perfect. Likewise, Satan too when he was created, was perfect. He was

known then as 'The morning star', or Lucifer (Isa.14:12). That name has a bad connotation now. But it was not so, way back then when he was first created.

He was created as the head of the angels, to lead the angels in the worship of God. God gave him many supernatural abilities and powers when he was created. But then he fell into sin and became Satan.

But Satan still has those powers today, because God did not take them away from him when he fell. We may wonder why God didn't take away those powers from the Devil. The reason is that God doesn't usually take back the gifts He gives. Even we human beings would not normally take back a gift that we have given to another - even if that other person turns against us one day! And so Satan uses his power to harm people. And that is why people who get in touch with him can do supernatural things through witchcraft.

It is written concerning Satan, "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning (that was his name - the shining one), O son of the dawn" (Isa.14:12)

As the head of the angels, Lucifer was in God's presence constantly. Why did he fall away? The reason is given in the next two verses (Isa.14:13,14) "Because you said in your heart 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God....I will be like the Most High'.... Nevertheless you will be cast down into hell."

Lucifer was more gifted, more beautiful and had more supernatural abilities than all the other angels. He led the angels in the worship of God - until pride entered his heart. He then began to think, "Only One Person is above me, and that is God Himself. I will rule over Him as well."

That was really a stupid thought that came into his heart. How could he ever ascend above his Creator? But that is how Satan is - quite foolish in many of the things he does and thinks, even though he is so clever!! Many clever people in the world too do a lot of utterly foolish things, spiritually speaking. The more we study about Satan, the more we will see how stupid he is in many of the things he does.

Satan was not happy to be where God had placed him. He wanted to ascend to the place where everyone would worship him! He did not say so. He just began to have such thoughts in his heart. We read that in verse 13. But God looks at our hearts, and he looked at Lucifer's heart, and saw what he was aiming at.

There is a difference between temptation and sin. Temptation comes initially as a thought in the mind. It is only when we agree with that thought however that we sin. If, on the other hand, we reject the thought immediately, we do not sin.

For example, have you ever had an evil thought of doing something to pull another person down in the eyes of others, so that you can appear as a better person?

Do you know who was the first person to have such a thought? It was Lucifer. Whom did he want to pull down? Not the angels, because they were already below him. He wanted to pull God down. To pull people down in order to get on top yourself is the very spirit of Satan.

Why do I say that you must know your enemy? Because when such a thought enters your mind, you should recognize that your enemy is trying to get in. The roaring lion is waiting to devour you.

It did not take many years for the highest archangel to become the devil. No. Only a moment. He did not fall gradually, step-by-step. No. He came down like lightning, as Jesus said - in a moment (Lk.10:18). One moment, he was the shining one. As soon as he began nourishing the thought of becoming like God, immediately he became the devil.

How long does it take for an angel to become a devil? Not even one second. Just a moment. How long does it take for a really good person to become like the devil? Just a moment. That's all. Remember that.

Another passage that tells us about the origin of Satan is Ezekiel 28. There we see Satan called "the king of Tyre" (Ezek.28:12). There are demon powers behind the rulers of this world and at that time Satan himself was behind the ruler of Tyre. And the Lord spoke to Satan who indwelt that human ruler.

The Lord reminded Satan of the time when he was in the garden of Eden (Ezek.28:13) This tells us that Lucifer was in Eden before Adam and Eve were there. And the Lord reminded Satan of how he had been "perfect in his ways from the day he was created until sin was found in him" (v.16,17).

Lucifer's heart was lifted up primarily because of his beauty. Is your heart ever lifted up when you look into the mirror and see how good looking you are compared to others? Beware of that. Thank God for the good gifts he has given you. There's nothing wrong in having a good-looking face. But there is everything wrong in being proud of it. For then you open the door to Satan.

Another reason for Lucifer's pride was his cleverness. Do you know that the most intelligent among all created beings is Satan? There is nothing wrong with being intelligent. We can use our intelligence for the glory of God. But we have no right to be proud of it. We don't have to be stupid to serve the Lord. No. Thank God for your intelligence, and thank God for your beauty, but never be proud of either.

The third reason for Lucifer's conceit was that he had the highest position among all created beings. He failed to recognise that all these three things that he was proud of - his beauty, his cleverness and his position - were all gifts of God. And that is what many human beings - and many Christians too - fail to recognise. And that's how Satan gets a foothold in their lives, and finally destroys them.

So we see that all the sin in the world originated with pride. Not with murder or adultery but with pride. And that's why salvation came through Jesus humbling himself. The way of humility is the way of deliverance from all of Satan's schemes and wiles.

In Lucifer, we also see the origin of the spirit of discontentment with one's appointed lot in life. If we could look at this world from God's point of view, we would see the world full of grumbling, complaining, murmuring people everywhere - a spirit that they have all imbibed from Satan.

The spirit of rebellion against authority is yet another thing that originated with Lucifer. There was only one authority that Lucifer had above him - and that was God. And he rebelled against that authority. He wanted to be above that authority and to push God down. Do we find that spirit in the human race? The spirit of rebellion against authority is what has led to numerous revolutions in countries and what has caused strikes in factories. And in these days, we find that rebellious spirit even among students - not only among college students, but among school students as well, and even among small children in a home.

All this is a sure sign that the world is deteriorating. Disrespect for teachers, and for parents and even for elder brothers in the church is rife everywhere. Never forget that it was this spirit that changed the best of the angels into a devil. And this spirit can change a good boy or girl into a devil even today.

God never makes anyone evil. It is when we open ourselves to the spirit of Satan that we make ourselves evil.

And now notice one final characteristic about Lucifer. When he fell, he didn't fall alone. He had company. We read in Revelation 12:4 that he dragged down one-third of the other angels along with him. They too foolishly joined him in his spirit of pride, discontentment and rebellion. It is the same today. Where one person is evil, he is not content to remain evil by himself alone. He wants to drag others down with him into his misery and evil, as well. A root of bitterness in one person can infect many others, if those others are not watchful (See Heb.12:15).

CHAPTER THREE

THE DECEPTION OF SATAN

In Genesis 3, we can see how Satan attacks. It says there that the serpent was the craftiest of all the animals. Satan entered that serpent (just like the demons entered the pigs when Jesus cast them out of the man of Gadara). And Satan spoke to Eve through the serpent and asked her "Has God indeed said - You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" When Eve said that this was indeed what God had said, Satan countered God's Word and said, "You shall not die".

Notice how Satan comes. First of all, he questions God's Word. That is how he comes to us too. "Has God really said that we are not to do that?", he asks, "What's wrong in doing this? These Biblical commands are old-fashioned. They were written for that time and that culture in which Paul lived. They are not meant to be literally obeyed by us in the 20th century", etc., etc.,

We find young and old people asking such questions constantly, little realizing that they are becoming mouthpieces of Satan. Even when their conscience tells them that something is wrong, they still use their reason and question what God has forbidden.

When something is commanded or forbidden by God in His Word, we can be sure that God has a very good reason for doing so. But Satan always makes us question whether God really meant it like that etc., And what is Satan's ultimate aim in making us question God's Word? Exactly the same as was his aim in Eve's case - to take us away from the Lord, and to compel God to reject us and cast us out, even as He cast Adam and Eve out of His presence.

Jesus once said that Satan was a thief. Satan does not steal money, for he knows that money has no eternal value. He steals only what has eternal value - primarily the souls of men. Jesus said further that after Satan steals, he kills and destroys what he has stolen (John 10:10). In contrast, Jesus went on to say, that He Himself had come to give us abundant life.

Isn't it amazing that in a world of 5,500 million people, more than 99% of the people prefer to believe Satan's lies and to obey him rather than believe in Jesus Christ and obey the Word of God. There we can see what a tremendous work Satan has done in convincing people that it is not a serious matter to disobey God's Word.

When people take their first drink of alcohol, or smoke their first cigarette, or begin to take drugs like heroin and cocaine, do you think Satan warns them that these will destroy their bodies and minds on earth and finally send their souls to Hell for eternity? No. He doesn't tell them the truth - for that would be unpleasant to hear. He tells them that they will get a kick out of trying it, and that they can have some enjoyment out of it. That is what Satan told Eve too.

And that is how he is deceiving millions of young people around the world today. Even if it is a matter of immorality or stealing other people's things, Satan says, "What's wrong with that? Don't be guided by outmoded 19th-century ideas" etc., Be careful of these thoughts that Satan puts into your mind. His ultimate purpose is to destroy you.

We see in verse 6 that as soon as Eve saw that the tree was good for food, her body was drawn to it. That forbidden fruit has many 20th century counterparts. Many things that God has forbidden, we will find our bodies being drawn to.

The Word of God goes on to say that Eve found the tree to be a delight to her eyes too. Our eyes will find many things very pleasing that God has forbidden us to even look at.

It says further that Eve found the fruit appealing to her mind as well. She saw the fruit as something that could make her wise. Our minds too are attracted to many things that God has forbidden. Be careful when your body and mind are drawn to something that your conscience tells you is wrong.

I am sure that at that moment Eve's conscience told her clearly that what she was going to do was wrong. She knew very well that God had told her not to eat that fruit. But what did she do? Because her body and her mind both wanted the fruit, she convinced herself that there was nothing wrong in eating it. So she killed her conscience and took the fruit and ate it.

What did Satan accomplish by making Eve sin? Many years earlier, he himself had fallen from God's presence. Once he had become evil, he was determined to make others evil too. It is the same with the human race now. When a person does something evil, he is not happy in being alone in the evil he has done. He wants to get others to do the same evil too.

I would encourage all young people to read the book of Proverbs. That is a really good book for you all to read. In Proverbs 1:10, it says: "Don't go along with someone who leads you to do evil".

Satan became evil and he wanted to drag Eve down with him too. And when Eve had partaken of that poisonous spirit, she wanted to drag her husband down. So she took another fruit and gave it to her husband. That is how evil has multiplied in the world through all the centuries. One man becomes evil and he drags others down with him.

That is why we need to be alert always. Satan comes to us at times like a roaring lion. If he always came as a roaring lion, we would recognise him easily. But he doesn't always come like that. He sometimes comes as a sweet "angel of light" (2 Cor.11:14). It is then that we have to be really careful.

Consider the time when Jesus told his disciples that He was going to suffer and die on the cross, Peter said "No , Lord, don't let that happen to You". But Jesus immediately turned around and told Peter "Get behind me Satan". He recognised that the suggestion to avoid the way of suffering was the voice of Satan, even though it came through Peter.

Jesus knew that He had to go to the cross, because that was the only way man's sins could be forgiven. Peter did not know that. Peter was well-meaning, but he didn't realise at that moment that Satan was speaking through him to try and stop Jesus from going to the cross. Yes, Satan can come to us even through a close friend and suggest something that sounds compassionate and good humanly speaking. So we must be alert at all times.

The one thing we must all covet is a sensitive conscience - something that speaks to us loudly even when we do a small wrong.

Look at the soles of the feet of a little baby. How soft and tender they are! Compare them with the soles of your own feet. How different! Yours have become so hard. It can be like that with your conscience too.

You had a sensitive conscience when you were born - just like those tender soles of a baby's feet - sensitive to the smallest wrong thing that you did. But as you grew up, you told lies to your parents, deceived them, stole things, hurt others in many ways, cheated in examinations, rebelled against your parents, and did many other evil things. Thus you killed your conscience, until it became hard and insensitive to sin - like the soles of our feet.

Paul once said "We are not ignorant of Satan's schemes" (2 Cor.2:11).

Satan came so cleverly to Eve, tempting her with something that looked so attractive, and finally destroyed her. Today Satan comes in the same way to destroy us not only with the things that I have just mentioned but also with more direct forms of Satanic worship. He leads people astray through witchcraft, through games like "Dungeons & Dragons", through ouija boards and astrology and horoscopes and palm-reading etc., Through all these means, Satan tries to get into people. Idol worship also leads people into contact with Satan. That is why God hates idol worship and tells us to avoid it totally.

Do you know that the movies also pollute your mind with all sorts of bad thoughts? When you see all that sex and violence on the screen, don't you have dreams concerning them? You get both fearful dreams and dirty dreams. The devil thus seeks to penetrate your mind with fear and impurity so that he can gradually influence your whole life.

If only Eve had called out to God for help, when she felt drawn to that tree, the story would have been so different.

When I became a Christian at the age of 19, I knew that I should not go to the movies anymore. But one day my friends came and asked me to accompany them to a movie in the theatre in the naval base (where I was working). I then found that I just did not have the courage to tell them that since I had become a Christian, I would not come. So I walked along with them to the cinema-theatre. But all the way there, I was praying silently to the Lord saying, "Lord, please help me. Save me out of this situation. I don't want to go." When we finally reached the cinema-theatre, there was a notice put on the board there that said that the movie had to be canceled that day because they could not get the film. I praised the Lord for answering my prayer so wonderfully. But then the Lord spoke to me and said, "I helped you this time. But next time you will have to say 'No' yourself." By the time my friends came to me the next time, I had been so encouraged by God's miraculous answer to my prayer that I could say "No" to them quite easily.

When God came into the garden of Eden and spoke to Adam and Eve confronting them with their sin, He also cursed Satan saying, "The seed of the woman will bruise you on the head and you will bruise him on the heel" (Gen.3:15) That took place on Calvary.

Jesus Christ was born of a woman and he crushed the head of Satan on Calvary and Satan bruised his heel by the nails that went through Jesus' feet.

And so we see that Genesis 3 ends with a message of hope that Satan will not rule over man forever. Jesus came and defeated Satan, and can now set all men free from the power of Satan.

Satan need not have any power over your life any longer. That conscience of yours that has become hard can become sensitive once again like a little baby's, if you believe that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He defeated Satan's power over you totally. Jesus died not just to forgive you your sins but also to deliver you from the power of Satan that has enslaved you to so many bad habits. Remember that the head of Satan has been thoroughly crushed by your Saviour.

Hallelujah!

CHAPTER FOUR

WHY GOD HAS NOT DESTROYED SATAN

What is it that reduces man to the level of an animal?

It is when he is interested only in his bodily needs and in his earthly existence. What is an animal interested in? Food, sleep and sexual satisfaction - that's about all. And when a man is interested only in these things, we can say that he has descended to the level of the animals.

But God didn't make man to be just like the animals. Education doesn't make a man superior to the animals either, for even well-educated men behave just like animals at times.

There is a part of us that is deeper even than our minds. It is called the spirit. Our spirit makes us aware of God.

When God created man He created him with a free will. He gave man the freedom to choose.

When Satan was created as an angel, he was created with the freedom of choice too. That is why he could say, "I will ascend above the throne of God."

There were many other things that God created that did not have a free will. The stars and the planets, for example. The planets in our solar system have never rebelled against God's laws for thousands of years. Why? Because they do not have freedom of choice.

But then the planets cannot become children of God either. For someone to become a child of God, he must be created with a free will to choose entirely voluntarily what he wants.

But the danger of having freedom of choice is that you can use it to please yourself and to disobey God's commandments. But God was willing to take that risk because He wanted obedient children. And that is where Satan also fulfills a function in God's purpose.

All the chaos, confusion, diseases and evil in the world are the direct result of man disobeying God and listening to the Devil in the garden of Eden.

We could then ask this question: "If Satan is the root cause of all the problems in the world, why doesn't God destroy Satan?"

Well, I hope we can at least believe that God's wisdom is greater than ours. Our wisdom is like a little cup of water, whereas God's wisdom is like an ocean. We can be certain that if God has allowed Satan to exist and to be active on earth, there must be a very good reason for it.

In fact God accomplishes a number of things through Satan's workings. That is why He has allowed him to exist.

One reason why God allows Satan to cause so much evil and damage and suffering on earth, is so that people will thereby turn to God. Do you realise that if life on this earth had been very comfortable, with no sickness, suffering, poverty, or misery, hardly anyone would have thought about God at all?

Everything that God allows is for a purpose. We read in the Old Testament that when the people of Israel in the wilderness forgot about God, they were suddenly bitten by poisonous snakes. Immediately they turned to God. And God healed them. Wasn't it a good thing that those poisonous snakes were there to make those people turn to God?

I heard a story of a businessman who had once been close to God. He drifted away from God, as his business prospered. The elders in his church spoke to him repeatedly and tried to turn him back to the Lord. But he was too occupied with his business. One day a poisonous snake bit the youngest of his three sons, and the child became seriously sick. Even the doctors gave up all hope. Then the father was really worried, and sent for one of the elders of the church to pray for the child. The elder was a wise man. He came and prayed, "Lord, thank You for sending this snake to bite this child - because I could never get this family to think about You at all. But what I could not accomplish in six years, this snake has now done in a moment! Now that they have learnt their lesson, Lord, heal the child. And grant that they will never need any more snakes to remind them of You again."

There are people who do not think of God until one day they are suddenly taken to a hospital with cancer. then, all of a sudden they begin to think of God and they turn to

Christ and are born again. Incurable diseases, sicknesses, poverty and many other evils in this world have all been used by God to turn people away from their sins to have an eternal home in heaven. That is how God uses the very things that Satan does to save people from his clutches and save them for all eternity. Thus God makes a fool of Satan again and again.

God also uses Satan to purify us believers.

Consider the example of fire? We know that millions of people have died through being burnt in fires in the history of the world. Yet no-one has yet stopped using fire. Because it is through fire that food is cooked and that automobiles and airplanes and machines run. Fire is also used to purify gold that can be purified in no other way. So fire can be put to very good uses. Or consider electricity. Millions have died through being electrocuted. Electricity is certainly very dangerous. Yet we all know that it can be made to serve very useful purposes.

Adam and Eve were innocent when they were created. They had to make a choice if they were to be holy. And in order to make a choice, they had to be tempted, so that they could refuse evil and choose God instead. And that was why God allowed Satan to come into the garden of Eden and tempt them.

Do you think it would have been difficult for God to prevent Satan from entering that garden? Not at all. But without temptation Adam could not have become holy. He would have remained innocent forever.

There is a lot of difference between innocence and holiness. Innocence is what you see in a baby. If you want to know what Adam was like when he was created, look at a baby - innocent and ignorant of good and evil. A little baby may be innocent but it is not holy, not perfect. In order to become perfect, that baby will have to grow up and make some choices, refusing the evil and choosing God.

It is when we refuse to yield to temptation in our minds that we develop character. You are what you are today because of the choices you have made so far in your life.

If other people around you are better than you, it is because they made better choices in their life than the ones you made. We are all making choices everyday - and those choices determine what we will become ultimately.

Eve made a choice in the garden. Through her choice, she was actually saying, "I would rather please my bodily desires and accept what Satan is offering me than be bound by the restrictions that God's commandments have imposed on me. I want to be free."

But did she become free? No. She became a slave of Satan. Only obedience to God's commandments can make us truly free.

Adam and Eve took a very important decision that day in Eden, that produced lifelong consequences for themselves and their children. All decisions produce consequences - sometimes consequences that unfortunately affect our children too. In Adam's case, he and his wife were sent out of God's presence for the rest of their lives.

So don't imagine that those little choices that you make are unimportant or that you will never reap in the future what you are sowing today. God will allow you to be tested and to be tempted. And for that purpose, He allows Satan to be free and to be active.

Let me show you an example from the Old Testament in the book of Job. In Job chapter 1, we read about a conversation that took place in heaven between God and Satan. And from the experience of Job, we can learn something about Satan's workings.

In Job 1:6, we read that one day the sons of God (angels) came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan also came among them. God asked him where he was coming from.

Listen to Satan's answer. He said he had been visiting different places on the earth. Did you know that Satan is active in this world right now?

Many people have the idea that Satan lives in hell. If that were true, then he could not possibly trouble us here on earth. But Satan does not live in hell.

The Bible teaches us that there are three heavens. The first heaven is what we call space. The third heaven is the immediate presence of God (2 Cor.12:2). When Satan was cast down from the immediate presence of God, he was cast down to the second heaven (Eph.6:12), and not to hell. And from the second heaven, he has the freedom to come to earth at any time. That is why he could come into the garden of Eden. And that is why he and his demons can come to earth even today.

The Bible says that Satan goes about like a roaring lion seeking for people whom he may devour. He is forever seeking to tempt young people to make wrong choices. He wants to enter into their lives thus, so that he can rob them of their purity, their honesty and their integrity, and thus destroy their character and finally take them with him to eternal damnation.

That is why Satan is roaming around the earth.

And you can be sure that Satan is observing everyone. He has been observing you from childhood and has sought at all times to tempt you to do evil and make the wrong choices, so that he can destroy you. He was the one who whispered to you to cheat in your examinations, to retain grudges against others, to tell lies to your parents and teachers, to steal other people's things, to read dirty books, etc.,

God then told Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is no one on earth like him - a blameless and upright man". Of course Satan knew everything about Job. In

fact Job was Number One on Satan's "hit-list". So Satan replied saying, "Does Job fear God for nothing? You have put a hedge around him and his house and his possessions and protected him and blessed him in every way. That is why he serves You" (Job 1:8-10).

There is a wonderful lesson for us to learn here: God puts a hedge around His children - a threefold hedge, around their bodies, their families and their possessions.

It is a blessed privilege that we have as children of God, to have this threefold hedge giving us Divine protection. Proverbs 18:10 tells us that the Name of the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous can run and be safe. There is great safety in the Name of Jesus. Satan does not fear any name other than the Name of Jesus Christ who defeated him on Calvary. When our life is surrendered to Christ, we can use the Name of Jesus Christ to resist Satan. The Bible says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

We read further in the book of Job that God allowed Satan to go and afflict Job, his family and his property. In other words, God opened each hedge a little at a time, to allow Satan to go through and test Job. Why did God do that? So that Job could be "purified like gold" (Job 23:10). At the end of the testing, we read that Job became a humbler and a more godly man, with all self-righteousness cleansed out of him.

That is why God allows us to be tested too. So that out of those testings, we might come out purer, humbler, more godly, more loving and kind, more compassionate, less self-righteous, and more like Jesus Himself. So we see that Satan serves a very useful purpose in the sanctification of God's children.

All this teaches us at least two things:

First of all, that Satan can never touch any child of God - their bodies, their families or their possessions without God's permission.

And secondly, that whenever Satan is allowed to touch us or hurt us in any way, it is always with the purpose that we might become more like Christ in our lives, more free from the temporary things of earth, and more heavenly-minded.

Isn't it a great comfort to know that our Heavenly Father is in total control of even what Satan tries to do to us?

I want to tell all of you young people that if you give your life completely to God you will have this threefold hedge around your bodies, your families and your property always. Satan will not be able to penetrate through any of those hedges without God's permission. And whenever God does permit Satan to come through, you can be certain that it will be for your good.

So we see that the Bible gives us clear teaching about Satan and his workings - not to frighten us but to enable us to see God's purpose in allowing him to exist.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE METHODS OF SATAN

If you as a young person do not know how to resist Satan in your life, it can not only ruin your life on earth, it can also affect your eternal destiny. Satan won't wait until you have grown up, before he begins his attacks on you. He will start on you right now. So you must know something about his methods.

Unfortunately, most peoples' idea of the devil comes more from the advertisements of Onida Television than from the teaching of God's Word. And so they think of Satan as a harmless prankster with horns and claws and a forked, green tail. But we read in the Bible that Satan does not have such a hideous form at all. Satan is a spirit and he is not a fool to come in such a way as to make people run away from him. How would be able to lead them astray then?

Satan is more like a confidence trickster who first wins your confidence and then cheats you. The Bible says Satan comes as an angel of light - as one who is attractive. And it is because he comes as an "angel of light", that he is called "the Deceiver of the whole world" (Rev.12:9).

Let me give you one example - karate. Most people think of that as just a martial art-form, a method of self defense. But that is only part of the truth. Just like yoga which appears to be only physical exercise, but yet teaches people to worship of the sun, in the same way, karate too has demonic forces behind it. There are demons of karate, and I have encountered them in demon-possessed people, but they will present themselves as harmless messengers of good things like self-defense.

Satan came in a very charming and attractive way to Eve in the garden of Eden. If he had been repulsive, Eve would have run away from him.

Notice this fact that both the Old and the New Testaments begin with description of Satan tempting people - the Old Testament with the temptation of Adam and Eve (Gen.3), and the New Testament with the temptation of Jesus (Matt.4). That shows the importance that the Bible gives to the matter of our knowing the methods of our enemy.

If we follow the example of Adam and Eve in the way they confronted Satan we will certainly fall. But if we follow Jesus' example in the way He confronted Satan, we will overcome.

Immediately after Jesus was baptised in water and anointed by the Holy Spirit, even before he began his public ministry, the very first thing we read is that He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Lk.4:1).

It is indeed amazing that the Holy Spirit would lead Jesus to meet the devil. One would think that the Holy Spirit leads people only to mountain tops to get visions and revelations of God and heaven!!! Yes, He does lead us to such places. But He also leads us into places where we can be tempted by Satan.

I hope you realise that the Holy Spirit will never lead us to places that are harmful for us. So we can understand from that one verse of Scripture that temptations must be useful for us. Otherwise the Holy Spirit would not have led Jesus to be tempted by Satan. And He won't lead us to be tempted by Satan either. God does not tempt anyone. But He does allow us to be tempted by Satan.

Notice the timing of Satan's temptations:

He came to Jesus, just after Jesus had fasted for forty days and nights, when he was hungry. It is when we are physically weak or when we are facing some mental or emotional pressure in our lives, that Satan tries to attack us.

Secondly, we notice that Satan came to Jesus after He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit and had heard the voice of approval from Heaven. Satan comes to us soon after we have had a time of tremendous blessing from God.

So let us be alert to Satan's tactics. After God has tremendously blessed us, Satan will come along to try and puff us up. Or when we have failed in an examination, or are sick or physically drained out, he will come along to try and get us discouraged so that he can lead us into sin.

God's Word has been given to us in advance so that we can know "the wiles and schemes of Satan". God's Word shows us how Satan approaches, at what times he usually comes, what enticements he offers, how others were deceived by him, and how Jesus overcame.

What are Satan's lines of approach?

First of all, we see that he tempted Jesus through His bodily desires. Satan suggested to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread".

That is how Satan comes to us too. He tempts us to satisfy our **LEGITIMATE** bodily desires in **ILLEGITIMATE** ways. But Jesus was alert, and replied "It is written.....".

When Satan had come to Eve thousands of years earlier, he had questioned God's Word saying, "Has God said..?"

Do you know that there is only one book in the world that Satan hates with all his heart? That is God's Word, the Bible. And why does he hate it? Because it reveals how he became Satan, it exposes all his schemes, and most important of all, it tells us all about his defeat on Calvary's cross, and his final judgment when Christ comes back to earth.

That is why Satan hates the Bible and always tries his best to prevent people from reading it. He would rather allow you to read a novel or a comic than the Bible. Because Satan knows that those novels and comics will not help you to overcome him, but the Bible will.

When Jesus came to earth, he came as a man just like us, and was tempted in all points exactly as we are (Heb.2:17; 4:15). Why? So that he could be an example for us. So that he could say to us "Follow Me. Follow My example."

And what is the example that we can follow here? It is to quote God's Word alone to Satan when we are tempted. Jesus did not discuss matters with Satan as Eve did. He did not reason as to whether He needed food for His body, or whether food was good, or necessary etc., He was only concerned with what God had said in His Word. And my dear friends, I want to tell you that if you live your life by just this one principle: "What has God said in his Word,? That alone is my final authority", then you will always overcome Satan, like Jesus did. In fact Jesus replied quoting God's Word in answer to all the three temptations that Satan came with.

And there we see the contrast between Eve and Jesus. Jesus' attitude was "God's Word for my soul is far more important than any food for my body." Or in other words, "The need for food is not as important as the need to read, understand and obey the Word of God". That is the meaning of Jesus quoting that verse from the Old Testament to Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Did you understand that, my young friends? The first principle by which we can overcome Satan is by recognising that God's Word is more important for us than the satisfying of ALL our bodily needs - whether it be a hunger for food or sex or whatever. If you don't take that position right at the outset, you will certainly be deceived thereafter.

You can be sure that the devil will tell you that it is more important to eat your food than to read God's Word each day. And there are many believers who believe the devil. The proof that they believe what Satan says is seen in the fact that they never forget or lack the time to eat food (even three or more times a day), but often forget or are too busy to meditate on God's Word.

Who has done this work of deceiving believers and thus making them weak? Undoubtedly, Satan himself. What an example we have in Jesus Who, even after fasting for forty days, still felt it was more important for Him to listen to a word from God than to satisfy His bodily needs.

It is those who give the pre-eminent place to God's Word in their lives who will live a consistently, victorious life. The apostle John told young people (in 1 John 2:14), "Because God's Word is dwelling in you, you are strong and have overcome the evil one." It is impossible to overcome Satan in any other way. I want to encourage all of you to read and meditate on the Scriptures every day of your lives.

Let us now look at the second temptation.

Here Satan tempted Jesus to jump down from the top of the temple, and to claim God's promise of protection. It was a temptation to do something spectacular and thus earn the admiration of the crowds below in the courtyard, who would see Him descending unhurt, into their midst. What Satan suggested to Jesus was really a ploy to make Him commit suicide.

Satan will often tempt you to do something spectacular in order to get the acclaim of others, or perhaps to show-off that you are someone great etc., Notice that Satan even quoted Scripture to Jesus, saying, "The angels will take care of you."

Remember that Satan can even misquote Scripture if he can lead you astray thereby. And if you are ignorant of what the Scriptures really teach, he will deceive you.

"Do something spectacular in the Name of Christ", Satan suggests. Christianity has often got a bad name because of the stupid things that many believers have done, quoting Scripture and tempting God.

For example, there are believers who do not take any medicine when they are sick. They do not have any Scripture to base their so-called "faith" on. But they imagine that they are "trusting" God. That is exactly like jumping down from the temple, expecting the angels to provide supernatural protection! They finally die of their sickness - and the Name of Jesus Christ is dishonoured among the heathen, who get the idea that Christianity is a religion of stupid, fanaticism. And Satan sits back and laughs, for he has succeeded in luring one more believer to commit suicide, not by taking poison, but by refusing to combat the poisons in his body through medicines that God created for use. Many a child of God who could have been useful to God for the work of His kingdom on earth has been lured to their death by Satan in this way.

The devil is always tempting people to do something foolish, something that is contrary to the spirit and teaching of God's Word, and something spectacular. It is by humility - by humbly submitting to God, and by not seeking any glory for ourselves in any way, that we overcome Satan.

When Satan quoted a Scripture to Jesus, Jesus quoted another Scripture to Satan in reply. He said, "It is also written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'". We are not to tempt God by doing foolish, stupid and unnecessary things and then expecting God to protect us from the results of such folly!

And now, finally, the third temptation.

Here at last, Satan came to what he has always desired - worship. He told Jesus, "If you bow down and worship me, I will give you all the glory of this world."

The glory of this world is a tremendous temptation to all of us - money, popularity, honour, position, power etc., And the devil says, "Which of these would you like to have? Tell me, and I will give it to you. Just bow down to me a little bit, and I will give it all to you".

He will say, "Do you want to pass in your examination? Do you want to come first in your class? I will give it to you. Just bow down to me - give a bribe and get that question paper in advance; give a bribe to the examiner and get some more marks; cheat in the examination.... etc.,"

These are the ways in which many are bowing down to Satan today.

Is it important for you young people to know about the devil's schemes? Certainly. You must know that when you cheat in an examination, you are bowing down to Satan in your mind and saying "I will obey your orders, Satan. I will take a little piece of paper with notes in my pocket, into the examination-hall".

There are many more ingenious ways of cheating that young people have discovered in these days - for Satan is very clever, and offers all his wiles to help those who want to cheat.

If Satan offered the glory of this world to Jesus, don't you think he will offer it to you as well? And as you grow older, you will find that Satan will tell you of so many other wonderful things that he can offer you. There are people who sign false statements, practise unrighteousness in financial matters, and engage in crooked activities - all in order to get a little more money, a little more popularity, or a higher position in this world.

The devil is constantly telling people, "Tell me what you want? I will give it to you." Jesus had only one reply to such a temptation. He said, "Be gone Satan. It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve'".

What a wonderful thing it is that we have God's Word to warn us of all these schemes of Satan. How blessed you young people are that you can learn all this at this young age!

When you are tempted to get something of this world and you realise that you have to sacrifice your character in order to get it, what are you going to do? Remember what Jesus said to Satan, and you follow Jesus' example and tell Satan the same thing yourself.

When Satan tempts you saying, "You don't have to be righteous, you don't have to speak the truth there. Tell a little lie, and you can gain something of this world", be bold to reply to him saying, "Begone Satan, I will not listen to you. It is written that I should bow down and worship God alone. I am going to follow Jesus."

From the time he was created, Satan has always wanted others to worship him. That is why he wanted to be like God - because he knew that God alone can be worshipped. He

wanted the other angels to worship him. He wanted Adam's race to worship him. And, amazingly, he wanted even Jesus to worship him!!!.

He could not succeed with Jesus. But he does succeed with many people - in fact with most people - in the world today, and even with many, many believers, who compromise their convictions in order to make some earthly profit for themselves.

There are millions who are bowing down to Satan today. They do not realize that when they yield to sin, or go against their conscience, they are actually bowing down to Satan. And why do they do it? In order to gain something of the glory of this world.

When you want success, popularity or power - maybe success in an examination, or popularity in school, or a position in the world - Satan will come to you and say, "I will give it to you. Do this. Do that. Go and say this. Go and do that...." And you know very well that everything he is suggesting is wrong. But you still go ahead and do it, and thus bow the knee to Satan. Do you think you can still call yourself a Christian when you do things like that? Certainly not. No one is a Christian who bows the knee to Satan.

What shall we do then, if we have bowed the knee like that to Satan in past years? We must repent of all those occasions when we did it, give back what we have cheated or acquired wrongly, and ask Jesus to forgive us and cleanse us. Let us do that without delay, lest Satan continue to have power over our lives.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DEFEAT OF SATAN

I want to share something with you now concerning the defeat of Satan.

The greatest battle that ever took place on this earth is not written about in any of the world's history-books. It was on Calvary, when Jesus through His death defeated Satan, the prince of this world.

One verse that you should never forget in your whole life is Hebrews 2:14,15. I am sure Satan would not like you to know this verse. No one likes to hear about his own defeat or failure, and Satan is no exception. Here is the verse:

"Since then the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He (Jesus) Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death (His death on Calvary's cross), He might destroy him who had the power of death that is the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

When Jesus died he made the devil powerless. Why? So that we might be forever free of Satan and the bondage of fear that he had put on us throughout our lifetime. There are many types of fears that people in the world have - fear of sickness, fear of poverty, fear of failure, fear of people, fear of the future etc., The greatest of all fears however is the fear of death. Every other fear is inferior to the fear of death.

The fear of death leads on to the fear of what will happen after death. The Bible teaches very clearly that those who live in sin will finally go to hell - the place that God has reserved for those who do not repent. The devil also will spend eternity in the lake of fire, along with those whom he deceived and led into sin on this earth.

Jesus came to the earth to save us from that eternal hell, by taking the punishment from our sins. He also destroyed Satan's power over us so that he can never harm us again.

I want all of you to remember this one truth all your lives :

GOD WILL ALWAYS BE ON YOUR SIDE AGAINST SATAN.

That is such a glorious truth that has brought so much encouragement and comfort and victory to me, that I wish I could go everywhere and tell every believer in the world about it.

The Bible says "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The Name of Jesus is the Name at which Satan will always flee.

The picture that most Christians have in their minds is one of Satan chasing them and of their running for their lives from him. But that is exactly the opposite of what the Bible teaches.

What do you think? Was Satan afraid of Jesus or not? We all know that Satan was scared to stand before our Saviour. Jesus is the Light of the world, and the prince of darkness had to disappear from before Him.

Jesus told His disciples about how He had seen the fall of Satan in heaven. And there, Jesus said, that Satan's fall had been "like lightning" (Lk.10:18), when God cast him out. When Jesus told Satan in the wilderness, "Be gone, Satan", he disappeared from Jesus' presence too at the speed of lightning. And when we resist Satan in the Name of Jesus today, he will flee from before us too at the speed of light. The darkness flees before the light.

Satan is afraid of the Name of Jesus. He is afraid to be reminded of the fact that Jesus is Lord. Demon-possessed people will not confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, neither will they confess that Satan was defeated on the cross.

There is power in the Name of Jesus Christ to cast out any demon and to make any devil flee from you - at the speed of lightning. Never forget that.

I want to tell you young people that anytime in your life if you are in a difficulty, or facing some insurmountable problem, when you are facing something for which there appears to be no human answer, call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus. Say to Him, "Lord Jesus, you are on my side against the devil. Help me now". And then turn to Satan and tell him, "In Jesus Name I resist you, Satan". I want to tell you that Satan will flee from you immediately, because Jesus defeated him on the cross. Satan is powerless against you, when you walk in the light of God and resist him in Jesus' Name.

Satan obviously does not want you to know about his defeat and that is why he has prevented you from hearing about it for so long. That is why he has stopped most preachers from preaching about his defeat as well.

I want you all to know this clearly that Satan was defeated once and for all by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. You need never again be afraid of Satan. He cannot trouble you. He cannot harm you. He may tempt you. He may attack you. But the grace of God in Christ will always make you victorious over him, if you humble yourself, submit to God and walk in His light at all times. There is tremendous power in the light. Satan, the prince of darkness, can never enter the realm of light. If Satan has power over many believers, it is because they walk in darkness, living in some secret sin, not forgiving others, or being jealous of someone, or pursuing some selfish ambition in their lives etc., Then Satan gets power over them. Otherwise he cannot touch them.

You should never be superstitious like people are in this world. People are afraid to do certain things on certain days - like for example, on Friday the 13th. Some people are scared when they see a black cat cross their path. Some check up on the position of the moon to determine which is a bad time, and avoid doing anything important then.

Where do such superstitious fears originate from? From Satan. Jesus has come to deliver us from every such fear. We need never be afraid of anything in this world any more. All superstition is from the devil.

We are told in the book of Revelation that one day Jesus will come back and bind Satan in the bottomless pit, and then Jesus will reign on this earth for a thousand years. After that period, Satan will be released for a short while to show everyone that he still hasn't changed after his long imprisonment. He will then go out and deceive people on the earth for one last time. And then it will be seen that the race of Adam hasn't changed either, even after observing the thousand-year reign of peace under the Lord Jesus.

Then God will come down in judgment on Satan and cast him into the lake of fire for all eternity. And all those who lived in sin, who bowed the knee to Satan, and who obeyed him rather than obeying God's Word will also join Satan in that lake of fire.

That is why we preach this gospel of Satan's defeat. It is perhaps the most important truth that believers need to hear at this time. But remember, that you will have no power over Satan if you don't walk in purity.

So, I want to urge you young people: Never allow the devil to pollute your minds in any way. If your mind is impure, you won't be able to use the Name of Jesus against Satan effectively. The Name of Jesus is not like some magic mantra that can be repeated to ward off evil. No. You have to submit to God first. Only then will the devil flee from you when you resist him. But the devil won't be afraid of you, if you don't submit every area of your life to God.

Give your life to Christ completely then - now itself - and determine that you will live only and totally for Him henceforth.

I can assure you that twenty years from now, you will be thankful that you followed the teaching of God's Word that you have just heard. And one day when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and your turn comes to give an account of your life to the Lord, you will be even more thankful.

May the Lord help you to live in such a way that you have no regrets when you come to the end of your life's journey. Amen.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
