

The Real Devil 2-2-14

In 1971, an interesting court case was made under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Gerald Mayo sued Satan (UNITED STATES ex rel. Gerald MAYO v. SATAN AND HIS STAFF, 54 F.R.D. 282). He stated that "Satan has on numerous occasions caused plaintiff misery and unwarranted threats, against the will of plaintiff, that Satan has placed deliberate obstacles in his path and has caused plaintiff's downfall." Ultimately, the federal court of appeals dismissed the case. They said that Satan is "a foreign prince with no standing to sue in an American Court", that this was likely a class action, and that without a physical address for Satan, no service of summons could be made.

The reality of Satan is a matter of great confusion. Who is Satan? Is he real? Can he possess us? Should we fear him? Hopefully, we can walk through the Scriptures and find the truth about Satan.

He is first introduced to us in Genesis 3 as the Serpent who tempted Eve. It is at the end of the Bible that this is made clear for us (Revelation 20:2). The name that we are most familiar with are Devil and Satan. They each have a similar meaning in two languages; *Devil* is the Greek word (*Diabolos*) which means "Accuser", and *Satan* is the Hebrew word meaning "Opponent". TO be clear, some think that the name *Lucifer* also applies. However, *Lucifer* is NOT the Devil. The only mention of that name in the Bible is in Isaiah 14:12; yet the context tells us clearly that this passage is about the King of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4b). In truth, there is no firm evidence that He is a fallen angel, as many suppose. The closest statement is that he disguises himself as an angel, as stated in II Corinthians 11:14.

So what is the Devil? Ephesians 2:2 calls him "the prince of the power of the air". 2 Corinthians 4:4 calls him "the god of this age". Jesus called him the "ruler of this world" in John 12:31. Finally, in Jud 8-9, the Devil is called a dignitary, who should not be reviled. These passages tell us that Satan is one with authority. If his power is real, HE is real. So what is his authority/power?

According to Hebrews 2:14, his power is that of death. It was a power he exercised on earth, which is why he was called a prince of the earth, god of the world. The power of death gave him the power to make accusation of sin (which is the power of death), as we see in Revelation 12:10. Thus, the whole of the world is under his power (I John 5:19). The Bible tells us that Death's power is in sin (Romans 5:12. I Corinthians 15:56). Specifically, his power is our sin (Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? Romans 6:16). Therefore, Satan's power is not in things like the occult or in mysticism.

He can possess us; that is, he can own us by our sin. But without sin, he has no power (Romans 8:38-39). We live in sin, we live in fear of his power (Hebrews 2:15). Yet the story of the Gospel is that Jesus robbed Satan. The Bible describes the fall of Satan as being the binding of Satan by the death and resurrection of Jesus. (Mark 3:27, Luke 10:17-18, John 12:31, Revelation 20:1-2).

Satan can no longer make accusations against those who are in Jesus Christ. Thus, he has no place to stand before God, as he did in Job 1, and revile us with accusation. If we are in Christ (by obedience to the Gospel), we are justified by Christ's name, and are without sin.