

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 25: 9: 2007

Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:1-4

THE WELL DRESSED CHRISTIAN

1. WHO IS THE ENEMY ?

Our overall subject these nights is “ **The Well Dressed Christian,**” What do you instantly know about a well dressed man ? His wife is good at picking his clothes. We are thinking in our study of “ **The Well Dressed Christian.**” This will involves us looking at the Christian Armour. Talking about armour and battles presupposes that we have an enemy. Indeed the Christian has a three fold enemy. There is,

1. The External Enemy: The World

John says, “ *Love not the world.* ” (1 Jn 2:15) This refers to the invisible spiritual system of evil. The world’s system is opposed to God. 1.

2. The Internal Enemy: The Flesh

Paul says, “ *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,* ” (Gal 5:19) By the flesh Paul does not mean “ *the body.* ” The human body is not sinful, it is neutral. If the Holy Spirit controls the body, then we walk in the Spirit, but if the flesh controls the body, then we walk in the lusts or desires of the flesh. You see, the flesh stands for that part of man’s nature wherein his natural desires have free rein.

3. The Infernal Enemy: The Devil

Peter says, “ *be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.* ” (1 Pet 5:8) Who is the Enemy ? The Devil. One of the most intriguing books to read is entitled “ ***Our Man in Damascus,***” a book that speaks generally of the undercover working of the Mossad, the Israeli Secret Service. This book tells specifically of an Israeli spy in Syria who was eventually caught and publicly hanged in Damascus. Although he was a Jew, Ari Cohen was an Iraqi by birth and, among other languages he spoke Arabic and Spanish fluently. *After a purge of Jews from Iraq he and his family were repatriated to Israel where he was recruited by the Mossad.* At the request of the Israeli intelligence agency, Ari went to live for a while in Argentina where he posed as an affluent business man. In his line of business he imported large amounts of goods from Syria and as a result was invited to visit Damascus.

Through his contacts he became very friendly with top members of the Syrian government and was even taken on a tour of the military bases of the Golan Heights when they were still in Syrian hands. *He indicated to the head of the Syrian army that he would like to donate a gift of eucalyptus trees from Argentina to be planted at army bases all over the Golan Heights providing shade for the soldiers in this region which is greatly exposed to the hot sun.* The offer was welcomed as a brilliant idea and a magnanimous gesture. Later, when Israel and Syria went to war against each other, the eucalyptus trees facilitated Israeli fighter jets in identifying the location of all the

army bases on the Golan Heights giving Israel a great advantage. Observation and deftness paid off long before the wear ever started. *The Mossad showed that one of the most effective arms of military strategy is that of intelligence, the study and surveillance of the enemy's strengths and strategies.* Often the quality of intelligence is decisive in the conflict and eventual conquest of the enemy. On the other hand ignorance of the enemy can prove to be perilous and costly. Paul had this in mind when he wrote “ *we are not ignorant of his (the Devil's) devices.* ” (2 Cor 2:11) So who is the enemy ? C. S. Lewis wrote, “ *there are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel and excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.* ” My Lewis is right. Unfortunately strands of both errors exist in today's church.

On the one hand, some Christians are *materialists* who fail to understand that the Christian life is real battle. But on the other side, there are also many in the church who have an excessive and unhealthy fascination with demons. We trust this series will strike a balance between those two positions and will enable us how to encounter the enemy. We certainly don't intend to glorify him. But we do need to unmask him so that we can see him as he is, a corrupt and defeated being. Teddy Roosevelt had a little dog that was always getting in fights and always getting licked. Someone said, “ *Colonel, he's not much of a fighter.* ” The Colonel replied, “ *Oh, yes he's a good*

fighter, he's just a poor judge of dogs. ” Now it's a good thing to know what we are up against for we ought not to underestimate the devil. But is there a devil ? Many nowadays think not. Since the 18th century writes Theo Preiss's in his “ *Life of Christ,* ” “ *we have reduced the religious drama to two partners God and man, with a superior smile we have eliminated the roles of Satan and his legions.* Years ago the New York Independent printed these words by Alfred H. Hough.

**Men don't in a devil as their fathers used to
They forced the door of the broadest creed
To let his majesty through
There isn't a print of his cloven foot
A fiery dart from his bow
To be found in earth or air today
For the world has voted so**

**But who is mixing the fatal drink
That palsies heart and brain
And loads the bier of each passing year
With ten hundred thousand slain
Who blights the bloom of the land today
With the fiery breathe of hell
If the Devil isn't and never was
Won't someone rise and tell**

**Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint
And digs the pit for his feet
Who sows the tares in the filed of time
Wherever God sows his wheat**

*The Devil is voted not to be
And of course the thing is true
But who is doing the kind of work
The Devil alone should so*

*Won't someone step to the front forthwith
And make their bow and show
How the frauds and crimes of a single day
Spring up, we want to know
The Devil was voted fairly out
And of course the Devil's gone
But simple people would like to know
Who carries his business on*

My all of this is in line with Satanic strategy. The Devil is an expert at the disappearing act. “ *The Devil's best trick,*” observes Baudelaire “ *is to persuade us that he does not exist.*” Indeed, it's noteworthy that so many of the modern cults do not believe in a personal devil. “ *There is no devil,*” says Spiritism. “ *There is no being in existence,*” asserts Christadelphianism. My despite the fact that many today may be disposed to deny his existence, the Devil has been believed in from time immemorial. One thing is certain the Bible recognises Satan's reality. To Scripture he is no myth, not a phantom of the mind, but a grim personality, the arch enemy of God and His people. Well, who is the enemy ? I want to answer that question in three ways.

(1) OUR ENEMY HIS PAST

Where did Satan come from ? This spirit-creature that

seeks to oppose God and defeat His work ? I want you to see that the Devil's past history is,

(a) Affirmed in the Old Testament by the Servants of God:

There are 2 passages that concern us at this time Ezekiel Ch 28 and Isaiah Ch 14. Let's have a look at this passage in Ezekiel. Here in (28:1-10) the prophet is bringing a message of judgement on the king of Tyre. But beginning in (28:11) Ezekiel goes beyond the King of Tyre to the source of his evil, Satan himself. Notice here,

1. Satan's PERFECTION:

Look if you will at (28:12) This supernatural king was the sum of all of God's creation. He was “ *full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*” If you wanted to know what God thinks is beautiful, you would have to behold this particular angel in his original essence. We don't usually associate that quality with such a personality as Satan, yet coming from the creative hands of God, and before his fall he must have been a being of surpassing beauty. Three little French boys were once asked, “ *who created the devil ?*” Rene answered that it was quite impossible that God had created the Devil since he made nothing but what was good. Guy did not venture a reply. Henri the most rational of the three responded, “ *God created him an angel but he made himself a devil by his sin.*” Do you see his Beauty in (28:12) Do you that he was a Created Being ? (28:13) Do you see his Position ? “ *Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth.*” (28:14)

Satan originally may have occupied a place of honour around the throne of God. “*Stones of fire,*” perhaps refers to the blazing Shekinah glory of God. 1.

2. Satan’s DEFECTION:

Look if you will at (28:15) What was this iniquity ? Well, look at (28:17) Now turn to (Is 14:12-14) Lucifer means “*the light bearer,*” “*son of the dawn,*” “*shining one,*” and “*star of the morning.*” Now will you notice here that the Holy Spirit of God has seen fit to reveal to us step by step what went on in Satan’s heart. Five times in these verses we have the declaration coming from the heart of Satan, “*I will,*” in contrast to this we note our Saviour’s earnest words in the Garden of Gethsemane “*not as I will but as Thou wilt.*” (Matt 26:39) The sin of Satan was pride and this sin has permeated the human race ever since Satan rebelled against God and as many as one third of the angelic creation may have followed Satan in his defection. (Rev 12:3 Job 38:7) And they have become “*the principalities and powers,*” to which Paul refers in (Eph 6:12) These are the demons that wage unremitting war on the saints and constantly stir up trouble in the world. (Jude 6) 1. 2.

3. Satan’s EJECTION:

Look if you will at (14:12-15) In (Matt 25:41) our Lord referred to “*the devil and his angels.*” Satan led a group of angels in rebellion against God. How many angels followed him ? Well, according to (Rev 12:4) “*his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast*

them to the earth.” Since “*stars,*” in the Book of Job refers to angels (38:7) Revelation seems to indicate that one third of the angels rebelled with Satan. They are now known as demons. My Satan has already been cast out of heaven into the air, in (Rev Ch 12) he will be cast from the air to the earth, then from the earth to the bottomless pit (Rev 20:1) and finally from the bottomless pit to the lake of fire. (Rev 20:10) My Are you not glad this that Satan is on his way down ? You see, the Devil never leads anyone upward, he’s always dragging people downward. But God’s people are moving upward and heavenward “*for the path is as shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*” (Prov 4:18) So the Devil’s past history is (a) and then it’s

(b) Confirmed in the New Testament by the Son of God:

Look if you will at (Lk 10:17-20) Now lets try and analyse this and notice several things. Notice this passage,

1. Asserts Christ’s Deity:

He says, “*I beheld Satan,*” (10:18) If Christ saw Satan fall He must have been where He could see him, and the only period in eternity is when he actually fell from heaven.

2. Announces Christ’s Pre-incarnate Existence with the Father:

He had to be there in His pre-incarnate state to see Satan falling from heaven.

3. Accentuates the Personality of Satan:

“ *I beheld Satan,*”

4. Attests to the Dismissal of Satan from the Heavenly Courtroom:

As we have seen from the Old Testament prophets Satan was cast out and here Christ puts his stamp of approval on that.

5. Authenticates the Old Testament Accounts of the Prophets:

6. Affirms the Guise that Satan often employs throughout the Bible:

How does the Devil often appear ? As an “ *angel of light,*” (2 Cor 11:14) Christ says, “ *I beheld Satan as lightning.*” (1) My this created angelic being was cast out because his heart was full of pride and this pride is being reproduced not only in the heart of the sinner but in the heart of the saint. James tells us in no uncertain manner, “ *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*” (4:6) The story is told of Spurgeon, who one Sunday preached a masterly sermon. As soon as he had finished preaching his message, the devil whispered to him, “ *Spurgeon that was a fine sermon, you preached magnificently.*” For a moment he agreed with the Devil. Leaving his pulpit, he was met by a local deacon at the foot of the pulpit stairs, who started to say “ *Mr. Spurgeon, that was a masterpiece.*” Spurgeon, however

interrupted the well meaning deacon saying, “ *My friend, you’re too late. The devil told me that a few moments ago.*” Too often preachers and teachers parade themselves. They draw attention to their knowledge, their gifts, and their talents. Vanity colours their public ministry much to God’s displeasure. Pride of grace, pride of race, pride of face. Are you marked by this Satanic sin ? Some Christians are proud of their family history, their intellectual capacity, their material possessions, their great wealth, and their spiritual gifts. Do you what pride does ? It divides the church and destroys the fellowship. (1 Cor 1:10-12 3:3-5) (1)

(2) OUR ENEMY HIS PERSON

Who is the Devil ? What is he like ? Most Ulstermen enjoy a sense of humour. I certainly do, but I detest jokes about the Devil. You see, Satan likes people to think of him as a leering, tempting joker. Dress him in a red suit equipped with horns and tail, and carrying a pitchfork, and he’s pictured as the monarch of hell, surrounded by inmates having a great time. That’s the image that is portrayed by the world and nothing pleases Satan more than this unbelievable characterization of himself. Well who is he ? What is he like ? Well, let me,

(a) DESCRIBE HIS CONSTITUTION:

Who is the Devil ?

1. He is a Person:

The names given to him indicate personality. Satan, deceiver, liar, murderer, accuser, tempter, prince, the evil one. Moreover, have we not seen that Satan is a fallen angel and as such he possesses a personality. The Devil possesses all the traits of personality.

He has Intellect: The Ability of Plan:

Do you recall Paul's words? "*But I fear, lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*"

He has Emotion: The Ability to Communicate:

Satan held a conversation with Eve in the Garden and the Lord Jesus in the wilderness. (Gen 3:1-6 Matt 4:1)

He has Will: The Ability to Will:

Satan has certain desires and wills to accomplish those objectives. He took the Saviour to the top of a mountain and offered him all the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. (Matt 4:8-9)

2. He is a Spirit:

For angels are spirits, they are immaterial beings. Angels are called "*ministering spirits,*" (Heb 1:14) Demons are called "*evil spirits,*" and "*unclean spirits.*" (Lk 4:36 8:2) The Devil is immaterial and invisible, though at times he may manifest his presence in

temporary visible form. (Gen 19:1) Now all of this means that *Satan is not Omnipotent:* Satan is powerful, but not all powerful. Indeed John says, "*greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.*" (4:4) *Satan is not Omniscient:* He does not know everything. Can Satan read the thoughts of Christians? The Bible gives no indication that he can. Satan does not know everything because he is an angel and angels don't know everything. (1 Pet 1:12) But Satan is very wise by reason of his age and experience. He has spent untold years observing our actions and attitudes. Something else, Satan is not Omnipresent: Angels may be fast as the Book of Daniel indicates (9:21) but they cannot be everywhere at the same time and Satan has the same limitations. (Lk 8:33)

3. He is a Fallen Angel:

He is called by God "*the anointed cherub,*" (Ez 28:1) and that title designates Satan as one of the highest ranking angels before his fall. My before he fell Satan was a high-stationed guardian for God. (Ex 25:18-22 Rev 4:6-8) But now he is regarded as the leader of the fallen angels one without equal in their ranks. (Matt 25:41 Rev 12:4, 7) In the gospel the Lord Jesus refers to "*the devil and his angels.*" So who is the Devil? He is a person, he is a spirit, he is a fallen angel. But what is the Devil like? Well, lets

(b) DEFINE HIS CHARACTER:

You see, the terms the Bible uses gives us a clue as to what Satan is really like.

1. He is a Murderer:

Do you recall how the Lord Jesus shocked the hypocritical Pharisees who falsely assumed they were the children of God by saying, “*ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning.*” (Jn 8:44) What was the first crime recorded after the fall of man ? It was Cain’s murder of Abel.

(Gen 4:8) Indeed John says, “*Not as Cain who was of that wicked one and slew his brother.*” (1 Jn 3:12)

Do you know something ? Murder is Satanic. It’s the Devil who entices people to commit murder.

2. He is a Liar:

The Lord said, “*he is a liar and the father of it.*”

(Jn 8:44) There’s an unchanging principle that runs throughout the Word of God and it’s, “*be sure your sin will find you out.*” (Num 32:23) But Satan says, “*No it won’t go ahead and sin and who will know.*”

3. He is a Sinner:

“*The Devil sinneth from the beginning.*” Christ came into the world not only to destroy sin but to destroy Satan as well. John said, “*for this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.*” (1 Jn 3:8)

4. He is a Perverter:

You see, Satan has taken hold of every good that God has

made and perverted it. God made fruit for food and drink (Gen 1:29-30) But Satan can pervert it into alcoholism. (Eph 5:18) God designed sex for us to enjoy within the marriage bond but Satan can pervert it into something lewd and adulterous. (Gal 5:19)

5. He is an Imitator:

The only original thought Satan ever had was to sin. You see, in his desire to be worshipped as God Satan strives to be the imitator of His Creator. (2 Cor 11:13) My do you see clearly what Satan is like ? Now whenever we see folks possessing these traits, whether sinners or saints what are we to conclude ? Are we not to conclude that they are acting under the influence of Satan, that their conduct is Satanic ? Now we have discovered who he is, and what he is like, but how does he act ? Let’s

(c) DISCLOSE HIS CONDUCT:

Do you recall how Paul speaks of “*the wiles of the devil.*”(Eph 6:11) Did you ever think of his activity ? Dr. John McArthur to whom I am indebted for a lot of the material this says this.

1. He tempted Eve: (Gen 3:1-6)
2. He tempted Christ: (Matt 4:1)
3. He perverts God’s Word: (Gen 3:1)
4. He opposes God’s work: (Zech 3:1)
5. He hinders God’s servants: (1 Thes 2:18)
6. He hinders the gospel: (2 Cor 4:4)
7. He ensnares the wicked: (2 Tim 2:26)

8. He deceives the nations: (Rev 20:7-8)
9. He disguises himself as an angel of light: (2 Cor 11:13)
10. He contented with the angel Michael: (Jude 9)
11. He instigated the fall of the human race: (Gen 3:13)
12. He seeks to devour: (1 Pet 5:8)
13. He accuses God's people: (Rev 12:10)
14. He once had the power of death: (Heb 2:14)
15. The whole world lies in his power: (1 Jn 5:19)

My we better not underestimate our enemy or we will fall before his power. (1) (2)

(3) OUR ENEMY HIS POSITION

Sure, Satan has been cast out of God's immediate presence, he has been removed from his former office as "*the anointed cherub,*" yet he retains in the plan of God a great position. Consider his position by thinking of,

(a) THE SUBJECTS OVER WHICH HE RULES:

Do you recall our poem ? "*Who is doing the kind of work the devil used to do ?*" The answer is he's still doing it, but he is doing it through the subjects over which he rules. Look at (Eph 6:12) and notice,

1. His Dupes:

"*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,*" the sinner is not the enemy, it's the one behind the sinner who is the real enemy. Christ weeps for sinners because they are

duped. "*The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.*" (2 Cor 4:4) My we should have compassion on sinners because they have been duped by Satan. 1.

2. His Demons:

Charles B. Williams translates it like this, "*for our contest is not with human foes alone, but with the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark world, that is with the spirit forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest.*" Satan is not a solitary enemy, he has a force of demon beings who are highly organised, and brought together into a kingdom like God's system.

(Eph 6:12 Col 1:16) These angels chose to follow Satan (Rev 12:4) and they are known now as demons or fallen angels and it's through these demons that Satan gets the job done. My Satan is not omnipresent he cannot be at your house and my house at the same time personally, but that's little comfort to me, because one of his demons can. He works through his those ranks of demons who rebelled with him, and have been assigned responsibilities under him. My ***is it not time that we all woke up ? Do you realise that this entire universe is a battle ground and we are in the middle of it ? Do you see that those under the influence of Satan dog your steps and incite you to disobey God ?*** (Matt 25:41 Jn 17:14) (a)

(b) THE SPHERE IN WHICH HE MOVES:

Look if you will at (Eph 6:12) That phrase "*high*

places,” may be translated “*in the heavenlies.*” Of course that is where the Christian sits positionally with Christ, “*in the heavenlies,*” this is the sphere of our blessings in Christ. (1:3 2:6) But here also we find the powers of Satan.

1. Satan has Access to Heaven:

The Lord evidently allows him to appear on limited occasions. He appears with other “*sons of God,*” angels (Job 1:6 2:1) to assemble and answer to God. It is here that Satan accuses the brethren. (Zech 3:1 Rev 12:10) Do you see Satan’s purpose ? He works on earth to turn God’s children against God and he works in heaven to turn God against His children. “*Oh, by the way God, do you see what Abraham just did ? He lied about his wife ? Lord, do you see what David just did ? He committed adultery ? Lord, did you hear Peter just deny your Son three times ? And Lord, did you notice Denis Lyle down there in Moira ? He really blew it today in his so called Christian life. Just thought you’d like to know.*” But no sooner does the prosecutor make his accusation than our personal advocate, steps to the front of the courtroom and says, “*You don’t have anything against Lyle. I paid the penalty for his sins on the cross, so drop this case for lack of evidence.*” 1.

2. Satan is Active on Earth:

He travels the earth, he and his cohorts seeking to oppose the purpose of God in the life of the believer personally and in the life of the church corporately. (Matt 13:38 2

Cor 4:4 Eph 6:12) My our churches today are wrecked with division, discord, disharmony, do you know who is behind it ? Satan. Do you know who is doing the work of Satan ? Those who profess to be Christ’s.

Who is the Enemy ? The Devil who is the active aggressor in a war against God, His purposes, His power, His people. *From the Devil’s Past, we learn that the **sin** of the Devil is pride.* Is this sin that burned within Lucifer burning within you ? *From the Devil’s Person, we learn that the **nature** of the devil is evil.* He is a murderer, a liar, a perverter, are these marks evident in your life ? *From the Devil’s Position we learn that the **object** of the devil is destruction.* He through his cohorts is out to destroy you. Are you therefore sober, vigilant ? Are you resisting the Devil ? Refusing to give him a foothold in your life.