

We Can Beat The Devil!

Have you ever began reading a very suspenseful book... then peeked at the ending? I do it on a regular basis.

Let me illustrate with the book of books – a book filled with suspense, joys, sorrows, tragedy and triumph – the Bible. As you begin reading you read of the marvels of the six days of creation. As you approach the end of the chapter you find that the first people created, Adam and Eve, are special indeed (as are all mankind) for they are created in the image of God! (Genesis 1:27). And the creation into which they are placed is beautiful indeed. Adam and Eve are blessed with dominion over all of creation, and things are so wonderful that God Himself declares it to be “very good” (1:31).

But you get just a little further along (chapter 3) and in comes the devil. He is a fearsome creature indeed, “more subtil than any beast” (3:1). Now the beauty that God had declared to be very good is in danger as he begins to tamper with it!

Now go ahead a few more chapters and you find that the devil has indeed been busy. The world has become a wicked place, so much so that God declares He will destroy it in 120 years (Genesis 6:1-7). But hope is again restored, for we then read of Noah, who in the midst of a wicked world stands out like a champion! In the midst of all of this wickedness, he found grace in the eyes of God, for he was a “just man and perfect in his generations” and walked with God (6:8-9). Such a man who could lead his family from destruction to salvation as we find he did in subsequent chapters (see also 1 Pet. 3:20). But just as you get your hopes up you read chapter 9 and find that this great servant of God fell into the sin of drunkenness, even causing one of his sons, whom he had brought through the flood, to sin!

Now it is at about this point that I can't help

myself – I need to know what happens! Can man ... can I ... ever overcome the influence of the wicked one?! This becomes even more important as I realize that the devil, who has wreaked such havoc on God's creation, is out to get ME (1 Peter 5:8). So I peek. I turn to the last book of the Bible and read the following:

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (Revelation 17:14)

Now I know the truth – no matter how many ups and downs, victories and defeats I read of, I know that we can be victorious! We can beat the devil! As I continue reading I find that many other passages in this marvelous Book give the same assurance (cf. James 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-11). This is obviously a promise God wants us to know!

But the question looms - a question I MUST find the answer to – for MY eternal soul depends on it!

How Can We Beat the Devil!?

When I go “back to the end” I notice a very important fact. The Lamb overcomes, and I too if I am with him! (Revelation 17:14). I even realize now that the promise made from God about the seed of woman who would bruise the serpent's head is in reference to this very same Jesus – He is the promised seed (Genesis 3:15; cf. Galatians 3:16). In Revelation 12:10-11 I find another important fact – it is the power of His blood that makes it possible! (No wonder I love to sing the song, “There is power ... wonder working power, in the blood of the lamb”!).

But as often happens, one question leads to another. Now that I know victory can be mine if I am with Him, and that the victory is dependent on His blood,

“How Then Do I Contact the Blood?”

Looking back to the Bible (and how could I look anywhere else!?, (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17)), I find that God has given me plain statements as to how this comes about. In Romans 6:3-4 I read:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Of course God makes it clear that obedience to this commandment is important.

- He commanded it (not only here, but in several other places (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:21; etc), and since He commanded it I cannot really love Him if I do not obey His will in this matter (John 14:15). In fact I cannot even truly call Jesus Lord without obedience (Luke 6:46).

- God also made it plain that this command is for a specific purpose relating to my victory over the devil. It is to be saved (Mark 16:16), for the remission of my sins (Acts 2:38), to wash away my sins (Acts 22:16) and to put me into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27) where all spiritual blessings are found (Ephesians 1:3).

But the passage says we are baptized into His death – why is that important? In John 19 we read of the horrors of the death of Christ on the cross. As you get to verse 31 you find that the soldiers, trying to appease the Jews and not let anyone remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, were breaking the legs of those on the crosses to speed their deaths. “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and

forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:33-34). While baptism has such marvelous truths attached with it as we have already seen, this one is often overlooked. It was in His death that Jesus shed His blood. It is by baptism that I enter into His death – this is how I contact the precious blood so that my sins may be forgiven.

But do I just stop then – is Bible baptism the end of the battle with the devil? No! I still need the blood as I strive to "walk in the light, as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7). The devil has not given up trying to destroy my hope of eternal life, so I must keep walking. If we stop walking, the devil will surely catch and devour us (1 Peter 5:8). But as we walk in the light we are sober and vigilant against his wiles.

Note some of the things which those who are washed in the blood, walking with Christ can find that will help us in the battle to beat the devil:

- Submit to God... Draw nigh to God (James 4:7-8)
It was the Lord Himself who said that not everyone who simply called him "Lord, Lord" would be saved, but it would be those who submit to God's will, who "doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21-23).
- Resist the devil (James 4:7)
While God is all powerful, He expects us to do our part in overcoming the devil (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13). Thankfully He has given us the knowledge and means to fight this battle. In Ephesians 6:10-11 we are told "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10-11). Isn't it great that Jesus Himself used this same armour as He battled the devil (Matthew 4:1-11)! But clearly there is more to this battle than just remembering

a few words. We must apply these things to our lives (Psalm 119:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; James 1:21-22).

But when we do these things - the devil cannot overcome us! He must flee from us (James 4:7-8) – I am victorious ... I can beat the devil!

We either beat the devil through Him, through His blood as we walk in the light with Him, or we are overcome - without Him.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter 1:18-25).

God made His choice, His desire for you, through all eternity. What is your choice?

This tract is condensed from a lesson presented at the 27th Annual Mid-West Lectures, "God's Precious Promises." To hear or view the complete lesson go to www.kc-cofc.org/2009Lectures.htm or contact the 39th Street Church of Christ 15331 East 39th Street Independence, MO 64055-4240 USA

God's Precious Promises...

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