The Doom of Satan

Romans 16:17-20

Introduction

Max Lucado tells of an interesting encounter he had with a member of an eastern cult in the Miami airport. 'sir' – she called out to him. He stopped to see what she wanted.

She explained that she was a teacher and her school was celebrating an anniversary. In honor of the event, they were giving away a book which explained their philosophy.

Max writes: 'She placed a copy in my hand. It was a thick hardback with a mystic cover. A guru looking guy was sitting cross legged with his hands folded. I thanked her for the book and began to walk away.

'Sir' – I stopped – I knew what was coming.
'Would you like to make a donation to our school?'
'No' – I responded – 'but thanks for the book'
I began to walk away – she followed and tapped me on the shoulder. 'Sir – everyone so far has given a donation in appreciation for the gift.'

'That's good' – I replied – 'but I don't think I will. But I appreciate the book.' I turned and began to walk away. I hadn't even taken a step however, when she spoke again. This time she was agitated.

'Sir' – and she opened her purse so I could see her collection of dollars and coins. 'if you were sincere in your gratitude you could give a donation in appreciation.'

Max: 'That was low. That was sneaky. Insulting. I'm not usually terse but I couldn't resist.
'That may be true' – I responded – 'but if you were sincere you wouldn't give me a gift and then ask me to pay for it.'

She reached for the book but I tucked it under my arm and walked away.

The Bible is filled with warnings about false teachers and false religions:

Paul spoke to the Corinthians of some who were false apostles / deceitful workers – who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness [II Cor. 11:13-15]

Jesus told us to beware of false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothing [Matt. 7:15]

Peter warned of teachers introducing destructive heresies [II Pet. 2:1]

John tells us that many deceivers have gone out into the world – who do not acknowledge Christ as coming in the flesh – this is the deceiver and the antichrist [II John 7]

Why do we find such warnings in the Bible?

It has to do with the nature of the spiritual conflict taking place in our world

The battle between good and evil / God and Satan

One realm of that conflict is over truth / error

Luther: 'We are here in the devil's kingdom, just as a pilgrim arrives at an inn, where he knew all in the house were robbers. If he must enter, he will not fail to arm himself in the best way he can devise.'

We are to arm ourselves with God's truth – the sword of the spirit

Wherever God sows his truth – the devil is quick to sow error and confusion

II Corinthians 4:4 - 'the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.'

I John 5:19 - '. . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.'

The great message of the Bible is that God is redeeming a people out of this world – making them a new creation in Christ Jesus / giving them a love for truth / and sanctifying them in that truth

Another of the great messages of the bible is that evil will not last forever - - - it is of a temporary nature – it is an intrusion into God's good creation

False teaching / deception / the lies of Satan - - - will one day become a thing of the past

When we read to the end of the Bible - - - we find an amazing picture in the future - - - where the devil himself will be seized / rendered inactive - - - confined to the abyss – while Christ reigns over a kingdom of righteousness – and Satan sentenced to the lake of fire for eternity

We may have a hard time envisioning such a world – where evil is vanquished / sin and death become a thing of the past – but Paul tells us it is coming

Paul points to this day when he says:

Romans 16:20 - 'And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.'

Scripture holds up a newspaper from the future - - - with the headline: 'We win'

In actuality – have already won - - - b/c our victory is grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

I. The Schismatics – vv. 17-18

Here Paul launches back into some teaching dealing with schismatics / false teachers

Part of apostolic love is warning and cautioning those we love about dangers that will present themselves

Warnings are positive expressions of care

As parents of teens – we might say:

'Don't stay out past 11 O'clock - - - nothing good happens after 11!'

Don't get in a car with someone who's been drinking

Don't go to meet anyone from an online encounter – [particularly girls] not safe

Proverbs 1:10 – 'My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.'

John MacArthur: 'It is the nature of love to warn against harm to those whom it loves. The greatest harm against believers is that which undermines God's truth in which they live.'

Paul is warning about those who disregard the teaching of the Apostles

For a warning to be useful – it needs to be in front of the danger

When I was a teenager – taking Driver's Ed. – at the end of the class - we were shown a short movie – raw video footage of car accidents – some alcohol related / some not

We saw the mangled cars – police officers on the scene – people crying - ambulance taking people away – some with the sheet pulled over their head

The point was – this is a warning – to you young drivers
'If you drive carelessly – don't pay attention to stop signs / run red lights / if you drink and drive - - - recognize that people get hurt in accidents – even killed'

Our DOT – likes to keep a running total on a sign above the Interstate - - - X number of people killed so far in traffic accidents

It's a warning for our good – cautioning us to slow down / etc.

Paul gives a warning here to the church at Rome

The warning had to do with false teaching / teachers – those who teach something contrary to the apostles – lead people into different views

Rob Bell – used to be a pastor at Mars Hill Church in Michigan – church was growing – his 'ministry' was taking off - - - Time magazine voted him one of the 100 most influential people in the world - 2011 - - - it likely had something to do with the fact that he had recently written a book: 'Love Wins' [secular media loves a good heretic]

Rob Bell: "I believe that Jesus's story is first and foremost about the love of God for every single one of us. It is a stunning, beautiful, expansive love, and it is for everybody everywhere.'

That sounds smooth and soothing – I like this doctrine

Paul says: 'be careful'

Rob Bell: 'At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church have been a number who insist that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins and all will be reconciled to God.' [p. 109]

He's good / He doesn't use a lot of words like that John MacArthur guy

He writes in a conversational style

But his teaching is wrong / and is ultimately deadly

He was teaching universalism which has been held by various fringe groups and theological liberals essentially from the early days of the church

Bell seems to give his motive in writing the book – which became a bestseller

His motive was not from exegeting the text of Scripture – but rather from how he felt about the doctrine

Rob Bell: 'Telling a story in which billions of people spend forever somewhere in the universe trapped in a black hole of endless torment and misery with no way out isn't a very good story.' [p. 110]

That's it – Hell is not a good story – 'God should give us a better story'

I don't think car crashes are very good stories – but they are very real - -- how I feel about them - doesn't mean they won't happen to me or to other people

Paul told Timothy

II Timothy 4:2 - 'Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.'

II Timothy 4:3, 4 – 'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.'

The wise listen to the word of God – heed the warnings

Jesus once said that many were on the broad road that leads to destruction – He was uttering sober truth

Matthew 7:13, 14 – 'Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.'

People we meet every day – are on one or the other of these two roads – You and I are on one or the other of these two roads

Scripture presents the matters of eternity with a degree of urgency / and the stakes are high - - - choose wisely now – or bear the consequences later

C.S. Lewis: 'A safe god, a tame god, soon proclaims himself to any sound mind as a fantasy. I have met no people who fully disbelieved in Hell and also had a living and life-giving belief in heaven.' [Letters to Malcolm, p. 76]

Paul says the Romans are to avoid those who cause division contrary to what they have been taught

The Danger: Satan does not show up with a pentagram on his forehead – carrying a satanic bible and smelling like a dead goat - - - he may look rather accomplished / successful / intellectual / influential

The Apostle John wrote about the Gnostics – who would later cause trouble for the church

Gnostics believed the body was evil / the spirit was good - - - so Jesus could not have truly been a man – He only seemed human

II John 7 - 'For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.'

False teachers either wittingly or unwittingly are being used of Satan

God gave us one reason why He allows false prophets to arise – back in the book of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 - 'If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, "let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them," You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.'

As Christians – we are tested – as to our faith

Will we listen to God and his warning – or to the voice of the false prophet who has departed from Scripture

The true believers will pass the test - / hold fast to the truth - - - and the false will be led astray

I John 2:24 – 'As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.'

II. Wise in Good – Innocent in Evil – v. 19

Matthew 10:16 - 'Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves.'

I Corinthians 14:20 – 'Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.'

When it comes to the world's curriculum on evil – we should flunk out

Normally – if you have to repeat kindergarten 2 or 3 times – not a good sign

But – if we are talking about evil – we should fail that class

I just don't get how to take the Lord's name in vain

You hear some co-workers swearing up a storm – 'I don't get that – that's not for me'

I don't know how to commit adultery - - - that's not part of my Christian DNA

We are to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil [v. 19]

Lisa Terkhurst of Proverbs 31 ministries had a good example of this with her teenage son who had filled out his first job application form – and he asked her to look it over and see if he filled it out right.

She had to laugh when she saw that on the application where it said 'sex' – he didn't put M or F – but instead wrote – 'no'

'wise in good / innocent in evil'

III. Crushing Satan – v. 20

Satan is the source of evil in this world –

- He was there in the Garden w/ Adam and Eve / tempting / enticing- - - the instigator behind the Fall
- He was there when Cain rose up and killed Abel
- He was there when the world of Noah's day became so violent and wicked that God decided to send the flood
- He was there in Sodom and Gomorrah where the stench of immorality rose to heaven and provoked God to destroy it with fire
- He entered into Judas – who then went and betrayed Jesus

Paul says: 'Don't worry – Satan will soon get his due.'

Why did God create Satan?

Satan is a fallen angel

John Piper: 'God did not find sin in the world and then make a plan to remedy it. He had the plan before the ages, and that plan was for the glory of sin-conquering grace thru the death of Jesus Christ.'

Hell was originally created for the devil and his angels

Matthew 25:41 – 'Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Jesus is the serpent crusher

While Satan is a doomed creature – we still fight against Him now

We are to put on the armor!

The language of spiritual warfare is all over the NT

Ephesians 6:11 - 'Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.'

I Peter 5:8 - 'Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.'

We are to live in a state of alertness – Satan is out there trying bring us into sin

For ultimate peace to exist in God's universe – Satan must be destroyed / he has to be crushed / evil must be obliterated

There is an allusion to Genesis 3:15

God spoke to the serpent

Genesis 3:15 - 'And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.'

Jesus came into this world – of the seed of the woman - - - a reference to the virgin birth – and he accomplished the defeat of Satan

John 12:31 - 'Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.'

A snake cut in half – even though its dying or dead - - - its nervous system can still trigger a bite reflex for hours after being chopped up

Satan's head will soon be crushed

One of the final battles involving Satan takes place during the Tribulation

Revelation 12:7-9 - 'And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.'

Revelation 12:12 - 'Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.'

He had 3 ½ years left – mid pt of the Trib.

The message of Scripture is that Satan's days are numbered

There is a day on God's calendar – crushing Satan's head

The message to Christians: 'hang on – persevere in the faith – you are on the winning team'

You may come limping into church some weeks – wounded from the previous week's battle
Maybe you just need to sing God's praises
Maybe you need to confess some sin – receive the healing balm of God's forgiveness

Perhaps you have been battered by earthly trials / maybe Satan has drained the gas out of your tank – and you're running on fumes / given you a black eye

And you come to church - - - and you hear Scripture

II Corinthians 12:9 – 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.'

Suddenly your cup is filled to overflowing – and you are ready for another day / another battle

Conclusion
We might lose a couple of battles but we win the war

Christ is coming

We are those who eagerly await the coming of our Savior

Michael W. Smith once wrote a song – 'End of the Book'

When things get bad and you can't stand to look
It's time to read to the end of the book
Don't put it down till you get to the end
When Jesus comes and His kingdom begins