

Charismatics and the Sovereignty of Satan

Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-6; Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 16:23; Mark 1:12; Mark 4:22-27; Mark 8:33; Luke 11:14-20; Luke 22:31; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 John 4:4; Revelation 12:7-12; Revelation 20:7-10

A121

I received an interesting letter the other day. It came from some people who came to Grace [Community] Church from a Charismatic church—a very large, prominent Charismatic church.

That's quite a jump—to leave there and come to Grace Church. The only thing they knew in their church about me was that I didn't have the power of the Holy Spirit. That's all they knew—that I didn't believe [in the continuation of the gifts], so I didn't have the power of the Holy Spirit.

They didn't know much else [about our church], but as circumstances indicated they came to Grace, on a visit, and they never left. . . . There are a number of people who were in this group that came, and one of the ladies wrote a really interesting letter to me. It is an amazingly well-written letter . . . [And] in the letter, this is what was laid out. When you think of the [broader] Charismatic movement, you think of speaking in tongues, or healings, or Benny Hinn knocking people down, and things like that. But there are some underlying things in the Charismatic worldview that are really very terrifying. And she pointed this out in the letter.

She said:

You know we lived all our life in this movement and one thing dominates that movement, and it is that Satan is sovereign. If you get sick, it was the devil. If your child gets sick, it was the devil. The devil made your child sick. And even if your child dies Satan somehow got the victory. If your spouse, your husband or your wife gets cancer, that's the devil that did that. If you had an accident, the devil did that. If you lost your job, the devil did that. If things didn't go the way you wanted them to go in your company or your family and you wound up with a loss of job or a divorce—the devil did all of that. The devil has to be bound and so you have got to learn these formulas, because you have got to bind the devil or he is really going to control everything in your life.

The devil dominates everything, and he is assisted by this massive force of demons who also have to be dealt with, and you have got to do everything you can to try to overcome these spiritual powers, and they are invisible and they are fast and they are powerful, and they are really impossible for you to deal with on any permanent basis, so it is an ongoing, incessant struggle with the devil.

The lady in the letter said, in summary, “We lived our whole lives thinking that everything that went wrong in the entire universe was basically because of the devil. The devil is really sovereign in everything and even God, along with us, is really struggling like crazy to overcome the devil.”

She went on to explain how it affected her:

I lived with heart palpitations, panic attacks, anxiety, frightening dreams—waking up in the middle of the night terrified that the devil might be doing something to my child while he's lying in his bed. Just living in this constant terror of what Satan was doing; that when the wrong guy gets elected—Satan put him there. That when the society goes a certain direction it is all under the control of Satan. Satan is really the sovereign of everything and it is really difficult to get control of him—even God is up there wringing His hands trying to get control of this deal.

I lived with that fear and that terror because I took my church seriously. . . .I came to Grace [Community Church] and one thing just totally shocked me. You said that:

The fact is, God is in control of everything! . . . When you get sick, or when somebody gets cancer, or when something goes wrong in the world, or when you lose your job, that is not outside the tolerances of God, that is not outside the purposes of God, in fact, God works all things together for good.

This was absolutely earth shaking. This was a total change for us, and the difference we found was so powerful that it totally changed the way we think about life.

That is the issue. We do not believe Satan is in charge of history; we believe God is in charge. That changes everything. That takes all the panic out. I can honestly say that I have never had a panic attack. I have never awakened in the night worrying what the devil might be doing, because God has not only conquered Satan, but God has put Satan under our feet. Scripture says, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). So we know God controls history. And this might surprise you, the devil is God's servant. If you want to read a great book, read, **Erwin Lutzer's book on Satan**, in which he points that out so capably.

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