

It's Time to Talk About the Devil

Colossians 2:13-15

13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Colossians 2:13-15)

- Verses 14 and 15 are about the cross, but verse 15 is difficult to understand.
- In the ESV Bible under the phrase “rulers and authorities” a footnote says: “Probably demonic rulers and authorities.”
 - And they were “disarmed.” But how did the cross “disarm” these rulers and authorities?

A lesson about Satan's power: Satan vs. The High Priest Joshua (Zech 3:1-5)

- Satan is ready to **accuse** Joshua—and apparently his accusation would be correct (3:4).
 - Satan is the great accuser: “... for the accuser [Satan] of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.” (Rev 12:10)
- Satan's power is accusation, *both true and false*
 - And his true accusations (or *mostly* true) are the most powerful
 - Who rightly accuses you and me? God's law does (Rom 2:12; John 5:45). Also, our consciences do (Rom 2:15). And sometimes Satan does!—but with malicious intent.

- Joshua, though dirty and sinful, is made clean and given new garments by the Lord. Satan's true accusation was not the end of the story. Same for us in Christ, see 2 Cor 5:21.
- Satan's *true* accusations against Joshua were defeated. Satan was 'disarmed'!

So back to our passage in Colossians 2:

- 2:14: We have sinned against God's righteous laws, but forgiven in the cross.
- 2:15: Meanwhile, Satan and his demons were disarmed in that their true but malicious accusations against us *come to nothing*. They are “triumphed over” because Christ secured our forgiveness.
 - There could be other authorities in this world who maliciously accuse believers, too. (Rev 17). Perhaps this is why Paul's language (“rulers and authorities”) isn't clearly and solely demonic.

What's the power against the forces of evil? The Name of Jesus! (Acts 19:13)

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. Read Zechariah 3:
 - How do we know Satan could accuse Joshua with *true* accusations?
 - What is the Lord's solution to Joshua's iniquity and filth?
 - How is similar to what Christ does for us?
 - How do you respond to true accusations, whatever their source? How should you respond?
2. Read Colossians 2:13-15:
 - According to verse 14, what did the cross do?
 - According to verse 15, what did the cross do? Try to explain this.
 - If the authorities and rulers have been “disarmed”, what do you have to fear? Do you feel this way? Pray for believers around the world that they would not fear.