



There must be many more 'gleaming facets' belonging to the 'Jewel of our Faith', the Cross. However, this series is ending with the certainty that Jesus' death was a victory: His self-sacrifice defeated Satan. **Revelation 12: 10 – 12.**

### 1. What or who is the devil?

- Contemporary Western culture seems to either ignore or ridicule the idea of a real devil, or conversely to see the work of the devil in every little problem or disaster encountered in life: neither perspective is Biblical.
- The devil is a spiritual being who stands in opposition to God, to God's purposes and to God's people.
- Jesus was tempted by the devil in the desert at the beginning of His ministry (*and did not succumb*). He tells the disciples He saw the devil being banished from heaven – **Luke 10:18** – and He knew he was soon to face death in order to drive the devil out – **John 12:31**.

### 2. How does Satan work?

- **Deception**
  - Jesus tells us the devil is a liar – **John 8:43-4** – and the 'best' lies are 99% truth e.g.:
  - In the Garden of Eden he confuses Adam and Eves' thinking by taking the truth and twisting it, just a little bit: 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?"' **Genesis 3:1 and Gen. 2: 16-17.**
  - The devil is a chronic, habitual liar. He makes us question God and paves the way for the next stage:
- **Temptation**
  - In the desert, at the beginning of His ministry, the devil tempted a seriously hungry Jesus to prove His divinity and turn stones into bread – **Matthew 4:1-4**.
  - The devil is tempting us when we wonder whether Jesus is really watching over us all the time, does he really know what I'm doing and what I'd rather like to be doing? And we do it anyway and enjoy it for a bit until guilt overcomes us and we crumble ..... Then the devil deals the killer blow:
- **Accusation**
  - Satan kicks us in the ribs when we are down, persuading us that we're too evil to be loved and accepted by Christ and destroying the confidence we had in Him.
  - We end up in a descending spiral of Spiritual oppression and depression, because Satan is opposed to God, to God's purposes and to God's people.

### 3. How does the crucifixion of Christ give us Victory over the devil's schemes?

- Christ fulfils God's promise to the Jews of a new covenant which restores them to Him. They receive a new heart and a new Spirit within them: God's laws are in their minds and written on their hearts. **Ezekiel 36: 26-7, 36 and Jeremiah 31: 31-4.**
- Before He died, Jesus comforts His disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit **John Chs. 14-16**. He explains He has to 'go away' (i.e. die) and will come back. In **Acts 2** that happens with the coming of the Holy Spirit to those who believed in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. Christ's death released the Counsellor or the Spirit of **TRUTH** to us.
- This internal (and eternal) Spirit teaches us, warns us, helps us to stand against temptations, changes our desires and gives us strength to conduct our lives in a Godly way. He draws us to the Bible, the Word of God.
- At the Last Supper Jesus refers to the bread as His body and to the wine as His 'blood of the new covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'. We remember His sacrifice when we take communion.
- If we're despairing about our standard of discipleship, it's good to remember at communion that it's not about 'me' but all about Jesus, who is continually interceding for us.

### 4. Christ's death wins us Victory over Satan. Romans 8: 31-39

If God is for us, who can be against us?....It is God who justifies us.....Who can lay any charge against God's elect?.....We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.....(nothing) will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen!

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#### Points to Ponder

1. Satan's opposition to God accounts for the stigmatisation, persecution and genocide Christians are experiencing.
2. Verse 12 of our reading says Satan is filled with fury because he knows his time is short and verse 17 speaks of his rage against Christians. There is such a stark contrast between persecutions abroad and our own experience in the UK.
3. Christ gives us victory over sin and over Satan! He makes us more than conquerors ..... what a gift!