

Evening Service - Mr. Donald Macaulay

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Preacher: Mr. Donald Macaulay

[0 : 0 0] Let's turn back then to the chapter that we read, Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 2, page 965 of the Pew Bible, and we can read again at verse 10, actually at verse 9.

For this is why I wrote that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs. And particularly this evening, I want to concentrate on verse 11, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs.

This is Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, and to understand it fully, we need to be familiar with the first letter. And if you have a memory of the first letter, you will remember that Paul had written correcting many, many things that had gone wrong in the church in Corinth.

And you remember that among that, there was the celebration of the Lord's Supper and various other things, of factions within the congregation as well. But there seems to have been one particular sin that one person was involved in, which had caused immense trouble within the congregation, and he had written about that. And now he is sending a second letter, having received the news of what the congregation has done. He has received the second letter, where he pleads that it is now time to forgive this particular person. And that we saw from verse 5 onwards. And it appears from what we read, that the sin was sexual. If you go back to 1 Corinthians, you can see the background to that very, very clearly. But he's addressing a wider issue here. And the wider issue is the things that can cause division within a congregation. And Paul is very, very clear that any forgiveness that is given, as we read in verse 10, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ. And he gives us a secondary reason, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Now, I want to concentrate this evening particularly on the person of Satan. And that may perhaps surprise some of you. It's not often these days that we hear a sermon about Satan. And perhaps you're here this evening, and you don't want to hear a sermon about Satan. And if that's the way you feel, then I think you have a problem. Anyone who goes to war, one of the first principles of warfare is know your enemy.

[4 : 0 1] Know your enemy. And we see extremely clearly, as we have been studying in our midweek Bible studies in the letter to the Ephesians, how Paul tells us to put on the whole armor of God.

And the reason that he tells us that is because we are not fighting against ordinary flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities of the air, the spirit of darkness.

And therefore, when we are fully armed, we need to know what Satan's designs are, so that we are not to be outwitted by Satan.

Or as the AV puts it, lest Satan get an advantage of us. An advantage of us.

Now, it's a very solemn subject to be dealing with how Satan influences and deals with the Lord's people.

[5 : 1 1] And I suppose the first way that we need to tackle this is to be clear. Who exactly is Satan?

Paul had spent 18 months in Corinth. You remember that the Lord had told him in Acts chapter 18 that he had many people in that city.

And that was on his second missionary journey. He visits it again on his third missionary journey. But he had seen many, many things going on.

If you're familiar at all with the history of the city of Corinth, you'll know that it was a particular center of idol worship. It was a major city, a city of trade.

And people came from all over the world, or the known world at the time, not only to study in Corinth, but to worship in Corinth. And the worship was to one of the most famous of the Greek gods or goddesses.

[6 : 14] You can find out for yourself who that was if you're interested in that back history. So, our first question that we need to answer is, Who exactly is Satan?

Well, Scripture tells us very clearly. Turn with me to the book of Job in chapter 1 in the Old Testament.

The book of Job in chapter 1, page 417. And we can read it verse 6.

And we're going to be looking at various passages in the Old Testament that will help us to put things in context here. The book of Job is almost certainly the oldest book in the Old Testament. It's probably the first written book. It's contemporary with Abraham. And almost certainly was written at the same time as Abraham was alive, although in a different place, a different part of the world.

[7 : 23] And we see in verse 6, the first parts, the first five verses, tells us of who Job is. A man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was fearless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

And then we get his family and his wealth, etc., and so on. But then in verse 6, we are given a vision into the court of heaven.

Now, this is actually quite amazing. Who told the writer about this? When you think of it, what we have from verse 6 down to verse 12, let's read it first of all until we see what it says.

Now, there came a day when the sons of God— and the sons of God is a term that's used in the book of Job for the angels— when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And that, again, is Jehovah. And Satan came also among them. That is the first mention by name in Scripture of Satan.

[8 : 35] What does the term Satan mean? In the Hebrew, it means adversary, the one who is against something or other.

And particularly in this term, the one who is against God's people. Satan came also among them. The Lord said to Satan, From where have you come?

Satan answered the Lord and said, From going up and down and through on the earth and from walking up and down on it. And the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job? There is none like him on earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.

Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has on every side?

You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has and he will curse you to your face. And the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your hand.

[9 : 43] So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Now, that is quite a fascinating passage and it's followed by a second passage, which is very similar in chapter 2, when Satan comes back again to present himself among the angels in heaven.

And when you think of it, it's quite amazing that Satan is allowed to present himself among the angels in heaven. But nevertheless, the word of God tells us clearly that that is what happens. But you notice certain things here. First of all, he's not allowed to speak until God speaks to him. And secondly, he is not allowed to act until God gives him permission.

And these two things are extremely important for us to remember. There is nothing that Satan is allowed to do without God's permission.

And that should be a comforting thought to all of the Lord's people today. We see in the second section in chapter 2 at the beginning that he gives the same answer.

[11 : 03] God says again to him, Where have you come from? In verse 2, and he answers, From going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down upon it. And then the same consideration of Job.

And this time, he's allowed to attack Job and his health. But you notice that he is not allowed to kill Job. That is very clear.

God tells him, Sorry, the page is stuck. God tells him very clearly. In verse 6, The Lord said to Satan, Behold, he is in your hand.

Only spare his life. Only spare his life. And it would seem from that, as far as we understand, that Satan has no power to inflict death upon anyone.

Death is the result of sin in the Garden of Eden. And of course, most of us will believe and think very clearly that the first time that we see Satan in action is in the Garden of Eden.

[12:10] But he's not named there as Satan. He is named as the serpent. And many people question, How do we get from the serpent to Satan?

And again, we've got to go and look very carefully in Genesis 3 at what God says to the serpent and how he tells them that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent.

Now, that's a very significant verse. I don't know if you've ever really thought of it in detail before. But think of it.

The seed of the woman. We know nowadays, biologically, that it's not the woman who provides the seed. It is the man.

The man's seed fertilizes the egg in the woman. But Scripture says here, the seed of the woman.

[13:12] To whom is it referring? It's referring, of course, to the implanting by the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

And the one who was to come and to defeat Satan in his various attacks upon the earth. And you will remember that Satan tempts the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus speaks of Satan several times. And he says very clearly that in Luke 10 and verse 18 that he saw Satan fall from heaven as lightning.

Now, that tells us again that Satan at one time was in heaven. There are many people who have a picture now of the days of Satan being only in hell and ruling in hell.

But there's no mention of that in Scripture. Quite the opposite. Hell is always mentioned as a place which is prepared for Satan and his angels. But not that he is there at the moment.

[14:31] And as I mentioned Satan and his angels, the question that comes up with how many angels are along with Satan? How many angels fell? Along with Satan?

Well, Revelation 12.4 tells us that the tail of the dragon and the dragon of Satan, we see that clearly identified through Revelation. A third of the stars were taken from heaven by his tail is the way that John writes it.

Now, if that means that a third of the angels who were created fell along with Satan, then he has an awful lot of little helpers, an awful lot of fallen angels who are carrying out his work with him.

And we'll come back to that later. So where did Satan come from and where did he fall? Well, we've seen ample evidence already that Satan was an angel.

And there are many who think that he was, in fact, an archangel. One of two. There are only three angels mentioned in Scripture.

[15:48] There's the archangel Michael who is mentioned in the book of Daniel and then again in the letter of Jude. And then there's Gabriel, of course. And the third one is Satan.

Now, here's a very interesting factor for you. Of all the known names of angels, and we only know the name of seven angels.

Now, there are some, and I'm quite happy to argue the toss with you later on this one. There are some who will dispute that and say that there are only three angels mentioned.

But if you go to the book of Enoch, which you won't find in this Bible at all. It's an apocryphal book. That is one of the books that was rejected as part of the canon of Scripture many, many years ago because it was deemed to be not inspired.

But in the book of Enoch in chapter 20, and you remember Enoch as the Old Testament figure who never died, who was taken, one of the two Old Testament figures who was taken bodily into heaven.

[17:12] In chapter 20, seven angels are mentioned. I'll just mention them because there's a reason behind it. There's Michael, there's Raphael, there's Gabriel, there's Uriel, Sariel, Rechiel, and Remiel.

Now, if you notice something that all these have in common, all of them end in L, E-L. The two that we have in Scripture, Michael and Gabriel, also end in E-L.

And in Hebrew, E-L was part of the name of God that he gave to Moses at the burning bush, I am that I am.

The I am. L. Satan's name does not end in L. He never belonged to God from the moment that he fell.

And there are many who say that this was, Satan was the name that he was given after he was thrust out of heaven. That he had a different name in heaven.

[18 : 26] And that name was Lucifer. Lucifer. But you remember again that Lucifer does not end in E-L. But if you research things carefully, you'll find that the name Lucifer is actually coming from Scripture.

If you turn with me for a second to Isaiah chapter 14. Sorry, we're going to have to go back and forward in a few passages here to clarify this.

Isaiah chapter 14. It's on page 578. And reading at verse 12.

This is the king of Babylon. A warning against the king of Babylon.

And you remember again how Babylon is used frequently in Scripture, especially in Revelation, as the terminology of the kingdom of Satan. But if you see in verse 12.

[19 : 39] How are you fallen from heaven, O day star, son of dawn? How you are cut down on the ground, you who laid the nations low. You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God.

I will set my throne on high. I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high.

But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. Now, the point about this, not only of the fall of Satan, but if you're using the authorized version, you'll find that what it says in verse 12 is, How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of dawn?

And in actual fact, that is a mistranslation. The word Lucifer, Latin meaning de star, as it's put in the newer versions now, was taken from the Septuagint.

That was the first translation into Latin. And from a copying error, from then on, it was inserted in that verse in Isaiah.

[20 : 59] Satan's name is not Lucifer, nor was it ever his name. But there are those who still believe that and call him by this name.

And then, to put that together with, we have another section in the prophecy of Ezekiel. If you turn with me to Ezekiel, sorry, we're going back and forwards here, but it's necessary to get the full picture.

Ezekiel chapter 28. It's on page 714. And at verse 12.

In fact, we can read from verse 11, we'll see the same thing again. A lament over the king of Tyre. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, Thus says the Lord God.

Now, the king of Tyre is synonymous with Babylon in this case. It's just another synonym for that. But it's what follows that really matters. You were the signet of perfection.

[22 : 17] Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. Now, the king of Tyre couldn't possibly have been in Eden, the garden of Eden.

Every precious stone was your covering. And then there's a list of the stones. On the day that they were created, they were prepared. In verse 14, you were an anointed guardian cherub.

I placed you. You were on the holy mountain of God. In the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till unrighteousness was found in you.

And so on. And if you look at verse 16, in the middle of it, So I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was proud because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. And so on.

[23 : 28] Now, those passages make it very clear to us, first of all, that Satan is a created being. And secondly, that because of his sin, he was cast out of heaven.

And many people ask a question and say, well, when was that? When were the angels created? And the answer to that is we don't know.

We don't know exactly when the angels were created. Some think that they were created on the same day as Adam and Eve were created. Others think that they were created before God started creating the actual world as we know it.

And they base that on a verse in the book of Job that says, when God is questioning Job and says, where were you when I laid the foundations of the world? And when the sons of God sang for joy, the angels singing for joy at the creation.

And it would seem from that verse that the angels were created, therefore, before the actual creation of the world that we read in Genesis, in the beginning of Genesis, took place.

[24 : 50] However, that's disputable. There are many who interpret that and think very differently about that. And again, you have to make up your own mind on that. But it doesn't really matter.

The thing is that we're shown very clearly from Scripture that we have an adversary, a fallen angel, maybe a cherub.

And you remember the cherubs. It was the cherubs who were looking over the Ark of the Covenant, looking down on the mercy seat and looking on the blood that was sprinkled on it as well.

The cherubs were those who were closest to the presence of God. And there are those who take from that and the use of the word cherub that Satan was in a very high position in heaven.

Possibly one of two archangels, many think, along with Michael. In Peru, over many years there, we came across a very peculiar belief that existed in the evangelical church.

[26 : 05] I'd never heard it before and I've never heard it since. But they believed that Satan had been the master of music in heaven. And if you go back to the passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel, again, don't have time to look at them just now again, you'll find there that it refers to viols and tablets and musical instruments.

And that's where they take that idea from. Maybe it's right, I have no idea. And to be honest, I don't really care. It doesn't really matter very much whether he was or he wasn't.

The fact is that he is a fallen angel and he is the enemy of the Lord's people. And this is, again, time is passing by, this is what we need to look at now is what exactly are Satan's devices?

This is what Paul says, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan for we are not ignorant of his devices. So what are the devices of Satan that we need to be very careful about so that we're not outwitted by them?

Well, I would say that firstly, and Satan's greatest success has been to convince people that he doesn't really exist. If you ask people about Satan nowadays, he's a figure of fun to most people.

[27 : 37] He's a guy with horns, et cetera, and a fork that he uses to push people into hell with and so on. And he particularly appears in his act of around Halloween time.

that is totally against the biblical picture. Biblical picture, as we saw in Job, is that Satan is going to and fro on the earth still every single day along with his little helpers.

and they are constantly attacking the Lord's people. And it's a very solemn thing to think about.

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ this evening, you are almost certainly well familiar with being attacked by Satan.

in one way or another, he will attack you in your thoughts, perhaps in your speech, in your mind. He is constantly having a go at you, in the same way as he had a go at Eve.

[28 : 53] Did God really say that? That was the question to Eve. And you notice that Eve's problem was that she couldn't resist the temptation.

Adam, on the other hand, appears to have sinned willfully. There's no word of the serpent speaking to Adam. It's Eve who tempts Adam.

And Adam sins willfully. And as he sins, as our federal head, then we are all imbued with his nature. his sinful nature. And that is the problem that we have. We are born in sin. That's what we were

saying in Psalm 51. And when we come to the point of being forgiven for our sin through the blood of the atonement, the blood of the cross, I love that word, atonement.

Break it down. At one meant with God. To be at one with God. That's what the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ does.

[30 : 10] It removes, it removes the stain of sin. It gives us the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Oh, it doesn't mean that we stop sinning.

sin. We sin daily in thought, word, and deed. Because as Paul tells us, the two natures that we have are constantly struggling, one with the other.

Satan's best device that nobody believes that he really exists, that he's a figure of fun. But yet the Lord's people know different.

And if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ this evening, you know that you are being constantly attacked by Satan. Constantly.

He is constantly making you doubt your faith. You're not good enough. So often it comes to me and he says, you get no business preaching.

[31 : 21] You get no business standing in a pulpit. Look at you. And it's very difficult at times to come to a pulpit knowing that that is absolutely true.

Were it not for the grace that is given through the forgiveness and the blood of Christ. So that's his first device.

But he's got so many others. and if he has a third of the angels fallen with him to help him, then he's got a lot of little helpers.

And there's a very interesting little book that you might like to read sometime by C.S. Lewis. I'm sure some of you have read it already, called *The Screwtape Letters*, in which an old experienced devil is giving advice to a young devil as to how to entrap Christians.

And it's well worth a read. What other things does he do? His devices? Well, it's fascinating, isn't it, that the Old Testament law tells us not to put our money to usually.

[32 : 40] And yet, we have become a country of gamblers. We gamble on the stock exchange. I'm amazed every time I go into SPAR or Tesco or any one of these at the number of people buying lottery tickets all the time.

In the vain hope that they might actually win something. Or some of them do. That's why, of course, others keep buying. There was a time when gambling and betting were not only illegal in our country, but were regarded, especially by believers, by the churches, as one of the major sins.

And yet, now it's so acceptable that it used to be that the lottery results were given on television. It's brought into our homes. And was it last week or the week before where there was a big celebration for 30 years of the lottery?

And looking at all the wonderful things that the lottery money has achieved for communities everywhere, at what cost? At what the cost to those who are addicted to gambling?

And into our society has come a culture of tolerance. We have to be politically correct, but also to be socially correct.

[34 : 16] You can't say anything nowadays without fear of being taken to court for something. You have to be very, very careful in what you say, because social media will jump down on your throat very quickly.

And if you don't watch yourself and what you say, you'll find yourself with a lawsuit. The legal profession has latched onto it as a way to make money. It's a culture that came from the United States, where they sue everyone and everything for anything.

Tolerance. Behind the tolerance, what has happened? All we have to do is look at the latest legislation that has been passed through the Houses of Parliament.

The right to die. We have put ourselves, our Parliament has put ourselves in the place of God.

And the argument is that, oh, there's so many other countries that are doing this now. Just because there are so many other places that do it, doesn't mean it's right.

[35 : 29] And you can apply that principle to so many other things that have come into our society, a broken society, a society where family values have disappeared.

We've lost our moral compass as a nation. But perhaps the biggest problem we have is exactly the same problem as Satan had.

Pride. We have so much pride in ourselves. and that is not even referring to the noxious use of the word pride nowadays in all its different contexts.

But it's this idea of me, myself, and I. If I have enough belief in myself, I can achieve anything.

That's the message that's been constantly given to us through social media.

How successful Satan has been. But then again, we have to remember the principle that we saw in the book of Job, that nothing that he does is without God's permission.

[36 : 45] And you might question, and it's a very good question, why has God allowed our society, not just ours, but throughout the whole world, to fall into such excesses, not only of values, but of sexual behavior, and so many other things.

And that's a discussion that could go on for a long time. But basically, of course, the simple reason is because of our sinful nature. But at the same time, as God allows that in his permissive will, nevertheless, he has said to us very clearly that there is a way out of this situation.

There is a way to resist Satan. Peter tells us in his letter, in 1 Peter, he says, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Resist him. The problem is that very often we don't resist him. And the hymn writer got it right as well when he put it like this.

He said, yield not to temptation for yielding is sin, not temptation.

[38 : 08] Yielding is sin. See, the problem with sin is that it's pleasurable. So much of it is pleasurable, or at least it seems to be pleasurable to us.

but for the Lord's people, it's a different situation. Being attacked by Satan should draw you closer to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. And I have to say with great compassion and great sorrow this evening that if you're not being attacked by Satan, it's because you already belong to him.

And I know it's such a solemn thing to say, because you already belong to him, because he already has you in his power. power. There is only one way to break that power, and that is through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Go and look and read how Jesus was tempted by Satan. Every single time he refutes him with scripture, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

[39 : 38] God. And that is the greatest tool that you and I have to resist Satan. Remember what he said to Peter, get thee behind me Satan.

Thou savourest not the things of God, but the things of men. And that is such a useful thing for us to remember. how often do you and I have to say that.

Get thee behind me Satan, as he attacks the Lord's people continually. Time has gone by.

It's a difficult study, the study of Satan, and to understand everything that is behind it. but be thankful for this. You have tools, you have armour, and you have weapons to resist him.

And remember that he has no power over death. Death is in the hands of God himself. It is appointed unto man wants to die, and then the judgment.

[40 : 53] That's what scripture tells us. And go to the book of Revelation and see the end of Satan and his angels.

And you see how they are cast into the pit, the bottomless pit that has been prepared for them for all eternity.

And until that day, Satan and his little helper will continue to attack the Lord's people day by day. But thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift that we have the blood of Christ to protect us. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that we are able to meditate on these things, solemn things.

And we thank you, O Lord, that the enemy of our souls, has been defeated, has been defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. And the blood that was shed cleanses from all sin.

[41 : 58] Be with us this evening as we meditate on these things. Help us, O Lord, to resist temptation, to resist the devil who seeks us as a roaring lion whom he may devour.

We pray, O Lord, that you would guide anyone here who is struggling to come to faith, that you would uphold and bless them and strengthen them. Be with us now as we conclude our worship and pardon sin through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Let us conclude by singing verses in Psalm 106 on page 382. Page 382.

We'll sing from verse 43 down to the end of the psalm. He many times delivered them, but with their counsel so they him provoked that for their sin they were brought very low.

And the last two verses, O Lord, our God, does save and gather the heathen from among, that we thy holy name may praise in a triumphant song. Blessed be Jehovah, Israel, God, to all eternity.

[43 : 13] Let all the people say, Amen. Praise to the Lord, give thee. Let us sing these verses into God's praise. Psalm 106 at verse 43, He many times delivered them.

Amen. He many times delivered them, but with their counsel so, they him provoked that for their sin they were brought very low.

yet there uplifted on he beheld when he did hear their cry, and he for them his covenant did call to memory.

after his mercy's multitude he did repent and made them to be pitied of all those who did them cautiously lead.

O Lord, our God, us save and gather the breath and from above that we thy holy name may praise in a triumphant song.

[45 : 13] bless be Jehovah Israel's God to all eternity let all the people say Amen praise to the Lord give you.

Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever Amen