

**Grace Q&A 9**

**with**

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**1) How much influence does the devil and his demons have on our lives?**

**There are different teachings on this, e.g. that by sinning you give room to the devil, or that the enemy can just come into the lives of Christians to do harm.**

**What does the message of grace tell us about this?**

- ✓ **'Satan' means 'adversary'. He is our enemy**
- ✓ **The devil is a defeated foe. And in the name of Jesus, who defeated him, we have authority over him and all demons. The place of victory is not something we work towards, but from**
- ✓ **Though defeated he is not destroyed. He is still active and has limited access to us**
- ✓ **He cannot possess a believer or cause a curse to come upon us or do injury to us**
- ✓ **Really, his only power is that of deception, as in the garden of Eden. But this is a real and serious danger, not to be taken lightly**
- ✓ **He operates through worldly philosophy, false teachers and prophets, false doctrines and untaught Christians**

**\*Nothing can come our way unless God allows it**

**\*But it does seem clear that unwise action and behaviour gives him access. Examples:**

**\*Unforgiveness – *“Be angry, and do not sin”*: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place (opportunity) to the devil’ (Eph.4:26-27); *‘Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices’ (2 Cor.2:10-11)***

**\*lack of watchfulness** – *'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world'* (1 Pet.5:8-9)

**\*Pride and self-confidence** - *'And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren"'* (Lk.22:32)

**\*Accusation (not condemnation)** – **Joshua the high priest** (Zech.3:1-2); **Job** (Job 1:6-12)

**2) Could you address 'our authority in Christ'. For years we sat under the teaching that Satan is 'under our feet' and as children of God we now have authority to claim freedom over say sickness, mental trauma etc.**

**\*'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil' (1 Jn.3:8). The word for 'destroy' here in the Greek is *luo* which does not mean to make an end of, but to loose, dissolve, break, sever, untie. Satan's authority has been loosed over our lives**

**\*We have not only been delivered from his power but brought into the realm of a new power – the power of God. *'...to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God...'* (Acts 26:18). This means we have power and authority over Satan and all demons in Jesus' name**

**\*Spiritual warfare is not a call to go to war against Satan. The war has already been won by Jesus. Trying to fight the devil is dead works**

**\*Our responsibility is to stand in that victory in His name and in the armour of God. As we do this, we exercise our authority in Jesus' name and experience the victory He purchased for us. E.g. He causes us to triumph. He makes us more than conquerors, etc.**

**\*The Bible says we experience victory through faith. The fight is the good fight of faith**

**\*Much of our spiritual authority is in relation to our personal walk. This includes dealing with the enemy's attacks upon our minds, where most spiritual warfare takes place**

**\*We also have authority over physical sickness, just as Jesus exercised this authority on earth**



**\*Not every believer is healed after prayer**

**\*Reasons given for this are sometimes neither helpful nor true**

**\*The following points have helped me to come to terms with this: 1) When people do not get healed after prayer this does not diminish our authority over sickness; 2) No one, including those who are healed, are fully healed and will not be so until we receive our resurrection bodies; 3) Sometimes God is more glorified in our weak state than when we are strong**

**\*Regardless of the fact that not all are healed we should, nonetheless, always pray for the sick knowing we have authority in Jesus' name**

**3) I noticed Moses believed in Jesus and told his followers that God 'will raise a prophet from amongst you as Myself'**

**Abraham and David also believed, but why didn't God spare Moses of a single error of hitting the rock rather than talking to it for water to come out, yet David committed many errors but received God's mercy and grace?**

**\*First, Moses was not excluded from the kingdom of God for his disobedience. He will be there with Abraham and David. He was just not permitted to lead God's people into the Promised Land**

**\*Moses was *chastened* for his disobedience. But so too were Abraham and David chastened. Those whom God loves He chastens**

**\*It might seem to us a small act of Moses smiting the rock, but it was a serious thing because of what it portrayed in type. It was like crucifying Christ a second time, implying the finished work of Christ was not enough and God was still angry with His people**

**\*This is further emphasized in that though it was the people who sinned yet it was Moses who was reprimanded by God because he struck the rock, *'It went ill with Moses on account of them; because they rebelled against His Spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips'* (Psa.106:32-33)**

**4) There is a teaching I've heard on growing in grace podcast that James and Paul disagree concerning salvation by faith alone/by works. Is there any validity to that argument? And if true how would that affect the infallibility, inerrancy of the Bible in that the Bible does not contradict itself?**

- ✓ **James:** *'You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only'* (**Jas:2:24**)
- ✓ **Paul:** *'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law'* (**Rom.3:28**), **and,** *'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified'* (**Gal.2:16**)

- ✓ **First, we know that James was not at variance with Paul on the matter of justification by faith. Both men were an integral part of the Council of Jerusalem when this doctrine was under siege. Judaizers taught that it was necessary for Gentile Christians to be circumcised and keep the law in order to be saved (Acts 15:1&5). The Church leaders came together to discuss this matter. During the Council it was unanimously resolved once and for all that we are not saved through our works but by God's grace, through faith in Christ alone (e.g. Acts 15:9-11)**

- ✓ **Paul wrote both Romans and Galatians with the express purpose of clarifying God's way of righteousness. Romans was written to explain the true nature of the gospel, i.e. we are made righteous by believing in Christ alone. Galatians was written to bring correction on this issue when false teachers were attempting to deceive new Christians into believing that it was also necessary for them to keep the law in order to stay right with God**
- ✓ **The purpose of James' epistle was not to explain the way of justification at all, but to give various exhortations on a number of issues. But as he does so he makes a statement that seems to imply that we are justified by our works**



**1) Never allow the obscure to cancel the clear**

**2) Paul is teaching about justification; James is teaching about faith. James does not throw into question whether we are justified by faith. As we have seen, he agrees with Paul that it is the only way we can be saved. What he seeks to do is to put to the test one's *profession* of faith.**

**Example. True faith is much more than making a confession or giving mental assent to something. Even the devils believe that God is real. But are they saved? No! Genuine faith leads a person to put their trust entirely in the finished work of Christ on the cross for salvation**

**3) Paul is concerned with justification *before God*. James, however, is concerned with a person's profession of faith being justified (or verified) *before man*. He says, '*Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works*' (James 2:18). It is only when we grasp this we see that Abraham was justified by God a long time before he offered up Isaac; in fact, even before Isaac was born (Gen.15:6). But his obedience faltered many times leaving us asking, 'Did he really believe?' God knew all along that he was a true believer, and justified him the moment he believed. But an onlooker would be left wondering. Works are the fruits of righteousness. But emphasizing the fruits will never produce the fruits.**

**5) John addressed the false teaching of Gnosticism already at work in the early church in 1 John. He exhorts us to beware of false doctrines. Does Gnosticism still exist today and what form does it take?**

- ✓ **Gnostics taught that God did not create this world. Thus, God is not held responsible for the evil and suffering in the world. This material world was created by a distant emanation of God, who has become a rival God**
- ✓ **God is Spirit. Spirit is good, but matter is evil**
- ✓ **Gnostics believe that our spirits existed before we were born on earth and have now become imprisoned in bodies (reincarnation)**
- ✓ **The body is to be hated. Salvation is found in being set free from enslavement to the physical realm. This is achieved through knowledge (Gnosticism). The more ignorant a person is the more evil they will be. The more enlightenment they have the closer they will be to salvation**

- ✓ **The Gnostics teaching regarding dealing with the body could be one of two extremes – 1) ascetism; 2) unrestrained behaviour, since the body has no relevance**
- ✓ **They deny the true humanity of Jesus, saying His body was a kind of phantom body which received the Spirit at His baptism and left Him before the crucifixion**
- ✓ **The Gnostics infiltrated the Church for the first three centuries, always claiming to be Christians. But clearly their teaching was heretical. This problem was complicated by the fact that many of the so-called Fathers were influenced by Plato and mixed Christian beliefs with relics of their Gnostic past**

# Does Gnosticism Exist Today?

**Whilst Gnosticism as a whole system is not taught in the Church today, some of their beliefs still seek entrance. We should always be on our guard against any teaching which:**

- ✓ **Denies God as Creator**
- ✓ **Rejects the incarnation of Christ**
- ✓ **teaches that the body is evil**
- ✓ **Attempts to deal with sin in the flesh by legalism or licentiousness, offers salvation through knowledge, etc.**
- ✓ **Also, we reject the Gnostic gospels of Thomas, Judas and Philip**