

Reading: Luke 11:14-28

Theme: Jesus the Victorious One! (1 John 3v8b)

John is taking us back to basics and he has already mentioned Jesus' **future appearing twice** in 1 John 2:28-3:2 and in 3:4-10 he also mentions **Jesus' 1st appearing twice**. We are given a quadruple incentive, motive for living righteously - not only what God will do for us, but what God has done for us. Last week we considered that **Jesus Took Away Our Sins** (v5) - in His coming to earth, His sinlessness and His atoning death. It means that when we trust Him all our sin, sins, their guilt and condemnation are removed and His positive righteousness is forever credited to us. This is to be worked out, shown and demonstrated in our lives as John will show. Yet John deals with a 2nd thing that Jesus accomplished in His 1st appearing - **The Devil's Works Are Destroyed (V8b)** - this is what we are looking at this evening. I have 3 points to try and open up something of this glorious theme:

1. The Oppressor's Work.

At once we are faced with the reality of the person and work of the devil. The writers of the Bible were Hebrews and thought in concrete terms, not abstract ideas. The Bible teaches the reality of a personal devil. He has many names in Scripture - Satan, devil, Lucifer, Abaddon or Apollyon, the Dragon, the liar, the murderer, the evil one, the Prince of the power of the air, the ruler of this world and others also. Many caricature him as in a red suit, tail, horns and a pitchfork - but do not think he is real. One of the devil's best works is to keep his reality secret by being a joke, a tale, or just ignored. As Christians we are to never lose sight of the reality of the enemy of our souls.

The devil is opposed to God and His works, especially His people who are the work of His grace. As believers we are targets of the devil's malice, hatred and schemes. Realise and recognise he

hated us before we were a Christian and did all he could to keep us as his slaves and prisoners. Yet as believers he has a bitter hatred against us and this can be frightening, daunting, but we are to recognise that we are in the hands and care of the Lord God Almighty. The devil though powerful, is not Almighty; though a terrifying creature, he is but a creature and part of God's creation and not God or a god.

From Scripture we can piece together that the devil was created as the chiefest of God's angels - Lucifer, the star of the morning and was created to serve and worship God, but chose to rebel and go against God with other angels as it seemed he wanted the throne alongside God. He was cast out of heaven and rages against God, His works, His highest work mankind and especially those who are God's people and he would set himself up to be a rival ruler of the universe and is still active in human history. Satan is the rebel without a cause and with him are the fallen angels, usually termed demons.

We could contrast Jesus with the devil - Jesus was sinless, the devil has been sinning from the beginning; Jesus was God who became a servant, the devil was a servant who wanted to be God; Jesus humbled Himself, the devil would exalt himself. The question is asked "*Why did God create him if He knew the devil would do such?*" We have to say that God was not surprised by the devil's work and actions. Yet we are not told why God created him and allowed it to be so. We cannot probe God's eternal mind or the vastness of His wisdom and purposes. *A useful book to read is **Spectacular Sins** by John Piper and in chapter 3 he deals with this issue, but the whole book is worth reading and is available as a free PDF download from the **Desiring God** website in the book section.* We know God allowed the fallen devil and sin to be in the world to magnify God's amazing love and grace - especially in the

work and person of the Lord Jesus when He came His 1st time into the world.

The devil rebelled, was against God and all His works. We know God created Adam and Eve perfect and righteous. The rebel, moved with malice and hatred against God's highest point of creation, wanted to spoil God's work and we see in Genesis 3 of his successful scheme in tempting Eve, causing her to sin and Adam brought to sin through her and they became disobedient to God. From the moment of their sin they were under the control of the devil - not free to choose, but bound and biased toward sin and the devil. Since then mankind has been under the control and oppression of this tyrant. This world is where this oppressor reigns, holds sway, has authority. It should have been for God, but the devil has his limited rule and reign here and mankind is helpless and hopeless to escape or resist him. Realise he is limited by God.

We noted last time that sin is lawlessness - we break God's law, are guilty rebels and deserve God's punishment. Yet God's law was designed for our good, but we view it as cruel and restrictive as the devil's lies and his propaganda has been swallowed hook line and sinker. Back in Genesis 3 the devil questioned Eve as to what God had said and then twisted it to make out God was doing such to keep them down and it was not for their true benefit. The devil lied, has ever been lying that God really hates people and doesn't want their good, benefit or to enjoy life. He was and is so subtle and crafty about it and still deceives people, so that even when faced with clear evidence people will desire the devil's lies rather than God's truth. The devil still says God hates people and wants to spoil their lives. Tragically people are still deceived and taken in by this; they then live their lives as they want to, but in fact are puppets being controlled and dominated by the devil, his

lying propaganda and he pulls their strings to go against God and His ways.

Even though God gave statutes of liberty - so we can live life to the best as individuals and society - people will go against those statutes and cause themselves and others all sorts of misery, grief, pain and hurt. Mankind has a will that is in bondage to the devil and sin. We think we are free to choose, but are not. Yet we go on thinking we are masters of our own destinies and it does not matter what we do. In fact, we believe the lie the devil told Eve – such things make us wise, broaden and deepen our experience and people indulge in sin for the knowledge and to have a deeper life experience, but the devil never tells of the consequences of sin and disobedience.

Regrettably when we sin we are brought more and more under the power and the authority of the devil - as our addiction to sin becomes more and more and it dominates us, so that which we feared to do at one time can then become a habitual unthinking matter and does not trouble our consciences. We can even justify doing it! The works of the devil are so subtle, yet so strong and we are helpless to escape, to resist and to overcome him. The strongman Jesus spoke of (Luke 11:22-23) would need to be overpowered and tied up before his goods could be taken and so we see:

2. The Deliverer's Work.

The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3v8). What a glorious message of hope to the hopeless! It is not that we have to do things, achieve, struggle and strive to do them, but One has come mightier than the strong one and destroyed his works. So often we focus on the Lord Jesus' coming as constructive - to make peace, to restore the relationship between

God and man, between man and God in His life and death. Yet to accomplish such great and glorious works He also had to come in the destructive role of the destroyer of the devil's works. He not only took away our sins in His 1st appearing, but He also destroyed the works of the devil. This word "*destroy*" has the force of "*demolish, to loose, to dissolve*". There was a prison house of the devil's works; men and women were in bondage and slavery to him, to his lies and authority. The Lord Jesus would loose them, destroy and dissolve his empire, control, work and authority.

Even as Adam and Eve had sinned, were enslaved, the 1st proclamation of the gospel of hope came - the seed of the woman bruising, crushing the serpent's head. Our great God gave hope even at the start of the captivity of darkness and sin. The seed of the woman came and Jesus was born of woman by a supernatural, divine virgin conception – the incarnation - no man was involved. It shows, declares that God keeps His promises and the devil is a liar when he says that God does not care for or love us for the incarnation loudly declares "*God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son...*" In a glorious and remarkable way, the incarnation declares God loves and cares for us, He has time for us. God could have seen mankind in its sin and left us to stew in our own disgusting sin and filth - for even as we were in such a state we wanted equality with God and in our own way. Yet God so loved the world He sent His Son! His very appearing in the world denies the devil's lies - for God does love and care for the world and people like us.

While His appearing destroys those lies of the devil, also His life and work destroys so many more lies. The devil says God will spoil your life; He will make your life a sad, morbid, pathetic and cringing life. Yet the Son of God on earth lived a life that was remarkable, that was full of life. Yet He did not steal, kill, rob, go

about having sex with everyone and everything He could, He didn't drink Himself into a stupor, nor use foul language, He didn't own great possessions, but His life was a remarkable, attractive and positive life and it was lived in perfect harmony and obedience to God's commands. He exposes the devil's lies and arguments, showing them for what they are by fully living the life Adam and Eve were designed to live.

Then in His teaching He smashed more of the devil's lies too (sin is okay, it doesn't matter). Jesus exposes those as completely false - to think lustfully on another person is counted as the sin of adultery; to hate a person is as the sin of murder in God's eyes. Sin is shown to be serious and the heart of sin is the heart of men and women. Sin is shown as ugly, dirty, vile and is revealed as seen by God and not through the propaganda lies of the devil.

The devil felt secure and safe as the strongman, but one stronger came into his kingdom of the world and what does that One do? He destroys those works systematically – releasing the demon possessed, healing those crippled by demons - He set the captives free to serve God and not to live as blind slaves to the devil. Those chains of slavery the devil had forged are snapped asunder by the Son of God on earth.

The final and most glorious decisive battle occurred on Calvary. There, as we noted last time, our sins are taken away - their pollution, guilt, condemnation and power are all dealt with there. So were the devil and his hordes with all their power, malice, spite, temptations against the Son of God and He defeats them totally and there they are spent and dissolved force. We are told of this in Colossians 2:13b-15 *“God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He*

*took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them by the cross.**"* All this was gloriously accomplished by Jesus at Calvary. Yet He died and the last enemy seemed to triumph! How then can the victory then be proclaimed?

Thankfully the victory is proclaimed - in the early dawn of the 1st Easter Sunday morning when it is heralded "*He is not here, He is risen*". That is how we know the victory was accomplished, He is the Conqueror and the devil's works have been broken in the lives of all who trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. When we become a Christian, the devil's authoritative rule and power over us is dissolved, destroyed. We do not have to listen to him. Yes, he will roar, bully, intimidate us; threaten and entice us, lie, cheat and scheme, but we are not under his control for we have a new and more powerful master and John writes of this. Yes, the devil will carry on as if he is in charge, but we are to remind ourselves and him that we are Christians – remember what Paul wrote in Romans 6, as well as what John writes here – we are not to keep on sinning thoughtlessly, easily and unresistingly. We have the new life of the Saviour in us, have His Holy Spirit living in us to help us, keep us and sustain us in the Christian life. That is why we cannot, as a child of God, continue to go on sinning as if it is all we can do, but finally quickly note:

3. The Victor's Work.

Many of us here are believers, perhaps someone isn't and you could feel "*I could never become a Christian as I would never keep it up.*" You are spot on and definitely right! None of us could keep it up unless the Victor continued His work in us. Yes, we are to purify ourselves and aim to be like Him, but we are not on our own. He will help and enable us by His Holy Spirit. In fact, the victorious Lord Jesus is still working now - He is saving people,

even people here in Doncaster to be His people, He is snatching them from being children of the devil (*under his control and believing his lies*) and making them His children so they will have new life, see the truth and live as they should. He is reigning now in heaven; is sat at the right hand of the majesty on high and He ever lives to save all who go to Him and to intercede for His people. He still works and shows He has destroyed the devil's work!

At the moment it often seems He has not destroyed the devil's work, but He has. The devil and his hordes are offering up guerrilla resistance. In the 1974 a Japanese soldier, Hiroo Onoda, finally surrendered on a Pacific island - he had been fighting the war, putting up resistance for 29 years after the war was long over. The devil and his hordes are a beaten, a spent force, but still dangerous in their desperate guerrilla resistance. The time will come when the devil and all his works will be seen openly to have been destroyed as he, and all in his control, will be cast into the lake of fire and the Lord Jesus will be clearly seen to be the Conqueror and Victor, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He would have created a new heaven and new earth where sin's effects and the devil's oppression will be never again known or seen.

The only One who could help us and free us was the Rescuer, the Saviour - the Lord Jesus and, we can thank God, He appeared to destroy the devil's work and set us free – and that is what He did! If the Son sets us free, then we are free indeed. I pray that is the case for us all here this evening and we go on to “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*” (Galatians 5v1 AV).