

Your Adversary Exposed

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Watchman Nee

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To the lovers of truth.
Those who walk in the light, as He is in the light.

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Preface

Watchman Nee (1903-1972), a preeminent church leader and Christian teacher of the first half of the 20th century, had a humble beginning as Christ's servant in China. In the year 1922, he pioneered church gatherings in Fuzhou, which marked the genesis of local churches in the region. Over the course of his 30-year-long ministry, Nee penned numerous enlightening books elucidating the Bible, planted churches throughout China, and organized extensive conferences for the edification of Bible students and church functionaries.

In a testament to his enduring influence, Christianity Today magazine, in 2009, ranked Nee among the 100 most impactful Christians of the twentieth century. Despite having passed away over three decades ago, Nee's life's work continues to inform and inspire millions of Protestant Christians in China. To date, in excess of three thousand churches beyond China's borders, inclusive of several hundred in the United States, recognize him as one of their guiding religious and theological luminaries.

Watchman Nee's life serves as a testament to his remarkable dedication and vibrancy. He embraced Christianity in 1922 and during the 1930s, undertook voyages to Europe and North America, where he disseminated his teachings through sermons and speeches. These were later collated and published in book format. By the waning years of the 1940s, Nee had cemented his status as the preeminent Chinese Christian author, evangelist, and church founder.

The Chinese government incarcerated Nee along with numerous other Christian leaders in 1952 due to their unwavering faith. Unfortunately, Nee was never released. Nevertheless, during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, his literary works continued to gain traction and widespread acclaim, notably in the United States. His magnum opus, "The Normal Christian Life," sold in excess of a million copies globally, cementing its status as a timeless Christian classic.

Nee tragically met his end in a labor farm at the age of 71 in 1972. His limited surviving correspondence attests to his undying faith in God until his final breath. Unbeknownst to him, his life and ministerial contributions would leave an indelible impact on the world, extending far beyond the confines of the Chinese prison farm where he spent his last years.

This book is a compilation of several of his sermons on the subject of our adversary, the devil and Christ's absolute victory over him. As you will learn from Nee's teachings, Christ's victory is our victory. Thus, we are not ignorant of the wiles of the devil. In this volume, our adversary is exposed for what he truly is. Defeated.

The Distinction

Most people today consider man as being divided into two parts: the soul and the body. They think that the soul is the invisible part, the psychological part within man, and that the body is the visible part, the outward form of man. Of course, it is true that the body is the outward shell of man. But it is a question whether or not the soul is a substance. Are the soul and the spirit one thing, or are they two things? Is the soul equal to the spirit, or are the two different? Man's answer is that they are the same thing other than a difference in terminology, the two are identical in substance.

Man's answer, however, is not trustworthy. We must take a look at the Bible, the trustworthy Word of God, in order to find out the answer to this question. The Word of God does not divide man into two parts, the soul and the body. Rather, it divides man into three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "Sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete." This verse clearly shows a distinction between the spirit and the soul. Otherwise, it would not have said, "Your spirit and soul," but rather, "Your spirit-soul." Since God has said this, we can see that there is a distinction between man's spirit and his soul. From this we can conclude that man is divided into three parts the spirit, the soul, and the body.

What is the significance of distinguishing the spirit from the soul? There is a great significance. It has much to do with the spiritual life of the believers. If believers do not know the boundary of their spirit, how can they understand the spiritual life? If they do not understand the spiritual life, how can they have a spiritual living? It is because believers are negligent or ignorant of the distinction between the spirit and the soul that they never grow in their spiritual life.

Not only has 1 Thessalonians divided man into three parts, other passages in the Scriptures do the same. For example, Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Here again, man is divided into three parts: the soul, the spirit, and the joints and marrow (which refer to the organ related to the mind and the will), that is, the body. Since the soul and the spirit can be divided, the two must not be the same thing.

THE CREATED MAN

Genesis 2:7 says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." "The dust of the ground" refers to man's body. "The breath of life" breathed into man's nostrils is his spirit. "A living soul" is man's

soul. Hence, a complete man is composed of three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body.

According to the above verse, the soul came into being when the spirit was joined to the body. When the spirit entered the body, the soul was produced. The body was dead, but when it was contacted by the spirit of life, a third entity was produced the soul. Without the spirit, the body is dead. Only with the spirit can one live. When the spirit is in the body, something organic is produced. This organic result is called the soul.

God's breath of life is the source of man's life. The Lord Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life" (John 6:63). It is the breath of life that gives life. Hence, this breath is the spirit. When the spirit and the body join together, the result is the soul. The Scripture says, "And man became a living soul." This means that when Adam's spirit and body were joined together, a third part was produced, the soul. His spirit and body were both joined to this third part, to his soul. This is why the Word of God calls it "a living soul" (1 Cor. 15:45). When we believers participate in the resurrection life of the Lord, the spirit begins to rule over our whole being. This is because those who have believed in the Lord are joined to the last Adam, who is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45).

The Combination of the Soul and the Flesh

Before we go on, we must first understand the relationship between the soul and the flesh. In the Bible, the flesh, as far as the lust of our flesh is concerned, is our sinful nature. The soul is our life. When we speak of our new life and new nature, it is as if life and nature are the same thing, but strictly speaking, there is a difference between life and nature. It seems that life involves something more than nature. Every life has its own nature. The nature is the natural principle of that life; it is the inclination and desire of the life. While we were sinners, our life was the soul and our nature was the flesh. We lived by our soul, and the inclinations and desires of our living were according to the flesh; we walked by the flesh. More simply put, it was the flesh that decided how we walked and the soul that supplied the power to walk according to that decision. The flesh, the sinful nature, gave the suggestions; and the soul, the life, supplied the power. The flesh instigated, and the soul executed. This is the condition of every unbeliever.

At the time a believer receives the grace of the Lord Jesus' substitutional death on the cross, God puts His life within him and resurrects his spirit. This new life brings with it a new nature. From that point on, there are two lives within the believer, the spirit and the soul-life. There are also two natures within him, God's nature and the flesh.

These two natures, one new and one old, are mutually exclusive, contradictory, and incompatible one with the other. Daily the new and the old struggle with one another, vying to rule over the whole being. A Christian, who is on this level, is an infant in Christ; he is fleshly. His experience at this stage is very unstable and painful, repeatedly alternating between victory and defeat. Later, he begins to realize the salvation of the cross and learns that if he believes that his flesh has been crucified with the Lord on the cross, he will overcome his sinful nature, that is, his flesh will be as silent as if it were dead and will no longer harm him. Since his flesh, the sinful nature, is crucified, he will have the power to overcome sin and will realize in his experimenting the promise that says, "Sin will not lord it over you" (Rom. 6:14).

Through this, the believer will enter another realm. Sin will be under his feet. Although there will still be the passions and lusts of the flesh, they will not be able to attract him anymore. The believer will now think that he is completely spiritual. When he looks back, he will see many who believed at the same time that he believed, yet they are still bound by sin. He will be self-flattered, thinking that he has reached perfection, the highest plane of the spiritual life, and that he is fully spiritual. Actually, he is not so, but far from it. He unavoidably remains a soulish Christian.

The word flesh is used in many different ways in the Bible. Here we will mention only its two most important uses. First, it is used in reference to man's flesh. Second, it is used in reference to the lust of man's flesh. When it refers to the flesh, it means the physical body. When it refers to lust, it means the psychological flesh. What is the lust of man's flesh? The human body has five senses. These five senses have their desires. The eyes desire beauty. The sense of touch desires gratification. The "itching ear" desires sensuous sounds. The mouth desires titillating tastes. The nose desires exotic aromas. There are many other desires. Because these lusts are of the flesh, they are also called the flesh.