

ABC's Nightline Faceoff on Satan an Exercise in Futility

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Most debates never settle anything and are usually held so someone can be proclaimed a winner; even if they are dead wrong. In a world where popular acceptance is the new morality what might we expect? Can we eliminate the father of lies with an opinion?
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ABC's 'Nightline' Face-Off: Does Satan Exist moderated by Dan Harris and aired on Thursday March 26, 2009 ignored both scriptural admonishments from Romans 1:29 and 1Corinthians 12:20 that warn against entering into debates to try to prove the faith to anyone. Christianity can only proclaim the gospel for best effect. The rest is up to the hearer.

{bot_wrgoogle}The discipline of theological proofs known commonly as apologetics serves to engage the seeker or the scoffer in providing evidence of gospel truths but Christ drew a line on even that when he said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Mt 7:6) While at first glance this may seem like a harsh statement if viewed from a converse standpoint it could be seen as "God don't want anyone to come in a kickin' and draggin' their feet."

To say that Satan does not exist to people who hold the scriptures as absolutely trustworthy is like asking them to throw as much as one fifth of the Bible in the trash. The scriptures make reference to Satan, the Devil, demons and devils over 185 times between Old and New Testaments.

Besides being called the "father of lies" (John 8:44) and the arch deceiver (Revelation 12:9) Satan is identified not as a playful spirit who calls man to choose the little temptations they are daily faced with but as the "god of this world." (2 Cor 4:4)

The Greek word for "world" in the New Testament is kosmos. The anglicized version of the word is the more familiar "cosmos" like the famous fashion magazine. What this literally means is that Satan is the ruler of the "kosmos" or more properly the "world system of evil."

He is not the spoofed red demon like man with a tail and a pitchfork but a powerful covering spirit that has angels, demons and minions subordinate to him who are feeding the world every kind of lust, temptation and distraction along with a pervasive and total deception which is to keep men from believing in God.

Unknown to most is the fact that his second most powerful deception is to keep anyone from believing that he exists as well. Playing on the very part of his nature (pride) that got him removed from the presence of God in the first place he appeals to the pride of man. Most men would not have God or Satan ruling any part of their lives. Convincing men that they are the captains of both their own souls and their own destinies is his biggest job by far, and it is the work he has the most success with.

His greatest temptations are the call to power, fame and fortune but he has a buffet or cornucopia of other lesser callings of every sort and description. Jesus spoke of this when he warned that the world offered a million diversions in the "broad way" but only a few in the life of faith in God. (Mt 7:13) There is something for everyone in Satan's great seething pot.

The whole matter of his existence becomes far more serious when it is seen that in the last days he takes up residence in a single man known as the "antichrist." This will be the world's last and worst dictator who will have by the very power of Satan all the available wisdom of this world at his disposal. (Rev 13:2) He will be seen as an attractive revolutionary economic, political and military genius. Most of the world will not recognize him as Satan in the flesh.

Although he is not born as a direct result of a relationship with Satan and a women at some point in his life he will yield so thoroughly to the god of this world that he will be completely possessed not with demons but by Satan himself. In a way he will mock the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. This man will be the very incarnation of the god of this world or Satan

in the flesh. No pitchforks, no fire and brimstone just good looks worldliness and an agenda that will lead the world to the battle of Armageddon.

If he were as corny and silly as we like to portray him his deception wouldn't get very far. But he is able to lead the entire world into an economic system that looks better than anything they have ever seen; for a while it actually works.

Far from being an obscure or hidden matter the Bible is quite clear on where, when (the season) and why he succeeds in bringing every man women and child on the earth under his sway who does not have faith in God. More than creating an irresistible economic system he requires that everyone be a part of it, like it or not. (Rev 13:16, 17)

Millions of believers throughout the world are convinced by the huge fulfillment of pre-millennial prophecies in this generation that he is alive today. I have no doubt of it. I also believe along with others that shortly after the Lisbon Treaty is ratified in the EU he will appear in that country after a bit of initial wrangling among that ruling bodies first few choices for president.

What I am also very sure of is that the same people who now doubt the existence of Satan will not have a clue about who he really is. Only after he presents himself as the very essence of God on the earth will they know otherwise. That proclamation and the act associated with it, commonly know as the 'abomination of desolation' in the scriptures will precipitate the finish of all prophecy and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment.

In addition to the Dante's Inferno kind of depictions of Satan and Hell other far more imaginative but goofy ideas exist today. Making Satan a mythological like creature is easy to accept but if that's hard to swallow then Hollywood has dozens of portrayals form cartoonish to bloodthirsty and murderous. Playing on man's proclivity to use logic, science or their own narcissistically driven personal conclusions the result is the same; he doesn't exist.

One of the worst results of believing in a Dante's Inferno kind of devil and hell is that it fosters another misconception that is the worst one of all. That error is that Satan is the ruler of a subterranean kingdom of fire and brimstone. Satan does not rule hell and no one who accompanies him there will be ruling anything, he is its chief victim. (Rev 20:10f)

C.S. Lewis said that modern man is so arrogant that if Christ were here today in his public ministry they wouldn't argue with him. Lewis said, they would invite him to dinner, hear what he had to say and then spend the remainder of the evening making fun of him.

Lewis could have added that if modern man saw Jesus cast the four to twelve thousand devils out of the Gadarene demoniac (Luke 8:26f) who then went into a herd of swine causing them to race down a hill and into the sea and drown; they would insist he apologize to the owner of the herd and news of animal rights charges and an impending lawsuit would have reached Jesus within days.

Today as they debate Satan's existence on national TV forums the far more important question of 'how many devils can one man have' is rarely ever asked. This is befitting in a time when in order to work the greatest deception in the history of mankind Satan, the antichrist and his cohort the false prophet solicit the help of powerful demonic spirits to pull it off. (Rev 16: 13, 14) But hey, if it were obvious it wouldn't make much of a deception!

Forget 'Touched by an Angel,' who do you think gets touched by the demonic hordes sent out to prepare the world for the last and greatest deception?

The most often repeated phrase on the Nightline show was that it is time to give up the 'myth.' We have to wonder if that would include dropping the endless courses on Shakespeare, classic fiction and Greek and Roman mythology offered in every university in the nation. Don't think so.

Deepak Chopra and others on Nightline had little to convince any biblically grounded believer that Satan is not real and those pre-disposed to dismiss his existence were already well primed to assent to Chopra's assertions. So what

was accomplished? For the pre-disposed, nothing which is exactly what they started with.

For others the powerful testimonies of former hooker Annie Lobert added yet more credence to one of my favorite sayings "a man (or woman) with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument."

The debate was laced with some hypocrisy. Chopra insisted that former hooker Annie Lobert was blaming Satan for choices she alone made. Yet one of the big tools in modern psychiatry and pop culture therapy is to find someone to blame. It's almost as American as apple pie to blame society, dysfunctional parents or oppressive childhood influences for every bad behavior we can produce. So much for honesty!

Lobert was clear about it and admitted that while she made the choice, Satan implemented or facilitated the course of action she chose. She was affirming what is taught in the epistle of James. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (James 1:14)

Another of Chopra's arguments was that since the "big bang" the natural order of things could not possibly produce something like Satan. Ignoring the affirmations that Satan does indeed exist might seem almost reasonable if it were not for the one who made the affirmations. Christ started his public ministry only after a direct confrontation with Satan and then went on to preach the gospel, heal the sick and raise the dead.

Conspicuously missing from Chopra's argument was the fact that not one single human being witnessed the big bang but an entire nation watched the miracles of Jesus Christ. When did the big bang become an authoritative reference on the supernatural as opposed to Christ?

The entire show was a bit clownish and leaves anyone to wonder why evening news formats are trying to answer deep theological questions. It was indeed futile to see those who already don't believe in something speaking to others who don't believe it either. That's what made it seem altogether unbelievable!

Modern psychiatry has accomplished a few saves and rehab programs can reform some others but for centuries faith in the power of the gospel has changed, renewed and converted untold millions. It is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2Cor 5:17)

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