

IF I WERE THE DEVIL...

The Bible has a lot to say about the devil.

He's been around for a long time. Deceiving, murdering, working catastrophic chaos and mindless, merciless, mayhem in the earth.

John 8:44

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (NIV)

Rev 12:9

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (NKJ)

If I were the devil I would know from my time in heaven and my past experiences with God the God's word always comes to pass. That God always speaks the truth, that He never lies.

Num 23:19

19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (NAU)

Titus 1:2

in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, (NKJ)

If I were the devil I'd know that God cannot lie and I would also know what He'd said about me, about my future.

Rev 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

If I were the devil I'd know that that is exactly what is going to happen to me and that there is absolutely nothing I can do about it.

God's word makes it very clear what is going to happen to the devil and when it's going to happen.

Mark 13:10

10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. (NKJ)

Matt 24:14

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (NKJ)

If I were the devil I would know that before the inevitable happened to me, the ***Gospel has to first be preached to all nations.***

As long as the Gospel is kept from being preached to all the nations I'm ok, I'm cool, I'm still in the earth and not in hell.

If I were the devil **MY FIRST PRIORITY** would be to see to it that ***the Gospel is not preached to the world.***

All my power, my whole kingdom, all of my demonic resources would be totally committed to stop the Gospel from spreading. *My whole survival would depend on it.*

2 Pet 3:11-12

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and ***hastening the coming of the day of God***, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (NKJ)

The Living Bible

You should look forward to that day and hurry it along-- the day when God will set the heavens on fire, and the heavenly bodies will melt and disappear in flames.

I'm to look for it and hurry it up.

Jesus has always meant for His delay to be a short one.

Rev 3:11

"Behold, **I am coming quickly!** Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Rev 22:7

"Behold, **I am coming quickly!** Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." (NKJ)

Rev 22:12

12 "And behold, **I am coming quickly**, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. (NKJ)

Rev 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely **I am coming quickly.**" Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (NKJ)

He says we are to hasten His return, to hurry it along, speed it up and make it happen.

He is anxious to return. While we wait for His return He waits for us to go forth.

Mark 16:15

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (NKJ)

Matt 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; ***and then the end will come.*** (RSV)

We must go so He can come.

Our focus has been the coming of the Lord – His focus has been the going of the Church.

If I were the devil I would be totally committed to keeping the church from going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature so that the end would not come!

If I were the devil I would see Christians who were totally committed to Jesus' last command - as my greatest threat and worst nightmare.

If I were the devil I would have schemes and strategies to keep the Gospel from getting to people. And I would work at it like my eternal destiny depended on it!

2 Cor 4:4

whose minds the god of this age **has blinded**, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (NKJ)

Satan is not only trying to damn mankind - he's trying to preserve himself!

2 Cor 11:3

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent **deceived Eve by his craftiness**, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (NKJ)

Eph 6:11

11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against **all strategies and tricks** of Satan. (TLB)

2 Cor 2:11

...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (NIV)

YOU BETTER BELIEVE I'D HAVE PLANS AND SCHEMES AND STRATEGIES.

I'd tell every despicable, damnable, bald, bold face lie I could tell.
I would deceive, disguise and disgust!

I would use despair and despondency to dishearten and discourage anybody who took seriously Jesus' command to go save the world.

I would mock and jeer
Intimidate and cause fear
Ridicule and sneer
And sadistically leer
I would stop up the ear
And confuse what they hear
I would provoke them to veer
Without mercy or tear
Keep the Gospel unclear
Make the price seem too dear
Their souls I will shear
To keep Him from drawing near
And my future right here

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I WOULD DO IF I WERE THE DEVIL.

Firstly:

I would marginalise missions.
I would departmentalise missions.
I would put it on the very busy list of all the other very busy things of church life.

I would do all I could to keep it from becoming the First Priority of the local church.

I would see to it that pastors had a missions PROGRAM – not a missions PASSION.

I would see to it that the church had a missions DEPARTMENT not a missions DYNAMIC.

I would see to it that Christians had a missions CONSCIENCE not a missions COMMITMENT.

Yes, I would definitely marginalise missions.

For hundreds of years in early-middle of church history not one missionary was sent out. The first priority of the church was keeping her doctrine pure.

If I were the devil I would keep the church so busy with all its departments and so anxious about the hundreds of details that are involved in running a church that they wouldn't have the time or resources for missions.

If I were the devil I would get Senior Pastors to focus on ***their finances, their facilities, and their frequent flier points***, not ***the doomed the damned and the dying***.

I would see to it that they focused on everything but the main thing.

If I were the devil I would see that the **main thing** is TO KEEP the **main thing** from BECOMING the **main thing**.

Paul said, "*This one thing I do...*"
I would have that interpreted as, "*These one hundred things I do...*"

Sir Heneage Ogilvie
The really idle man gets nowhere. The perpetually busy man does not get much further.

Secondly:

If I were the devil I would get Christians to focus on **this world** not the **next one**.

"Live for the temporal not the eternal. Work your whole life for a few short years of retirement. Live for right now, because right now is all you have.

Don't think about eternity. Don't think about accountability to God. Don't think that you're going to have to give an answer to God for how you lived your life and spent your money and used your time."

Daniel Webster
My greatest thought is my accountability to God.

2 Cor 4:18

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (NIV)

Rom 14:12

So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (NKJ)

Thirdly:

If I were the devil I would teach that the **purpose of prosperity** is to see how many toys I could buy and how many things I could accumulate before I die.

*“SHOP TILL YOU DROP.
BUY TILL YOU DIE.
SPEND TO THE END.”*

I would get Christians to love **earthly treasures** more than **heavenly treasures** – I would get them to believe that **temporal investment in things** is more important than **eternal investment in souls**.

I would see to it that the major focus of their money would be the accumulation of things.

Matt 6:19-21

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)

The Living Bible

19 "Don't store up treasures here on earth where they can erode away or may be stolen.

20 Store them in heaven where they will never lose their value and are safe from thieves.

21 If your profits are in heaven, your heart will be there too.

John Wesley said *it is just as wrong to store up treasure on earth as it is to do anything else Jesus told us not to do.*

Wayne Meyers

We are accountable to God for the excess and surplus in our life.

We are not owners, we are stewards. Stewards oversee someone else's goods. All that we have, has been entrusted to us by God.

Roy L. Smith

Every possession is a trust.

Luke 12:15

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (NIV)

A wealthy old man was very enthusiastic about his lovely young bride but sometimes wondered whether she might have just married him for his money, so he asked: "*If I lost all my money, would you still love me?*" She retorted, "*Of course I would still love you. Don't be silly. But I would miss you!*"

Fourthly:

If I were the devil I would make sure that the great commission became the great omission.

Instead of *Go into all the world and preach the Gospel*, instead of *make disciple of all nations*, I would teach a more popular doctrine – Stay at home and build facilities and teach yourselves over and over again to be His disciples.

Oswald J. Smith

Why should anyone hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once?

If I were the devil I would convince everyone that there is plenty of time, no rush, no hurry.

I would make sure that no one felt a sense of urgency for perishing people.

Robert Moffat

We'll have all eternity to celebrate our victories, But only one short hour before sunset to win them.

I would deafen the ears of Christians to the sound of a ticking clock. Time is running out. Every man and every woman every boy and every girl is only one heart beat away from eternity.

1 Cor 7:29

The important thing to remember is that our remaining time is very short, [and so are our opportunities for doing the Lord's work]...TLB)

Ps 39:4-5

Lord, help me to realize how brief my time on earth will be. Help me to know that I am here for but a moment more.

My life is no longer than my hand! My whole lifetime is but a moment to you. Proud man! Frail as breath! A shadow! And all his busy rushing ends in nothing. He heaps up riches for someone else to spend. (TLB)

Time is so short – eternity is so long.

If I were the devil I'd make sure that priorities were all wrong. That time was wasted until an entire generation died off, leaving the task of world evangelism undone and then I would begin again with the next generation, building on the example of the last one.

I would fight to make lesser priorities more important than preaching the gospel to perishing people.

It's easy to have misguided priorities.

Surprised to see an empty seat at an AFL grand final, a diehard fan remarked about it to the woman sitting next to the empty seat. *"It was my husband's,"* the woman explained, *"But he died."* *"I'm very sorry,"* said the man. *"Yet I'm really surprised that another relative, or friend, didn't jump at the chance to take the seat reserved for him."* *"Beats me,"* she said. *"They all insisted on going to the funeral."*

Fifthly:

If I were the devil I would encourage Christians to pray for the harvest.

That way they will think they are doing their part in the great commission. I would know that praying for a harvest that is already ripe is much less affective than praying for the labourers to go forth and reap the harvest.

John 4:35

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! (NKJ)

The Living Bible

Do you think the work of harvesting will not begin until the summer ends four months from now? Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening all around us, and are ready now for reaping.

How effective is it to pray for a harvest that is already so ripe we are losing it faster than we can harvest it?

Luke 10:2

Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (NKJ)

The need is for workers! Goers and givers!

The need of a ripe harvest is not for it to get any *riper* but for people to go and to give so that it can be harvested.

And finally, If I were the devil I would teach Christians that the power of the Holy Spirit has been sent **to bless them**.

I would see to it that there is a, **bless me** focus in the church.

Bless me, anoint me, appoint me, prosper me, help me, heal me, deal me, fill me, thrill me, teach me, reach me, enlighten me, build me, encourage me, inspire me, saturate me, satisfy me, appease me, please me, give me, grant me, grace me... more for me.

If I were the devil I would teach that the Holy Spirit has been sent to bless me in my life instead of help me to reach the world with the gospel.

Acts 1:8

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, **and to the end of the earth**."
(NKJ)

Witness = martus or martyr.

The reason we have been given the Holy Spirit is so that we would have the power to lay our life down as we are delivering the message of Christ to the ends of the earth!

This is what I would do if I were the devil.

This plan has worked for almost 2000 years. He's gotten away with marginalising missions, distracting pastors, seducing Christians to live for the moments and love material things for almost two millenniums.

But something has happened in the past few decades that he has never reckoned on.

A generation has risen up to embrace Jesus last command as their first priority!

This is his worst nightmare – his absolute worst case scenario! Millions of Christians are not falling for his tricks any more.

He has at best a few year's left!

50% of Africa is Christian.

Every 7 weeks in Latin America a million more people are being born again.

Over half of the population of Brazil and Guatemala and Honduras and El Salvador are already born again.

40% of Chile, Costa Rica, and Bolivia are ***Bible believing Christians.***

New Guinea - South Korea

35,000 Chinese a day are being born again. A million a month!

For the first time in the history of the world the finish line is in sight.

It's almost done! Will you be a part of its completion? Will you buy into the greatest event in the history of the world?

If Jesus lives in your heart you are a missionary. Going and Giving is what God has commissioned you to do.

If Jesus doesn't live in your heart you are a mission field.

ALTER CALL