



What if I were to ask you, "Do you believe there's anything too hard for God to do?" If you are a Christian and know your Bible, you'd probably remember that passage in Jeremiah 32 and answer quickly, "No - there is nothing too hard for God!"

But what if I asked you, "Is there anything too hard for God to do... through YOU?" Then you may hesitate, drop your head, and draw circles in the dirt with your toe. "Uh, well..."

That is the way it is for all of us, isn't it? As long as we keep the principles of God's word at a nice, comfortable, theoretical distance, we can believe it all. It's only when it comes to putting it into practice that we become disbelieving. Somehow, God gets smaller when we get involved.

God+You = Winning Team

God is a great God, and He wants to be great through you. The Lord is ambitious for you and for me. He wants us to learn the keys to winning the whole world. As we give up all for Jesus, we will gain all. How does this work? First, you must recognize the greatness of God.



"In the beginning God..." is more than a good way to start off the first book of the Bible. It is literally true in every realm of existence. The only intelligent way to understand the complexities and vastness of the universe and life on our planet is to say, "In the beginning God. All other theories stretch credibility far more than this simple statement from Genesis 1:1. God is the creator of everything and is still holding it all together by the word of His power. (Hebrews 1:3)

Secondly, we need to look in the Bible and see what He is telling us to do and realize that it is possible. There is nothing too hard for God to do through us. He is good and just and would never give us impossible commands. It is possible for us to obey God. Anything is possible because, as we start to obey Him, He does what we cannot do. We do the possible and He does the impossible.

God has told us to take the world for Him. That's what it says in Matthew 28:18-20. When Jesus tells us that He has been given all authority in Heaven and on earth, all other issues and doubts are settled. Then He turns around and says to us, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. A tall order, isn't it? It's hard enough to disciple an individual, but here Jesus is commanding us to disciple nations!

Is your God big enough to do that through you?

How big is your God? Is He big enough to create Jesus without an earthly father? Many skeptics disbelieve the virgin birth because they can't imagine a God great enough to do that. But I believe not only did God once create a man without an earthly father - He created one without either

a mother or a father! That man was Adam. He made Adam without either parent.

God created Adam and Eve, then told them to multiply and rule over the earth. (Genesis 1:28 KJV) Mankind has done well with the first part of that command: We have multiplied and replenished the earth with five billion of us. But the second part of God's purposes have been delayed.

They were delayed when Adam and Eve gave over the rulership of the earth to Satan in the Garden of Eden. The scriptures call the devil, "the god of this world." (II Corinthians 4:4) How did he get that position? God didn't give it to him! Man did, when he entered into conspiracy with Satan against God.

I find there are two extremes among Christians today. On one side, there are those who ignore the existence of the devil. They may even go as far as to say he doesn't exist at all, or that he is an analogy for the evil in the world. At the other extreme are Christians who attribute everything to Satan, giving him too much power.

We must avoid both extremes: We must understand who the enemy of God and our souls is and see how we can win over him.

Casting Votes For Satan

In scriptures such as Isaiah 14, Luke 10:18,19, Ezekiel 28 and others, we learn that Satan was a created being with lots of understanding and knowledge, who at one time stood in God's very presence. He chose to rebel against God, and one-third of the angels followed him in his rebellion. (Daniel 8:10-11 and Revelation 12:4) He and this group were thrown out of Heaven, and sometime afterwards (we aren't told how long) Satan again showed up in the Garden of Eden. There, in the form of a serpent, he tricked God's new creation into joining his rebellion.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they released Satan to become active in the world. He received his authority as prince of this world from them. And from the Garden of Eden until this moment, every time a person sins, Satan's ill-gotten authority on earth is increased a little more. When we sin, it's like we say to the devil, "... thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth!"

Sin is doing the will of the devil and sinning helps to secure his throne.

With that background, let's look at Satan's weaknesses. He does have them. In fact, he has some serious problems. I like the way "Holy Hubert," a street preacher in Berkeley, California, put it. When confronting a ranting mob of radicals, bent on tearing him limb from limb, Holy Hubert waved his Bible and yelled, "I've read the end of the book, fellas, and we win!"

We must realize the devil is only a created being. Satan is not the opposite of God - he's not some evil, equal counterpart. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Satan is none of the above.

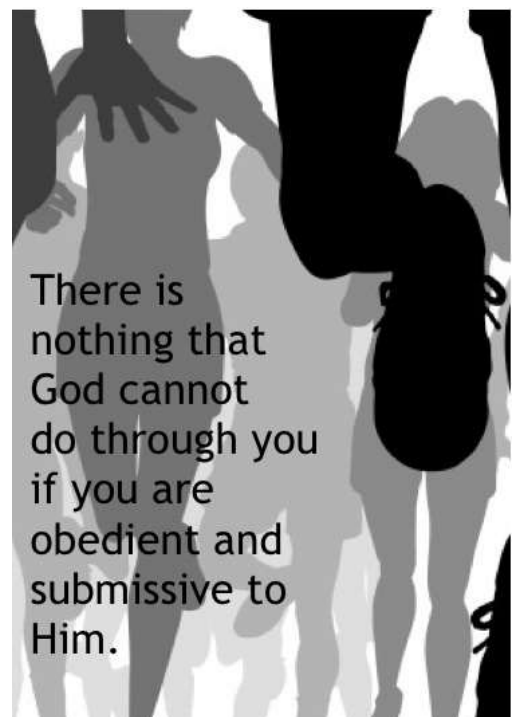
It's almost funny how many of us forget that. I travel frequently. Sometimes I find myself on four continents in the space of a few weeks' time. Yet in each place, I hear Christians talking about this one individual - Satan - and how he has personally been after them that very week. But Satan can only be in one place at one time - he's not God!

And the devil cannot know your thoughts, either. In I Kings 8:39 and Psalm 139, we learn that only God knows our hearts and thoughts completely.

Satan doesn't have all power. He has some magic tricks that he likes to show off to those who venture into the realm of the occult. But he doesn't have all power, like God. God is the creator, and Satan can't create anything. He can only father lies.

Mere men have been given power Satan hasn't. Human beings can multiply; they can have children. But the devil can't even do that. He still has the same number of demons as he did when he led those one-third in rebellion against God and was cast out of Heaven.

But even if the devil had two-thirds of the angels and God had only one-third, he would still be out numbered because of who God is! And the Word of God declares the amazing fact that we have the advantage over Satan because Christ in us is greater than the devil. (I John 4:4)



Are you feeling a little taller yet? Jesus in you is greater than all the demonic hosts and all the evil that's in our world! (Luke 10:19) There is nothing that God cannot do through you if you are obedient and submissive to Him. If you have given over your rights, if you are standing humble before Him, He promises to give you all the land that the sole of your foot treads upon. (Joshua 1:3)

God Puts "Plan B" Into Action

When man fell into sin in the Garden, he didn't do away with God's purpose for him, which is to take authority and rule over the earth. He merely postponed it, because man lost his power to Satan. Jesus came to recapture that lost authority. He was born as a baby, lying in a dirty animal shelter. He took the role of a servant, giving up all His rights. He took the road of submission all His life, and taught us that the meek will inherit the earth. He showed us how to regain the authority we lost.

Jesus didn't take control of the earth through pride, like Satan tried to do when he rebelled against God. He didn't use threats or bribes, like Satan uses with man. He used the strategy of serving in love. "Follow me," He said. Take up your cross, die to your selfish desires. If you try to keep your life, you'll lose it. But if you lose your life for My sake and the gospel you will save it. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? (Mark 8:34-36)

Lamb-1, Wolf-0

On the surface, God's way seems foolish. How can we win by losing? But on the cross, Jesus, the Lamb, defeated Satan, the wolf, by dying. He went down to Hell and after three days, God raised Him up. He emerged the winner, loading a great group of hostages free with Him! Then God gave Him a name above every name, promising that someday every knee would bow and every tongue would confess that Jesus is Lord. (Philippians 2:10)

God is already in the process of bringing every knee to bow. He's not waiting until the last battle and He doesn't want us to wait either. He is winning, one soul at a time, one cause, one nation, one people group. And He won't stop until His earth is again recaptured.

Does this mean we can have Utopia now? No. That will happen only when Jesus comes again. But we can extend Jesus' leadership now, in many lives and in many categories. It doesn't take equal parts of salt and water to make salty water. And we are the salt of the earth. We are also the light of the world. It's time to obey Isaiah 60:1 and rise up and let our light shine in this darkened generation.

Don Richardson, his wife, and their baby, went to live among the Sawi tribe in Irian Jaya to give them the gospel. This tribe was made up of headhunters and cannibals, and their constant warfare was driving them near to extinction. Within a few years after the Richardsons' arrival, a majority of the Sawis had become Christian. Not all of them - it wasn't suddenly a paradise. Nor was it some kind of Christian dictatorship, for there were still sinners among the Sawis who chose not to worship God.

But the effect of the gospel penetrated the entire Sawi society. Headhunting and cannibalism stopped altogether. The Sawis became leaders in commerce among other tribes in their area, with a variety of small business ventures. And the Sawis began to send out missionaries to other people groups in the jungles of Irian Jaya. They became the salt and the light in their part of the world.

If it can happen in an entire tribe, it can happen in an entire nation.

Jeremiah 27 promises an amazing thing. The Lord tells us first that He made the earth, the men, and the animals that are on the earth by His great power. Then He says, "I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight."

God went on in this passage to say He was giving the land He had promised to Abraham's descendants to Nebuchadnezzar - a heathen king! Imagine how the Israelites felt when Jeremiah declared this. Cries of "False prophet!" filled the air. They had read the scriptures. They knew that God promised this land to Abraham, way back in Genesis 13. Yet, the Israelites held the Promised Land described by those boundaries only for a very brief time. Why?

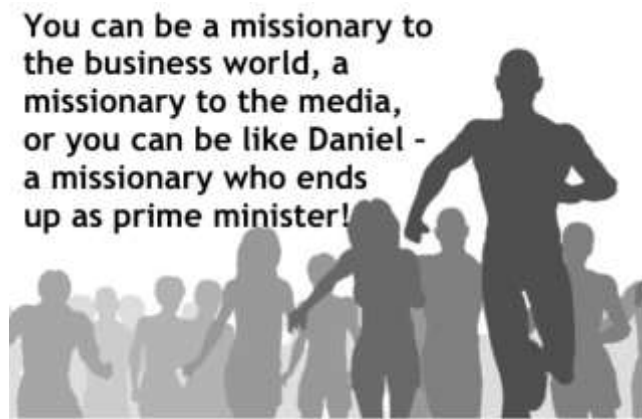
The Israelites failed to hold onto the Promised Land because they didn't fulfill the second part of that covenant between God and Abraham. The first part promised, "I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you. The second part declared that through the Israelites, all the people of the earth would be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3)

Like Christians today, the children of Israel seized the first part. They smiled: "God is going to bless me!" But they forgot the second part: "God wants to bless all the nations of the earth through me."

Since the beginning, God's purposes have not changed. He wanted Adam to take leadership over the earth. He wanted His chosen people to bless the whole earth. Through Christ, we have all become His chosen people (Romans 2:29), and He still wants the same thing for us that He wanted for the children of Israel: He wants to bless us and, through us, the entire world.

If you try to take only the first part of the covenant - even if you promise to pay tithes on the blessing - it is not enough. God Will not continue to bless you unless you take on the second half: carrying His blessing to all the earth.

God promised in Jeremiah 27 to give the world to the one who pleased Him. Jesus pleased God completely, so God is giving the earth to Him. He declared, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) That is the basis for Jesus saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18) And that was the reason Jesus was able to turn and say to us, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. (John 20:21)



He is including us in the process of reclaiming the land. Jesus is sending us into the world as missionaries, or sent ones. You can be a missionary to the business world, a missionary to the media, or you can be like Daniel - a missionary who ends up as prime minister!

There are five clear places in God's Word where He gives us the Great Commission. (Actually, there seem to be at least five hundred, but everyone agrees on these five as the most distinct.)

In Mark 16:15, we were given the *scope* of the Great Commission. We are to take the gospel to every person in our generation. I believe God gave that as a literal command to every generation since Christ.

We are given the *content* of the Great Commission in Luke 24:47. Repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be our message.

John 20:21, as we have noted, states that Jesus is the *sender*. Acts 1:8 tells us the *way* to do it: through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, the passage in Matthew 28:18-20 shows the *extent* of the Great Commission: We are not only to proclaim His Good News to every creature. We are to take the leadership God promised Adam in the Garden. All authority is given to Jesus and we are to disciple nations, teaching them to do everything Jesus has commanded us.

"But Isn't It Supposed To Get Bad?"

Some have trouble with this concept of Christian leadership. They say, "Hold on! Isn't this the end times? Aren't things supposed to get worse and worse until Jesus returns and cleans it all up? If we try to take ground for God in this world, maybe we are fighting against His purposes and the fulfillment of prophecies about the end of the world!"

A few years ago, some Christians in California became alarmed over the possible passage of a law condoning homosexual practices and extending moral wrongs as legal rights. They felt this law would be dangerous to society - especially to innocent youth and children.

These Christians decided to try and rally other local believers to communicate their position to the authorities. They enlisted some support, but were dismayed at the answer they received from many Christians. "Don't you know this is the end times? It's supposed to get more and more wicked, then Jesus will return." Their reaction implied that it was God's will for evil to triumph.

If we're not careful, we can use teaching on the end times as an excuse to do nothing. It can be a form of fatalism that says, "We can't act in politics, or in the media, or in any other significant arena of influence and leadership, because that would be working against God."

I don't claim to be an expert when it comes to end time prophecies. Like any other Christian, I read my Bible and try to discern what is going on around me. But one thing I do believe very clearly: Jesus told us to *occupy* until He came. (Luke 19:13 KJV) It isn't occupying the earth if we hole up in a religious enclave and let everything outside our church walls rot away.

I believe the Lord wants us to aggressively go out and reclaim lost territory from Satan and leave the timing and conclusion of history to Him. We're

still making the same mistake Jesus was correcting in Acts 1:6,7, when the disciples were pressing Him to know if they were in the end times. Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know..." The timing of the end of this world is in the Father's hands.

Revelation 11:15 promises that someday the kingdoms of this world will all belong to Jesus. Right now, we should be advancing towards that goal. Luke 17:21 KJV explains that the kingdom of God is within us. When Jesus Christ rules in my life or in yours, He is already ruling in whatever area of influence we have in this world. Let's extend that realm of influence.

Satan's Ratio Is Shrinking

Satan knows all this and he must be worried. He can't create like God, or multiply like man. His present strategy is to try - through abortion, war, disease, strife, and violence - to stop the multiplication of man. The devil is a destroyer. His purpose is to try and limit man. After all, he is losing his ratio. When he tempted Adam and Eve, there were only two human beings and he had one-third of the angels. Each week that the human race gets larger, Satan's ratio of demons to humans shrinks. So how does he maintain his control?

In some ways. Satan is smarter than we have been. He has targeted the most influential areas of human concern and has captured the few people in top leadership over those areas. Satan doesn't concern himself with the drunk, sitting on a sofa watching television through bleary eyes. He doesn't use him to try and rule the world. The devil goes for the leaders, using threats and bribes to control them and through them, the masses.

We have a number of missionaries from Youth With A Mission working in Thailand. In that region, we learned about a warlord who operates just across the border in the area of Burma called the Golden Triangle. In this small, mountainous region, much of the world's heroin is grown. The whole endeavor is led by one man. This underworld king has one hundred loyal lieutenants. A huge cash-flow comes from all over the world to him in return for the heroin he supplies. The hundred from his inner circle go out and recruit other young men at gun point to join their forces. *Threat*. As they join the war-lord's army, they are given pay, drugs, and women. *Bribe*.

Through threat and bribe, this warlord exerts control over his one hundred lieutenants, over the thousands of young men hired to fight for him and, ultimately, over millions of drug addicts on the streets of New York, Amsterdam, London, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo, and cities throughout the world.

This warlord, we learned, is himself a drug addict. He lives out his days in fear that he will be killed and replaced by another ambitious man. Satan is ruling over millions through this one man, who has become a slave himself.

Only one example, but it shows us how Satan uses his limited resources to hold onto his power as the god of this world. With his threats and bribes on a few in influential posts, he controls millions of people. But Jesus says, "Fear not." Perfect love casts out all fear. We can lead through love and win over the enemy.



This article is part one of a two part series compiled from the book, *Winning God's Way* by Loren Cunningham.

Loren Cunningham is co-founder of the international Christian missionary organization Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and the University of the Nations. Cunningham founded YWAM in the United States of America in 1960 with his wife Darlene Cunningham at the age of 24. They currently reside in Kona, Hawaii and are both active members of the YWAM Global Leadership Team (GLT).

Today, YWAM has an estimated 20,000 full-time workers in 171 countries and continues to focus in Christian mission work as a parachurch, non-denominational non-profit movement. Cunningham continues to be an active international speaker, with engagements in 30 to 40 nations every year. Because of his frequent travels and work in international Christian missions, YWAM claims that Cunningham has visited "every sovereign nation on earth, all dependent countries, and more than 150 territories and islands."