

OUR ENEMY THE DEVIL Ephesians 6:10-18; I Peter 5:8-9

People continually ask about the shooting at the church in Texas...or in response to all the other mass shootings that have occurred in our nation...*“Why would God allow something like this to happen”* or *“Where’s God...and why didn’t He prevent this from happening?”*

It isn’t the *judgment* of God...it’s the work of our *adversary* the **devil**. In **Luke 13:1-5**...Jesus addressed whether the *degree of sin* resulted in God’s judgment.

If you are a Christian, you need to know that you have an adversary...and he’s real. He wants to *discourage* you, *deceive* you, and *destroy you*. He wants to *compromise* you. He wants to *drag you down*. An *adversary* that you should *never underestimate*. He is a *sly* and *skillful*. He’s had centuries of experience dealing with humanity. That’s why there are some important things we need to remember about the devil...things that the devil doesn’t want us to know.

We need to understand that Satan is nowhere near to being the equal of God. God is **omnipotent**, which means that He is **all-powerful**. God is **omniscient**, which means that He is **all-knowing**. God is **omnipresent**, which means that He is **present everywhere**.

In sharp and direct contrast, we need to know that the devil *does not reflect any of these divine attributes*. Although he is *very strong* and *powerful*, Satan is **not omnipotent**. Nor is Satan **omniscient**. He *can’t know everything*. His *knowledge is limited*. Finally, he is **not omnipresent**. While *God is everywhere*, Satan *can only be in one place at one time*...as well as his demons.

Even though he can be *resisted by believers* (**James 4:7**)...and God has *placed limitations* on him (**Job 1:12**)...don’t underestimate him.

Satan is called many things in Scripture:

- **Lucifer** (God’s original name for him)
- **Satan** (Book of Job)
- **The devil** (John 8:44)
- **Beelzebub** (Matthew 12:24)
- **Belial** (II Corinthians 6:15)

He is described in many ways:

- **The evil one** (I John 5:19)
- **Prince of this world** (John 12:31)
- **God of this age** (II Corinthians 4:4)
- **The red dragon** (Revelation 12:3)
- **The tempter** (I Thessalonians 3:5)
- **A serpent** (Revelation 12:9)
- **Ruler of the kingdom of the air** (Ephesians 2:2)
- **Accuser of the brothers** (Revelation 12:10)
- **An angel of light** (II Corinthians 11:14)
- **A roaring lion** (I Peter 5:8)
- **The father of lies** (John 8:44).

The Old Testament prophet **Isaiah** (**Isaiah 14:12-15**) clearly describes how *pride* is what drove Satan’s downfall.

I. SATAN SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE:

- **Satan resists the ministry of God’s servants.**

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”

~Zechariah 3:1

“For we wanted to come to you...I, Paul, more than once...and yet Satan hindered us.”

~I Thessalonians 2:18

- Satan seeks to weaken the faith of God’s servants.

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat.”

~Luke 22:31

James 1 and Romans 5 talk about *test* and *trials*...and how they strengthening one’s *faith* when we *persevere*.

- Satan continually attacks believers.

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me...to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

~II Corinthians 12:7-9

Satan *buffets*, *resists*, and *hinders* God’s servants in every possible way, but always remember...*God’s grace is sufficient* to give the victory.

- Satan continually accuses believers.

“And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of

our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night’.”

~Revelation 12:9-10

- Satan holds people captive in their sin.

“And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

~II Timothy 2:26

“And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

~I Timothy 3:7

II. SATAN SEEKS TO DECEIVE:

- Satan steals God's Word from hearts and minds.

“These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.”

~Mark 4:15

- Satan can invade hearts and minds.

Of the lost...*“During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him.”*

~John 13:2

Of the disobedient...*“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?’”*

~Acts 5:3

Of the unguarded...*“Do not give the devil an opportunity.”*

~Ephesians 4:27

Satan seems to have the *power of mental suggestion*, which in the individual becomes *auto-suggestion* (*temptation*), and which unless *halted* and *hindered* by the **Word and Spirit of God (I Corinthians 10:13)** will be expressed by *word* and *action* (mental illness).

- **Satan (as well as demons) can enter the body of the unsaved. (*The Gerasene Demoniac*)**

“After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, ‘What you do, do quickly’.”

~John 13:27

- **Satan blinds unbelieving minds.**

“In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

~II Corinthians 4:4

Unbelief of the truth seems to be the same as a *special invitation to Satan* to bring in the *darkness of error* and *falsehood*. He *blinds the minds* of unbelieving men to prevent them from receiving the light of the gospel and being saved.

- **Satan empowers deception towards people.**

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.”

~II Corinthians 11:13-15

III. SATAN SEEKS TO DESTROY:

- **Satan is the author of sin...and *the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23)**

He introduced sin into the universe:

“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.”

~Ezekiel 28:15

He incited **Adam** and **Eve** to follow his rebellion against God:

“Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’.”

~Genesis 3:13

Sin was *not a creation* but *an origination*. It came into existence by the aid of that which had prior existence, namely...*personality*, and the *power of temptation*. God created this being not as the *devil*, but as a *holy angel*, who originated sin through *disobedience*...and *transformed himself* into the *wicked devil* which he is today.

- **Satan oppresses people through suffering.**

The New Testament ties *suffering* and many cases (but not all) of *sickness* and *disease* directly to the devil:

“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

~Acts 10:38

“And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?”

~Luke 13:16

In the final analysis Satan is the ultimate source of all *suffering*, because he is the ultimate source of all *sin*, its primary cause. He is also immediately responsible for many individual cases of *sickness* and *disease*; of which examples are furnished us in the New Testament. When healing...many times Jesus would say, *“Your sins are forgiven.”*

- **Satan is the author of temptation.**

*“For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that **the tempter** might have **tempted you**, and our labor would be in vain.”*

~I Thessalonians 3:5

*“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness **to be tempted by the devil.**”*

~Matthew 4:1

Satan incites men to *sin*. He so *arranges times* and *controls events* and *circumstances* as to make the greatest possible appeal to the sinful tendencies of man. He is the *tempter*. When I was younger, I had an older man teach me to pray...*“Lord, don’t let the desire and opportunity meet.”*

- **Satan is the author of death.**

*“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the **power of death**, that is, the devil.”*

~Hebrews 2:14

Jesus has already triumphed over death at the cross...

“Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the

*law. But thanks be to God! He **gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**”*

~I Corinthians 15:54b-57

IV. BUT...SATAN IS DEFEATED:

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

~Revelation 20:10

The career of Satan since his rebellion has been continually downward. The point of his *descent* began with the point of his attempted *ascent*. When he said *“I will ascend,”* that’s when he began to *descend*. When he began to *exalt* himself, God began to *abase* him. That abasement will continue until he has been stripped of the last vestige of authority and power, and cast in abject impotence as the arch-criminal of the universe into the eternal burnings. *Satan is under a perpetual curse; his defeat was secured at the cross; he is destined to be confined to the abyss and finally will be consigned to the lake of fire...forever.*

FOUR SOURCES OF POWER OVER SATAN:

- **The Cross.**

Most important of all...we need to know that the devil was *soundly defeated* at the Cross. There he lost his stronghold on the life of the human race. As a Christian, you have been *set free* by the power of Jesus Christ.

*“For the **word of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

~I Corinthians 1:18

- **The Blood.**

*“And they overcame him because of the **blood of the Lamb** and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”*

~Revelation 12:11

- **The Name...Jesus Christ.**

*“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at **the name of Jesus** every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

~Philippians 2:9-11

- **The Word.**

*“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered and said, ‘**It is written**, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”.’ Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, “He will command His angels concerning You”; and “On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone”.’ Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, **it is written**, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test”.’ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan!*

For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only”.’ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.”

~Matthew 4:1-11

In Ephesians 6, Paul *commands* (by way of the **Greek imperative**) the *constant guardedness* and *readiness* of a combat soldier for every born-again believer.

Five times in seven verses Paul says “**I COMMAND you to do this NOW!**”

*“Finally, **be strong** in the Lord and in the strength of His might. **Put on** the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, **take up** the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. **Stand firm** therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And **take** the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints”*

~Ephesians 6:10-18