

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

If you are a Christian, then you need to know that you have an adversary out there. He wants to *trip you up*. He wants to *drag you down*. An adversary that you should never underestimate...the **devil**. He is a sly and skillful adversary. 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* you are thinking. His *knowledge is limited*. Finally, he is **not omnipresent**. While *God is everywhere* at the same time, 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** (son of the morning)
- **Satan** (adversary)
- **The devil** (slanderer)
- **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**.

The Old Testament prophet **Isaiah** clearly describes how *pride* is what drove Satan's downfall.

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High'." (Isaiah 14:12-15)

- **I WILL ASCEND into heaven**. That's self-exaltation.
- **I WILL RAISE my throne above the stars of God**. That's self-promotion.
- **I WILL SIT also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north**. That's self-centeredness.
- **I WILL ASCEND above the heights of the clouds**. Again, that's self-exaltation.
- **I WILL MAKE MYSELF LIKE THE MOST HIGH. Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit**. That's self-deception.

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 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.

“The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.” (II Thessalonians 2:9-10)

“It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.” (Revelation 13:7)

- ***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)

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 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, and which unless halted and hindered by the **Word and Spirit of God** will also in him be expressed by word and action (mental illness).

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

“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 wickedness in 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.*

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 is the author of suffering.*

The New Testament ties suffering and many cases 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 primal 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. Many times I've prayed...*“Lord, don't let the desire and opportunity meet.”*

- *Satan traps people 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)

- *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 as Paul says in Colossians 2:15, *“When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”* But Satan seems to have the right to use the mighty weapon of death, under special permission, for now (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

IV. BUT...SATAN IS DEFEATED:

- *Satan is forever cursed*

“The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you

and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel'." (Genesis 3:14-15)

- **Satan is restricted**

"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.' So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord." (Job 1:12)

"Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.' So the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.' Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." (Job 2:4-7)

- **Satan will be conquered**

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time." (Revelation 20:1-3)

- **Satan will be judged**

"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." (Revelation 12:9)

"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,"* then 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 conquest was secured at the cross; he is destined to be confined to the abyss and finally consigned to the lake of fire.*

FOUR SOURCES OF POWER OVER SATAN:

- **The Cross of Christ**

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 of Christ**

"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 of 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)

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place." (II Corinthians 2:14)

- **The Word of Christ**

"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).*