

RESIST THE DEVIL

1 Peter 5:8-9

INTRODUCTION

- Many people have lost their lives for not treating ferocious animals with the due caution they deserve
- And many people have been overcome by Satan for failing to be on guard against him
- There are increasing numbers of people, even among professing Christians, who reject the truth that Satan is a real person
- These false teachers remove the “d” from devil and are left with a vague concept “evil” that has no malevolent intelligence behind it
- Perhaps one of Satan’s greatest accomplishments is to convince people he does not exist!
- Or he presented as a caricature with horns, hooves, pointy tail and pitchfork, with his headquarters in hell
- But the devil is real, and he is in the world today, working ever increasing wickedness as the end of the age draws near
- There is a great spiritual battle going on all around us, and within us, unseen to the human eye, between the forces of God, and the forces of Satan
- On certain occasions God has allowed men to see the spiritual realm (Numbers 22:31; 2 Kings 6:13-17)
- All of us are involved in a cosmic war that has been engaged for the last 6000 years, and it is imperative that we recognise our place in this war
- The day you received Christ you were enlisted into the army of God as a soldier of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3)

- Peter himself was experienced in this warfare, having been particularly targeted by Satan for attack (Luke 22:31)
- Particularly in those times when opposition to the gospel is fierce do Christians need to be on their guard against the enemy's attacks that might lead them to be fearful and compromise their faith

In our battle against Satan we must:

I. BE ALERT (8)

A. Be sober

1. The word "sober" (*neepsate*) means to be not intoxicated in any way, and then to be soberminded, watchful, circumspect
2. The sober Christian is controlled, temperate, not given over to indulgence or extravagance (1 Peter 1:13; 4:7)
3. The world does not promote soberness, but rather temporary vanity, pleasure, entertainment and lust
4. In v.7 we are told to not be *careful*, yet we also must not be *careless*

B. Be vigilant

1. This word (*gregoreesate*) means to be awake and watchful, to be alert, in a constant state of readiness
2. The vigilant Christian is continually alert to his surroundings, and his own state, shunning all drowsiness or slackening of energy
3. The enemy is constantly looking for opportunity to come in "privily" (Galatians 2:4; 2 Peter 2:1) and sow his tares "while men sleep" (Matthew 13:25)
4. Vigilance is often connected to prayer – "watch and pray" (Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:33; 14:38; Luke 21:36; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:2)

5. Both these words are imperatives (commands) to be obeyed by every Christian – not mere suggestions
6. They remind us that as Christians we are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land, in enemy territory, constantly in danger of attack

II. BE AWARE (8)

A. Satan, the enemy of God and his people

1. He began his existence as an exalted angelic being, “the anointed cherub” (Ezekiel 28:12-14), without sin, called “Lucifer, son of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12)
2. He became lifted up with pride and sinned (Ezekiel 28:15-16; Isaiah 14:13-15)
3. God cast him from his position, and he became Satan and the devil, taking a third of the angels with him in his fall, which became demons (Revelation 12:4)
4. Immediately he set about his work of opposing God by tempting man to disobey God and bring sin and the curse into the world (Genesis 3)
5. He is a liar (John 8:44), a murderer (John 8:44), a deceiver (Revelation 12:9), and a thief (Mt 13:19)
6. He bears many names and titles which describe his character
 - a. The devil (Revelation 12:9), meaning "slanderer"
 - b. Prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2)
 - c. Prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
 - d. God of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - e. The dragon (Revelation 12:9)
 - f. That old serpent (Revelation 12:9)

- g. Ruler of darkness (Ephesians 6:12)
 - h. Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24), meaning "dung-god."
 - i. Apollyon (Revelation 9:11), meaning "destroyer."
 - j. The wicked one (Matthew 13:19)
 - k. Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15), meaning "worthless"
 - l. The enemy (Matthew 13:39; Luke 10:19)
 - m. The tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5)
- B. He is "your adversary" (*antidikos*)
- 1. This term was used for a legal opponent in a lawsuit, then generally one who contends, opposes and is continually hostile to another
- C. He is "the devil" (*diabolos*)
- 1. This word means slanderer or false accuser
 - 2. From the beginning, he has slandered God (Genesis 3:5), and he slanders God's people as the "accuser of the brethren" (Revelation 12:10)
- D. He is as a roaring lion
- 1. While the devil may attack us subtly as a serpent, here he is depicted in all his violent strength
 - 2. He "roars" against the saints
 - a. In violent persecutions
 - b. In slanderous accusations
 - c. In strong temptations

- d. in vile blasphemies
3. The lion in Scripture is bold (Proverbs 28:1), strong (Proverbs 30:30), fierce (Job 28:8), stealthy (Psalm 10:9; 17:12) and ravaging (Psalm 22:13)
- E. He walketh about
- 1. Satan is not in hell, rather goes to and fro in the earth, walking up and down in it (Job 1:7)
 - 2. Satan is not yet bound in the bottomless pit as the amillennialists claim (cf. Revelation 20:1-3)
- F. He seeks whom he may devour
- 1. Satan is not slack, but very diligent in his search for prey
 - 2. He has an insatiable appetite for men's souls
 - 3. He seeks to devour unbelievers
 - a. Unbelievers are children of the devil and do his lusts (John 8:44)
 - b. The unsaved can be possessed by devils
 - c. Unbelievers are blinded and deceived by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - d. Unbelievers are robbed of the word of God by Satan
 - 4. He seeks to devour believers
 - a. He afflicts believers (Job 1:12; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - b. He tempts believers to sin (1 Thessalonians 3:5)
 - c. He hinders the work of the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:18)
 - d. He accuses believers (Revelation 12:9-10)

- e. He promotes false doctrine in the churches (Acts 20:29-30)
 - f. He fosters discord among the brethren (Proverbs 6:19)
5. He attacks the mind, affecting our thoughts (Acts 5:1-11)
 6. He attacks the body, bringing physical weakness and affliction (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 7. He attacks the emotions (1 Kings 19:2-4)
 8. He attacks our morals, tempting us to sin (2 Samuel 11:4; 1 Chronicles 21:1)

III. BE ASSERTIVE (9)

A. We are to resist Satan

1. We must *forsake* the world, and *deny* the flesh, but *resist* the devil (James 4:7)
2. “Resist” (*anthistemi*) means literally to “stand against”, to withstand
3. The Christian is not to *attack* the devil, but establish solid defences against his assaults
4. It is not our place to rebuke the devil, or speak to him in any way (Jude 9)

B. Steadfast in the faith

1. Steadfast (*stereos*) means solid and firm
2. The Christian soldier is to have an unwavering, fixed confidence in God and his word
3. “The faith” is our faith in God
4. It was David’s steadfast faith in God that enabled him to overcome the giant (1 Samuel 17:37)

5. Christ shows us how to resist Satan's attacks by firmly trusting in God's word (Matthew 4:3-11)
6. Ephesians 6:10-18 describes the elements of the whole armour of God that he gives us, which enables us to resist the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18)

IV. BE ASSURED (9)

- A. Your suffering is not unique
 1. There is a temptation for believers undergoing a trial to think they are alone in their suffering (1 Kings 19:10)
 2. Our temptations are "such as is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- B. We may be encouraged by the faithfulness of other persecuted brethren
 1. Others have fought the same fight and have prevailed by God's grace
 2. That same grace is available to me, to enable me to stand firm under the same afflictions
 3. The "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) of the martyrs throughout history should be the careful study of every believer to both reprove us and encourage us

CONCLUSION

1. Satan is a powerful being, more powerful than any human, and is exerting great influence in the world
2. The vast majority of humanity are under his bondage and control, yet do not realise it
3. Only by the grace of God in Christ may we be delivered from the jaws of this devouring lion

4. The sons of Sceva thought they could overcome Satan without first receiving Christ, and were sorely defeated (Acts 19:13-16)
5. Before we can resist the devil, we must be submitted to God (James 4:7)
6. The tribulation saints are said to overcome the devil only by “the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11)
7. Can you say you are sober and alert to the spiritual warfare you are a part of, or has the world made you dull and drowsy?
8. There are many means by which we may allow the enemy to get an advantage of us, as we open doors to his influence in our homes and lives, and thereby give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:26-27; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11)
 - ✓ Occultic objects, books, media
 - ✓ Any form of idolatry, including images of Christ
 - ✓ Yoga and other forms of eastern meditation
 - ✓ Fornication and other forms of sexual immorality
 - ✓ Harboring bitterness or unforgiveness to others
9. Will you by the grace of God purge those evil things from your lives that you might stand against the attacks of the devil?
10. *“Is thy strength so small? Fear not the Lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith where it is, and for discovery of those that have none. Keep in the midst of the Path, and no hurt shall come unto thee”* (John Bunyan, The Pilgrim’s Progress)