

## Chapter 2 - The Nature of the Enemy

I have often said that it would be easier for us if Satan wore a red suit and walked around with a pitchfork. This picture causes us to either think that Satan is weak or that he is not real. He is real because the Bible tells us so.

Peter warned us of the devil in 1 Peter 5:8. He calls the devil a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. He is not talking about a physical attack, he is referring to a spiritual one. Besides getting us to do all sorts of wrong, Satan has vile motives for attacking us.

His motives include:

1. He wants us to reject Jesus as our savior.

By accepting the salvation that comes from Jesus, John 3:16 tells us that we will not perish but have everlasting life. Satan does not want us to claim that salvation.

2. He wants us to refuse to believe in him (Satan).

People believe that if we deny the existence of God then we are not accountable to Him. If we deny the existence of Satan then we are likely to fall into all of his traps and deceptions.

3. He wants us to end up where he ends up, in the Lake of fire.

Satan's end is set. John tells us that Satan will end up in the Lake of fire along with those that have not accepted the grace of God through Jesus.

4. He wants the opposite of everything that God wants for us.

2 Peter 3:9 tells us that God is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. So Satan wants us to perish with him and for no one to come to repentance.

If a person does not believe in the devil, he'll never seek to understand the traps he continues to fall into. He'll never seek to understand how to conquer the negative, debilitating, addictive, downward spiral of temptation.

The Bible and even Jesus tells us that Satan is real. Since Satan is real we should be asking ourselves, "How do I withstand his attacks?"

The first way is to realize that Satan is not omnipresent. He cannot be everywhere at once like God. Satan has an army of evil helpers, spirits (demons). These helpers are as committed to evil as Satan is. These minions follow Satan and have the same goals as Satan. They were willing to leave Heaven to serve Satan in his battle against man and God.

Ephesians 6:12 tells us *“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.”*

We are not battling someone that we can see, Satan is invisible. He is fully spirit and not flesh and blood. Satan is not alone, he has his minions to serve him.

In John 8:44, Jesus tells us that the devil is a murderer and a liar.

*John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks [a] lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies”.*

In John 10:10, Jesus tells us that the devil is a thief.

*John 10:10 – “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and [a]have it abundantly.”*

2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says that the devil (the serpent in Eden) is deceiving, crafty, leads us astray or away from God (corrupted).

*2 Corinthians 11:3 - “But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”*

“The person who is corrupted or seduced by a temptation follows the passions and desires of his own self rather than the will and commands of God.” (Stanley)

The devil strikes at our weaknesses and not our strengths. The devil is completely evil. Even when he uses good things to lure us, his final intent is evil. He is trying to lead us away from God.

Luke 15:10 tells us that *“there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”* We have to assume that there is similar celebration among Satan and his minions when someone chooses to reject Christ.

Satan never gives up on his pursuit of us. Always remember what 1 Peter 5:8, *“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion,*

*seeking someone to devour.*” Just because Peter wrote it more than 2000 years ago, it doesn’t make it any less true.

“You will never fully eliminate the devil’s temptation from your life. No matter how mature you may become spiritually, he still has access to you. . . There will never be a point at which you cease to be attacked.” (Stanley)

Consider that Satan tempted Eve in the Garden, God had a conversation with Satan about Job, then he showed up to tempt Jesus and now he is constantly attacking us today.

Romans 8:38-39 says *“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Satan can do nothing to remove the Holy Spirit from our lives once we claim the power of Jesus as savior in our lives. We cannot lose our salvation.

Satan knows that God is in control and that he cannot take what God will not allow. Consider what went on with God and Satan regarding Job. God had to allow Satan to attack Job. We cannot lose our salvation but that doesn’t stop Satan. He continues to attack us in order to undermine our dedication to Jesus. He wants our service of Christ to be weakened or ineffective. By doing so, our voice about grace through faith will be softened or not heard. If we live our lives discouraged or ineffective, our lives will be miserable and less fulfilling. Satan will fill your mind with doubts, and all manner of sickness, tragedy, and crises.

## **THE DEVIL HAS A PLAN OF ATTACK**

Satan wants to destroy our body, mind, or spirit, or all three.

Remember he wants to keep us from seeking and doing God’s will. God has a plan for our lives and if we fail then God is not glorified. Satan seeks to replace God in your life. Unlike God, he is good with any havoc that he can bring into our lives. He will even accept us denying Satan’s or God’s existence.

“The devil desires not only to destroy your possessions, your career, your family, your reputation in the community. He seeks to destroy who you are. He wants to demolish your character. He seeks to destroy your peace, joy, happiness, contentment, enthusiasm for life, willingness to take godly risks, generosity, and all other emotional states that are healthy or good.” (Stanley)

Satan’s attack is not a single event. “As long as you are alive and the devil exists, you will experience spiritual attacks.” (Stanley)

## **THE NATURE OF A SPIRITUAL ATTACK**

What is a satanic attack? Charles Stanley defines a satanic attack as: “ A satanic attack is a deliberate, willful, intentional, and well-designed act intended to bring harm to a person in any way—physical, mental, economic, relational, or spiritual.”

## **SATAN’S OBJECTIVES**

He has four objectives:

1. Satan seeks to draw us away from God. That’s always his ultimate goal.
2. Satan seeks to prevent us from doing God’s purpose and plan for our lives. He seeks to get us off track and out of the will of God for our lives.
3. Satan seeks to deny God the glory, honor, and praise due Him as we live godly lives of faith and trust in Him.
4. Satan seeks to destroy us—literally and eternally.

Another important scripture that we should memorize or keep close to our hearts is John 10:27-30

*John 10:27 “My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”*

Verse 28b tells us that even Satan cannot take away our salvation. Satan cannot undo the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives once we claim Jesus.

Charles Stanley says “The devil does have the power to attack us and tempt us. He has the power to deceive us and oppress us. In so doing, he has the power to:

- destroy the quality of our lives. He can send sickness and injury our way, to affect our physical, mental and financial well-being and our relationships.
- attack our peace and our joy. He can send agitation into the calm waters of our lives. He can stir up trouble for us and cause us to find ourselves in turmoil.
- use unbelievers or weak believers to harm us physically, but more often, in the things they say and do that undermine our reputations.
- bring confusion, anger, and frustration into situations and relationships—often for no apparent reason. The devil is a master at causing misunderstandings.
- decrease our witness for Christ on this earth and diminish our reward in heaven.

## **WE CANNOT DEFEAT THE DEVIL IN OUR OWN STRENGTH**

Matthew 17:14:22 tells us about a demon possessed boy that even the disciples could not help. Satan is the most powerful of all demons. What chance do we have against such a powerful being. James 4:7 tells us to "Submit to God, But resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

"We cannot defeat the devil by human intellect, cleverness, or force of personality. Defeating the devil is the work of Jesus Christ alone, and that work has been accomplished on the cross." (Stanley)

Remember God / Jesus have no equals. Satan is not as powerful as Jesus. Psalm 18:2 tells us where we should go to defeat Satan. *"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my savior, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."*

Jesus defeated Satan when He rose from the death. God's "rest of the story" tells us that Satan will lose. Our stance must always be, "I cannot defeat the devil. But I can resist him and trust Jesus Christ to defeat him." (Stanley)

My favorite verse in the Bible is Philippians 4:13. With the power than comes from Christ we are invincible. Our enemy is strong but our Savior has unimaginable power.