

The Master Foe

Introduction. Throughout the scriptures Satan is set forth as the greatest enemy of God and man. Some teaching on Satan is included in every book of the New Testament. But instead of fearing and respecting him because of his power, we ridicule him. Much of the ridicule of Satan comes from the fact that we have read stories instead of studying the Bible. In order to avoid skepticism on the one hand and ridicule on the other, we need the scriptures to formulate our views of Satan.

The Bible portrays the Christian as engaged in warfare (Galatians 6:10-12). Our tendency is to overlook the spiritual aspect of our warfare. Too often our battles are fought on a carnal plane, person against person or organization against organization. Our most important responsibility is to fight the devil who caused man to leave the path of righteousness.

The devil and his angels are exceedingly numerous and highly organized. We need to know the character, power, and methods of the enemy in order to fight this battle intelligently. The glorious part of all of this is that we fight a defeated foe, and, remarkable as it may seem, our victory does not lie in having our minds occupied with the enemy, but rather in looking away to Jesus. This gives us the enthusiasm we need to fight.

I. *The Origin Of Satan*

- A. No one truly knows the origin of Satan because the Bible never divulges that information. He belongs to the angelic order of beings who apparently sinned before Adam and Eve (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; 1 John 3:8).
- B. When God created the world, He called it "very good," thus ruling out the existence of Satan from eternity. Furthermore, Isaiah 14:12 and Luke 10:18 are misused. They do not tell us about the origin of Satan (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29).
- C. The Bible reveals that Satan will inevitably be judged (Revelation 20:14-15). In fact, hell was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

II. *The Personality Of Satan*

- A. Approximately 174 times in the Bible pronouns and names are given to him (Job 1:8; Matthew 4:10; John 8:44) and deeds attributed to him (Job 1:9-11; Matthew 4:1-11; Jude 9), all signifying that he is an existent being.
- B. He is never called "it" or spoken of as merely an influence. He walks about and influences people for evil and instigates evil plans against God's people. The reason for presenting the fact of his personality is

that we might clearly understand that we are opposed by an intelligent and aggressive foe.

III. ***The Designations Of Satan***

A. Names.

1. Satan (55 times in the Bible; cf. Zechariah 3:1; Acts 5:3).
2. Devil (61 times in the New Testament; cf. Luke 4:13; Acts 10:38).
3. Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24).
4. Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15).

B. Titles.

1. The father of lies (John 8:44).
2. Prince of this world (John 12:31).
3. God of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4).
4. Prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2).
5. Tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5).
6. Adversary (1 Peter 5:8).
7. Wicked one (1 John 5:18).
8. Accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10).

C. Representations.

1. Serpent (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9).
2. Angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).
3. A roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8).
4. Dragon (Revelation 12:3).

IV. ***The Work Of Satan***

A. Satan alters our view of God and Christ.

1. The world turns God into a Heavenly "dad" and "best friend," ignoring the fact that He is the "high and lofty One" (Isaiah 57:15).
2. Decades of attacks on the personality and credibility of Christ have made Him, in lots of people's minds, a good moral teacher, but not the Son of God (Matthew 3:17).

B. Satan alters our view of morality.

1. Whereas we have become familiar with the requirements of morality in the Bible, the devil, through never-ending societal pressure, changes our perception of morality.
2. How many Christians have loosened their stances on modest apparel, divorce and remarriage, and homosexuality because of what they see around them?

C. Satan alters our view of the church.

1. A lot of people believe that the words "religion" and "gospel" are synonyms, but they are not. There are many religions in our country but that does not mean they are true.

2. The social gospel concentrates on education, legislature, standards of living, etc. These are not wrong in themselves, but they are inappropriately emphasized when God's people are expected to concentrate all their efforts in making them a reality.

D. Satan alters our view of ourselves.

1. The gospel teaches that a fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Self-control is needed to control our mind against the problems of life.
2. But worry, anger, harshness, rebellion, suspicion, revenge, fear, grief, contention, impatience, pride, conceit, jealousy, and many others wreck our view of ourselves.

V. ***The Defeated Satan***

A. The Lord said concerning the church that the gates of hell would not stand against it (Matthew 16:18). So then, those on the Lord's side are on the side of victory.

1. The basis of victory.
 - a) Satan was defeated at the cross of Christ (John 12:31; 16:11; Ephesians 1:18-20). He cannot penetrate the blood of Christ (Revelation 12:11).
 - b) Satan uses the fear of death to keep people in bondage to him (Hebrews 2:14-15). He does this by contrasting the anxiety and despair associated with death with the immediate, but temporary, gratification that can be obtained from following him.
2. The power for victory.
 - a) Our strength is not a human strength. It is the strength of God made available to us through Christ, which, when exercised, spells Satan's defeat (Romans 8:37; 11:33-36).
 - b) Satan is a powerful foe. No human being can hope to cope with him without Divine help. That help is found in the word of God (Deuteronomy 30:19; Psalm 119:105; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).
3. The technique for victory.
 - a) Failure on our part to submit to God means defeat at the hand of the enemy. Learn to "walk by faith, and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). We must understand the necessity of being armed with the "breastplate of faith" through our faith in Christ (John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 5:8).
 - b) A Christian must guard against an evil heart of unbelief above all else (Hebrews 3:12-13). Through trust in Christ's blood and willingness to obey Him, Christians resist the devil and he flees from them (James 4:7; Revelation 2:10).

B. In order to be victorious in the "good fight of faith," we must take great pains to restrain the attitude of heart which signals that unbelief

is taking over our minds. Spend time studying and meditating on the "great and precious promises" of God (2 Peter 1:3-4; cf. Lamentations 3:40-41).

Conclusion. A lot of people wonder who the most preeminent preacher is of our time. I will tell you: it is the devil. For those in business, he is never out of his office. For those who are homemakers, he is always at home. For those in agriculture, he is always at the plow. He is never on vacation. Satan is real and he is waiting for us (2 Corinthians 2:11).

The moment you and I became Christians, we were made members of the body of Christ as surely as my finger is a member of my body. It is for that reason that we come under Satan's attacks, for the venom of his hatred is aimed at Christ through us. But just as he lost in his battle with Christ, so will Satan lose in his battle with us when we learn to stand our ground against him in the grace and strength provided by our Savior. Satan will prevent you from being a child of God and if you are a child of God, he will want to keep you from being a righteousness one.