

Sunday, March 19, 2023 pm

STUDIES IN 1 PETER (30)
Your Adversary, the Devil
1 Peter 5:8-9

As we begin to draw 1 Peter to its conclusion, we find a final admonition before his farewell remarks. In 1 Peter we have addressed suffering for the cause of Christ in a world that stands opposed to God and Christ Jesus and His followers. There are many ways that we may “suffer for the cause of Christ”, from severe persecutions to material losses to inconveniences and disappointments. As we have continually noted Peter is preparing His brethren for what is likely going to be worse times ahead.

Of course, behind these persecutions is the devil. So, in this lesson, let us pause and talk about the devil. In our lesson today we want to address our adversary, the devil.

I. Who is Satan?

- a. Satan is real
 - i. He is NOT merely a force as some contend. Nor is he something made up to justify why people behave badly.
 - ii. He is a being, though we are uncertain of his origin or fall.
 - iii. He appears 3 times in scripture – 1) To Eve in the garden, in the form of the serpent; 2) To God in heaven to accuse Job; and 3) To Jesus as He faced temptations.
- b. Terms used to describe him – one of the best ways to understand Satan is by the terms that are used to describe him.
 - i. **Devil** – diabolos – a word found about 38 times in the NT, 34 of which apply to Satan himself (3x the word is used to describe people that are slanderers). The word means slanderer and describes what Satan does. When he appeared to Eve he sought to slander God (Genesis 3:4-5). When he appeared before God as recorded in Job, he sought to slander Job (Job 1:9-11). He strives to discredit us anyway that he can.
 - ii. **Satan** – his formal name if there is one. The word means an enemy and is often associated with slandering. Satan appeared to Jesus – Matthew 4:10 where Jesus called him Satan (the other usages are devil). It was Satan who entered Judas to betray Jesus (Luke 22:3) and he was behind Peter rebuking and later denying Jesus (Matthew 16:23, Luke 22:31ff). Certainly, we need to view Satan as our enemy.
 - iii. **Adversary** – only in our text describing him – again, he is an enemy.
 - iv. **Belial** – 2 Corinthians 6:15 – (or beliar) means worthlessness, extreme wickedness. Some scholars have described this as the Jewish name for Satan. Found only once in the NT.
 - v. **Deceiver** – Revelation 12:9 – in this text he is also described as “the great dragon” and “that serpent of old”, called the Devil and Satan. Revelation 20:10 notes that the devil, who deceived men, was cast into the lake of fire. 2 Corinthians 11:3 describes him as the one who deceived Eve in the garden by his craftiness. 2 Corinthians 2:11, while not using the term speaks of his devices by which he takes advantage of us. Satan will deceive us in any and every way that he can.be
 - vi. **Beelzebub** – lord of the flies – Luke 11:15, etc. Actually, Beelzebub was a Philistine god, but when Jesus was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebub, Jesus understood they were attributing the title to Satan (Luke 11:18, cf. Mark 3:22-23, “...How can Satan cast out Satan?” Jesus asked.)

- vii. **The enemy** -Matthew 13:39. In the parable of the wheat and tares, Jesus identified the devil as “the enemy”. In this parable he is acting as an enemy trying to damage the good works of God’s people (the sons of the kingdom).
 - viii. **The wicked one** (evil one) – Matthew 13:19 in explaining the parable of the Sower, Jesus describes Satan as “the wicked one” (cf. Mark 4:15, and devil in Luke 8:12). The word used here is found about 78x in the NT mostly as evil and then wicked, etc.
 - ix. **God of this age** – 2 Corinthians 4:4 – this describes his dominion, where he has influence. Understand he does NOT have ultimate control, but where he has reign in in this world among those who allow him to rule their lives, which sadly is overwhelmingly the majority.
 - x. **Prince of the power of the air** – Ephesians 2:2. This is another description of Satan as the world is his dominion. John 12:31 calls him “the ruler of this world”
 - xi. **The tempter** – Matthew 4:3 – as Jesus is led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, he is described as the tempter. Of course, temptation is what he uses to capture us (James 1:12-15). 1 Thessalonians 3:5 – Paul was concerned that they had been tempted by the tempter, and thus he sent to know of their faith.
 - xii. **A liar and father of lies** – John 8:44. Jesus spoke of the corrupt Jewish leaders as being of their father the devil. He then described him as a murderer who does not stand for truth because there is no truth in him. Furthermore, he is a liar and the father of lies. Satan lied to Eve and everything he has done since is rooted in deceit and lies.
 - xiii. These are some of the descriptions of Satan and gives us an understanding of who we are facing as we strive to serve God. He is behind all the sorrows of this world, whatever persecutions we face, and the struggles with temptation we endure.
- c. We must be aware of his devices. 2 Corinthians 2:11 warns about this and it ties into our text. But for a brief moment, let us consider some of the devices Satan uses¹. Those listed here are by no means exhaustive.
- i. The word “devices” implies plotting and scheming, or his thoughts or purpose.
 - ii. At times, he transforms himself into an angel of light – 2 Corinthians 11:12-15, and so do his ministers. Paul called them false apostles and deceitful workers. The point is that sometimes the wicked disguise or cover up their evil intents. They try to appear as honorable to gain a following or trust so that they can exploit their victims. In the case of Satan, EVERYONE is his targeted victim. It is up to us to NOT be victimized.
 - iii. He uses deceivers, false brethren and teachers, also associated with the above text. 1 Timothy 4:1 speaks of those who depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... 2 Peter 2:1 notes that false teachers will bring in destructive heresies and deceive many to follow them.
 - iv. He uses the world – 1 John 2:15-17 warns us about the avenues of lust that drive men. One of our biggest adversaries today is worldliness – people want to enjoy life and do what they want to do. And for many, that involves sinful practices which bring instant and temporal gratification.
 - v. He uses suffering – the very theme of 1 Peter we have been discussion involves warnings to prepare to suffer for the cause of Christ. Why such strong warnings, because suffering is the catalyst that will cause many to turn away from following Jesus. In the Parable of the Sower, the stony ground describes a heart that when faced with troubles withers away – Matthew 13:20-21. TRUST me when I say, sufferings will be the spiritual downfall of many. Satan knows this and WILL exploit you if you are not prepared.

¹ This list of devices, as well as some of the content associated with the various descriptions of Satan are based on the Truth Commentary on 1 Peter by Clinton D. Hamilton, © 1995, Guardian of Truth Foundation. Pp. 487, 477-487.

- vi. He seeks to create doubt in our minds. That is what he did with Eve in Genesis 3:4-6. For many today, all he has to do is plant seeds of doubt to cause them to question their faith, and for many, they give up.
- vii. He is also crafty – Ephesians 6:11 speaks of the “wiles of the devil”. That word means scheming or craftiness. The word is used 2x both in Ephesians. 4:14 describes us being “*tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.*” And Ephesians 6:11, Wiles of the devil. Interestingly, our English word, “method” is likely derived from this Greek word. Satan “strategizes” and schemes continually as to what he can do. He is patient and will use generations, if needed, to accomplish his plans. That is why today, the prevailing wickedness can be traced by to decades of neglect and step by step indoctrination.

II. Our text

- a. What can we do about Satan as we struggle to overcome tribulations and trials in this life? See our text.
- b. Be sober – serious and awake, not dulled. The word is found twice before in this letter – 1 Peter 1:13 – gird up the loins of your mind, be sober...; 4:7 – be serious and watchful in your prayers. 2 Corinthians 2:11 – we must not be ignorant of his devices. WE often speak of being alert and watchful – see also 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8. We HAVE to be looking!
- c. Be vigilant – we are aware and cautious. Soberness means we are awake and alert, being vigilant means we do this ALL the time. We take precautions to ensure we are ready. We study to find vulnerabilities so that we can strengthen those areas. 1 Corinthians 16:13, Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Again, 1 Thessalonians 5:6 – *but let us watch and be sober.* ALSO, consider Ephesians 6:10-18 where we are called upon to put on the WHOLE armor of God. We are preparing ourselves to face him.
- d. Satan is seeking to devour us – *he walks about like a roaring lion*, - this is WHY we are watching. We have just addressed his scheming. The term *devour* is a strong one that means to completely and SUDDENLY consume us. He will not be satisfied until we are completely his.
- e. Resist him, steadfast in the faith –
 - i. “The faith” here is likely a reference to God’s word. In the same way Jesus resisted Satan with God’s word, so we must learn to do as well.
 - ii. Resist him – let it be understood that Satan CAN be defeated and overcome.
 - iii. First, Jesus defeated Him when He arose – John 12:31 – He has cast out “the ruler of this world” Hebrews 2:14-15 notes, *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* According to Matthew 25:41, Hell fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. One day he WILL be cast into that eternal torture (Revelation 20:10-15)
 - iv. James 4:7 tells us that if we resist the devil, he will flee from you.
 - v. We have Jesus as an example – Hebrews 4:15 – He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. After being tempted in the wilderness, we are told that the devil left Him for a season (Matthew 4:11). NOTE: This is a good place to insert 1 Corinthians 10:13 – there is NO temptation that God cannot and will not provide the way of escape.
- f. Knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world - NOTE: This says something about the widespread influence of Christianity as Peter writes, likely it the early 60s. Also, note that you are not alone if you suffer as a Christian. And that is something we have addressed throughout our studies of this book. This means there are others you can call upon to help you and stand with you as you face the difficulties of faithfulness in a faithless society.

And thus we are encouraged one final time to prepare for the trials and tribulations that might come with service to God. Peter has given many admonitions and encouraging thoughts to help us as we deal with difficulties. These are centered around the fact that WE NEED EACH OTHER as God's people. All we have left are some concluding remarks that we will address in our final lesson of this book. Meanwhile, I conclude by asking, What are you doing to prepare for Satan and his attacks? Think about it!