

02 – KNOWING YOUR ENEMY

- ✓ Last time, I said it's important to have an accurate view of the devil. (If we *over-estimate* him, we'll shrink back from the fight. If we *under-estimate* him, we won't be on guard, as the Bible tells us to.) Let's see if we can build a Scriptural image of the enemy.

Facts About the Devil

1.) The Devil is Real

- ✓ I really shouldn't need to say that. But, according to a recent survey by George Barna, a staggering number of professing Christians said they see Satan as a *symbol* of evil, and not a real person. (Only 26% strongly agreed that he's a person, and not symbolic. That's crazy!)
- ✓ Every New Testament writer confirms the devil's existence and work. He's mentioned 29 times in the Gospels alone; and twenty-five of those came from Jesus himself. **Jesus and the apostles believed in the devil. So should we.**
- ✓ (We're not going to discuss Lucifer's fall in this series. We all know he's a fallen angel. I'd rather focus on how we defeat him ...)
- ✓ Last week, I also said that **Satan presents himself as being more powerful than he is.** Let's make sure that we're thinking Scripturally about him.

2.) God and Satan are Not Equal Opposites!

- ✓ Satan is a fallen angel. As such, he has the *power* and *abilities* of an angel. (Nothing more.) **He's not God's equal.** (God is on another level entirely.)
 - God is omnipresent – (He's everywhere at once).
 - God is omniscient – (He's all knowing).
 - God is omnipotent – (He's all powerful).

- ✓ Satan is none of those things. I can prove that with one verse.

1 Peter 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, **walketh about, seeking** whom he **may** devour.”

NOT OMNIPRESENT

NOT OMNISCIENT

NOT OMNIPOTENT

- a.) Satan isn't everywhere, but he does have a highly organized kingdom.

Eph. 6:12 – “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies.**”

- ✓ Those are the four classes of evil spirits. (Wicked spirits in the Heavenlies are the evil spirits that rule over countries, etc. Daniel 10:20.)
- b.) Satan isn't all-knowing, but he does study us.
 - ✓ Not only is he a student of human nature (in general); he also watches us *individually* and he strategizes against us *individually*. (You can see that in the life of Judas. He knew exactly what “buttons” to push to get Judas to betray Jesus.)
- c.) Satan isn't all-powerful. God is MUCH stronger
 - ✓ We've discussed this before. When Satan is thrown in the bottomless pit (after the 2nd Coming), it only takes *one* angel to do it.
 - ✓ In Scripture, we see expressions of God's power. When God Created the *universe*, He Used His Fingers (Ps. 8:3). When He Created the *earth*, He Used His Hands (Heb. 1:10). When He *saved us*, He Used His Arm (Isa. 59:16). But what about when Jesus cast out devils? How much power did *that* take?

Luke 11:20 – “But if I **with the finger of God** cast out devils ...”

- ✓ God and Satan are not equal opposites! (Satan’s not even close!)


3.) Satan Was Utterly Defeated at the Cross

Col. 2:15 (Phillips) – “And then having drawn the sting of all the powers ranged against us, he exposed them, **shattered, empty and defeated**, in his final glorious triumphant act!”

- ✓ Let’s do a test. When I say the word “devil”, what comes to mind? If you don’t think, “empty, shattered and defeated”, then you still have some *mind renewing* to do! Jesus defeated him! (Genesis 3:15 said that the Messiah, when He came, would crush the serpent’s head. That absolutely happened!)

Then Why Is the Devil Still a Problem?

- ✓ The obvious question, then, is this: If Jesus defeated the devil, how is he still able to cause so much trouble?
- ✓ Let me answer it like this: Romans 1:20 tells us that **God illustrates spiritual truth by what we see in nature**. (This is such a great example of that!)
- ✓ Did you know that if you cut off a rattlesnake’s head, it’s still dangerous for a while? A (web article) headline from Global News reads: “This Rattlesnake Was Decapitated – But It Still Bit a Man, and the Venom Nearly Killed Him”. (June 7, 2018)
- ✓ Here’s an Excerpt: “‘My husband came over and grabbed a shovel and cut off the snake’s head’, Jennifer said. ‘Around ten minutes later, my husband went to pick up the snake’s remains to dispose of them, and that’s when – unexpectedly – the reptile bit him. The head actually turned around and grabbed onto his hand.’”
- ✓ (As it turns out, that’s fairly common.)

- ✓ Another headline reads: “Severed Snake Heads Can Still Bit They Often Do”. The tagline reads: “A spitting cobra in Chirina reportedly bit a man 20 minutes after the animal was decapitated.” 

- ✓ What a great picture of the enemy! Jesus crushed Satan’s head, yet if you cooperate with him, he can still be dangerous.

4.) Satan Hates You, and Has a Terrible Plan for Your Life

- ✓ Just like *God* has a perfect will for your life, the devil has a perfect will for you. Satan’s perfect will for your life is death. His permissive will is to see you sick, broke, defeated, and miserable.
- ✓ Another thing he’d love (in this war) is to get you fighting on his side. (You’re probably saying, “But I’m a Christian! I’d never fight on the devil’s side!”)
- ✓ Of course, you’re not going *volunteer*! But he could *trick* you into it. How does he do that? Usually by getting you into strife or offense.
- ✓ Think About It: If I’m the devil, all I need to do is make you mad. If you’re like a lot of people, you’ll probably pick up a “weapon” and start firing on a fellow Christian ... (or your church.)

Prov. 12:18 – “**Reckless words are like thrusts of a sword ...**”

Prov. 30:14 – “They use their words like swords; **they cut and slash others to pieces.**”

Prov. 18:8 (NLT) – “**(Words) sink deep into one’s heart.**”

2 Tim. 2:25 – (Discussing Offended People) – “Perhaps God will grant a change of heart, enabling them to escape the devil’s trap, where they are **caught and held captive**, and **forced to run the devil’s errands.**”

- ✓ While we’re discussing strategies, let’s discuss one of his greatest strategies ... persistence.

5.) You Can Learn a Lot About the Enemy by Looking at His Names and Titles.

- ✓ One of his titles gives us insight into a strategy he uses on all of us.

The “Devil”

- ✓ Our English word “devil” comes from the Greek word “diabolos”, which is a compound of the words “*dia*” and “*ballos*”.
 - ✓ “Dia” means “to penetrate” or to “break through”. And “ballo”, means “to throw”. When you put them together, it means to repeatedly throw thoughts & temptations at the mind – striking *again and again* until it wears the person down and breaks through their defenses.
 - ✓ Satan doesn’t give up easily. In every attack, no matter what it is, he’s incredibly persistent! You have to outlast him if you want to win! You have armor and weapons, and you can defeat him!
 - ✓ Let’s wrap this up. We’ve looked at some of the most important things you need to know about the enemy.
- a.) Jesus defeated Satan at the Cross. (He left him empty, shattered and defeated.)
 - b.) Even though he’s defeated, he can still be dangerous. (If you try to *ignore* him, or worse yet; if you *cooperate* with him, he can defeat you.)
 - c.) He’s no gentleman. He’ll show up uninvited – to tempt you, attack you, or lie to you.
 - d.) God has provided you with armor and weapons. (We’ll discuss those things in the weeks to come.) If you’ll put on your armor and use your weapons, you can successfully enforce the devil’s defeat.