

YOUR EVIL ENEMY

A recent survey shows 67 percent of Americans believe in Satan. Another poll shows 57 percent of U.S. Christians do not believe the Devil is real. Why such confusion about "*the evil one*"? If you read the Bible, you know about waging spiritual warfare against three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The glimpses of Satan in Scripture lead many people to speculate remarkably too much. CS Lewis has well said, "*There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.*" You can believe too much or too little about Satan. What does the Bible teach?

1- Define your spiritual adversary. Scripture refers to that ancient serpent, the dragon, the devil, Satan, the evil one, the adversary, the enemy. All these monikers refer to an angelic being who led fallen angels in rebellion against God. This evil one is the devil, and his followers demons and devils. Satan is a created being, and so limited in scope and power - not even close to equal with God in any sense.

A- The devil is a deceiver. We first meet him in Genesis 3:1 where he is described as "*more crafty*" than any other creature. His beguiling words to Eve are, "*did God actually say?*" as he twists the Word of God. He does this in Matthew 4, seeking to deceive Jesus. In John 8:44 Jesus says, "*the devil does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*" Satan knows the Bible well. Better than you. But he lies about it.

2 Corinthians 11:14 describes false teachers as "*deceitful workmen,*" agents of Satan, "*and no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.*" The evil one is a master of disguise, more crafty and beguiling than even you. That's why you must be hearers and doers of God's Word, the Bible.

B- The evil one is a tempter. Your "flesh" is enemy number one because it is always with you. As James 1:14 says, "*Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*" Satan simply uses the world and the flesh against you. 1 John 2:16 says "*All that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of possessions - is not from the Father but is from the world.*" In Genesis 3:6, "*when Eve saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and gave some to her husband who was with her.*" In verse 13 she says, "*The serpent deceived me and I ate.*" But the seed of temptation is in you.

C- The adversary is a murderer. In John 8:44 Jesus says, "*the devil was a murderer from the beginning*" and was behind the religious leaders trying to kill Jesus. John 3:12 says, "*Cain was of the evil one and murdered his brother Abel*" and verse 15 equates hate with murder. In Genesis 3, the result of sin was death (Romans 6:23). Throughout Scripture, Satan is associated with death and killing, including child sacrifice in the Old Testament, which is akin to abortion through history and today.

D- The enemy is an opposer. In Matthew 16:23, Jesus talked about the coming cross. Peter rebuked him, but Jesus said, "*get behind me Satan, you are a hindrance to Me, for you are not setting your mind on things of God, but on things of man.*" Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 the apostle Paul writes, "*we wanted to come to you, but Satan hindered us.*" Satan is the evil spiritual influence behind the world's rebellion and opposition to God. He stokes the fires of rebellion in your heart and mind and will.

2- Determine your spiritual weapons. Satan is a powerful spiritual foe, but God has not left you defenseless. You have His divine weapons of truth and power, which you wield mightily as you yield to Jesus as Lord, trusting and obeying Him. Jesus defeated the devil, and gives you the victory. Next time we'll explore how God equips you with powerful spiritual weapons, deployed in the power of the Spirit.