
“Know Your Enemy” Part 1
The Devil: Knowing Fact from Fiction” (Revelation 12:9):
Pastor Peter Yi
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NIV Revelation 12:9 ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Introduction: Knowing your opponent (enemy)

If you are at least a casual sports viewing enthusiast, you probably know that all upper level teams study their opponents. They don't just arrive at the competition with a 'let's see what they've got' mentality. They spent countless amounts of time dissecting every single aspect of their opponent's game. So teams not only have the job of trying to improve their own skill and level of play, but they have to also must know what the strengths and weaknesses of their opponents are. They need to know how to exploit those weaknesses—where's the chink in their armour. At what position are they lacking skill, experience and talent? What blind spots do they have? They need to know what their opponent's habits are—that is, what are the things that they do consistently, that you can be sure you'll come against when you play them.

Dennis Rodman. -Rebounding
Mike Singletary. -defense

And so coaches and players will spend hours upon hours of time studying video of their opponents, trying to get an edge, and find that weakness to exploit, for one singular purpose—VICTORY!

Now as Christians, we too, are in a real battle against a real opponent, or better yet, a real enemy. But for many reasons we do not take this battle very seriously, especially when the stakes are so high. It's not about winning or losing a game. It's not about thousands and millions in endorsement money. It's not the privilege to carry a trophy. It's a lot more serious than that.

The contest we are in is about eternal life and eternal death, both our lives and those of others. It's about the difference between living a victorious life as opposed to living a defeated life. It's about being a part of the cosmic plan of God's Kingdom. It's about living, up to our fullest potential, right smack in the center of God's perfect will. It's about all those things and more.

And so today we're embarking on a short journey about the spiritual battle we are in called “Know Your Enemy”. Today we'll be answering the question, “Who is our enemy?”, Next week, we'll be answering the question, “What are the enemies tactics?” and then in the third week, we'll answer the question, “How do we defend against him?”

Use Caution and Common Sense

As I think about this subject in our day, I think there's always a danger in talking about the unseen spiritual world. People's ears perk up and our attention is heightened when we hear stories of the supernatural. I think it's always been that way. Perhaps it began when we were children at those sleepovers. What did we always do at sleepovers? Tell ghost stories. We'd tell each other ghost stories, scare ourselves to death and end up not getting a wink of sleep. I think that fascination

carries on into our adulthood. I remember as a young Christian in university listening very intently to accounts of spiritual encounters such as demonic manifestations, supernatural occurrences like visions and miracles. We're all deeply interested in that stuff. It's probably because we know so little about it and also because we are spiritual beings.

In any case we need to exercise caution, and as with anything, but especially with this subject, we have to always allow the scriptures to determine what is true and what is not. Never, especially in this case, allow personal or second hand experience determine what is true or false about these matters.

Preliminary warnings:

I want to continue by sharing a couple of preliminary warnings regarding this subject.

The first warning is not to *overdemonize* the situation. This is when we see the devil everywhere, and if isn't of God, then it's of the devil. If it isn't black it's white. If something good's happening then it's from God. If something bad is happening it's from the devil. So if you got injured playing sports, it was the devil. Or if you got into a car accident, it was the devil. Or if you lost your job, it was the devil. Global warming? The devil.

There are several problems with this position.

- 1) This view is an oversimplification of reality. Life or reality is usually not so cut and dry. It's usually much more complicated than that type of thinking. When we delve into this subject, we can't go very far before asking ourselves the question of the origin of evil. And this question, that's been bugging the Christian and non-Christian world since our existence, I don't think we can ever know the answer while we're living. And when we get into that issue, things can get really complicated. What we can do is to, by God grace, try to best understand our reality with the information God has given us in his word.
- 2) It fails to recognize the sovereignty of God in the complex issue of what the devil does and how much he can do and when he can do and so on (which we'll look at later on). In other words, if the devil is everywhere, then where is God in all of this?
- 3) It'll drive you crazy.

But the greater problem for all of us living in the over educated, over industrialized, over secularized West, is the exact opposite of seeing the devil everywhere, and that is not seeing the devil anywhere. I think this is a big problem for many of us. Most of us wouldn't know a spiritual attack if it hit us on our noses. We wouldn't know a demonic influence if it came to us in neon letters spelling out "demonic influence". We think people are weird that speak too much about the demonic. We get puzzled looks when people say things like, "God said to me..." or "I sensed in my spirit..." or "I felt an evil presence."

We have science to explain things and if science can't explain it, then it's better not to talk about such things.

We're rational people and we pride ourselves in the ability to use our minds. And we often times can't wrap our minds around the supernatural world so we do what all truly rational people do, we ignore it, right?

But the fact of the matter is that many of us, if not all of us Christians, have indeed had spiritual (demonic) encounters of some kind, is it not? We've had that weird dream. We've felt oppressed and under the devil's influence. We've sensed something was not right.

So both of those extremes are not good. We don't want to see the devil everywhere, because he isn't. And we don't want to ignore him completely either.

The Bible's teaching on the Devil

What we need then, is to allow the Scriptures to determine what the reality is regarding our enemy, the devil.

1. The Devil is real.

The Bible not only assumes it, but also makes it explicit that the Devil is a real entity. Some folks think that the devil just an impersonal force, the yin of God's yang. The evil balancer of the good in the world. But this would be incorrect. The bible makes it very clear that the Devil is a person, an individual, not just a force. It'd be a huge mistake to ignore him, to stick our heads in the sand, and pretend he didn't exist.

2. Who is he, the devil? Or who are they, demons?

- Demons are fallen angels or evil angels. They're the counterpart to good angels.

Let's take a look at a couple of verses?

NIV 2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

NIV Jude 1:6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

- The Devil is the leader of all the angels, and his proper name is Satan.
- They have free will – to obey God or disobey God just like human beings.

3. Where did he or where did they come from?

- They are created beings.
- They fell into sin sometime after the creation and before the fall of man. After God created the heavens and the earth, planets, trees, water, animals, plants, humans... God said, it was good, meaning that everything that he created was good. But when we get to chapter three of Genesis, in comes the serpent, lying and deceiving Adam and Eve to sin against God. So scholars say that some time between those two events, a chunk of the angels fell and in turn became evil angels or demons.

4. He's got a bunch of names, each of which describe his activity.

You and I, we can learn a lot about someone by their titles. I'm a Korean by birth, an American by citizenship, a Canadian by adoption. I'm a man, son, a brother, a father, a husband. I'm a pastor. I'm a fisherman, a sports enthusiast. And the list can go on and on. And all of that describes who I am, and a lot of my activity.

Let's look at the Devil's many names.

- Satan (Rev. 12:9) – his proper name
- Devil (Mat. 4:1ff) – greek word for accuser, or slanderer

- Accuser (Rev. 12:10)
- Belial (2Co. 6:15) recklessness, lawlessness.
- Beelzebub (Mat. 12:24) literally, the god of dung. Lord of this lower world, the foul prince of demons
- Enemy, Adversary (Luk. 10:19)
- Evil one (Mat. 5:37)
- Liar (Joh. 8:44)
- Great dragon (Rev. 12:9) combining gigantic strength with craft, malignity, and venom (Rev. 12:3). The dragon's color, "red," fiery red, implies that he was a murderer from the beginning.
- Serpent (Gen. 3:1ff) subtle, cunning, deceiving, poisonous
- Murderer (Joh. 8:44)
- Prince of this world (Joh. 12:31) world meaning the realm of evil humankind. Who's the leader? Not President Bush, it's the Devil.
- Ruler of the kingdom of the air (Eph. 2:2) – Ruler of the evil spiritual realm.
- Prowling lion – (1Pe. 5:8) – devour, aims to kill us

If he's all these things and more then we have a powerful enemy to deal with. It'd be wise for us to know who he is, what he can do, how he operates, and how to defend and attack, and overcome his schemes.

5. He's defeated.

- He's defeated, he's sentenced, but you can say he's out on parole. Or his sentence has yet to begin.

Luke 10:18 18 He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Hebrews 2:14 4 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil--

6. What does he do?

The devil is passionately engaged in opposing God and the work of Christ, especially in tempting humans.

He's the originator of sin. He was the tempter in the garden at a time when sin had not yet come into the human world.

John 8:44 says this:

John 8:44 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Matthew 4's example of Jesus' temptation by the Devil.

He hinders people from becoming Christians.

He keeps people in bondage

He tempts and deceives.

Conclusion:

I want to conclude by reminding all of us what Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-12

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and

blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

We mustn't get fooled into thinking that the life we're living is merely a physical one. It's much more than that. There is a spiritual battle that we're in the thick of, every single one of us. It doesn't matter if you're a Christian or not, all of us are in this battle. And we can either ignore it which is a bad move, or we can engage it, which is what God calls us to do, by first of all knowing the truth and then acting upon it. And we'll look more deeply into that in the coming weeks.

Let's pray.

