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Introducing the Angel of Light

Framing the Flock, Part 5

1 Peter 5:8a & Selected Scripture

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

We are in a constant battle, a spiritual battle. Satan is out to seek and destroy us. He wants to destroy our character, our joy, and our faith. He wants to hinder the spread of the Gospel. He wants us to fall into sin and away from God. He wants us to live for the world, sleep in on Sundays, and pray less. It's a very real battle that we must always be ready and willing to fight. We must put on our armor and cling to Jesus for the strength and grace to get through it. We must keep following Jesus no matter what.

Discussion Points:

Pastor Davey mentions that nearly 1 out of every 2 people in America under the age of 35 believe Satan is simply a metaphor for a dark force or an evil energy. Scripture, however, makes it very clear that Satan is real.

- What are some views of Satan that you have heard when talking with others?
- What is your view of Satan?
- Why (do you think) have we painted our picture of him (pointy tail, red face, etc.) that is not actually accurate?

Last week we studied how Jesus truly cares for us. He knows and loves us through each and every circumstance.

- How does that help your perspective on studying the verse for this week?
- Why is it so important that we understand and believe the truth that Jesus really does care?
- What is our responsibility in light of that truth?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Satan is described by many different names in the Bible.

- What names/references for Satan can you find in Scripture?
- What does that tell you about him?
- Is Satan someone we should fear?

Gospel Connection:

We need the Gospel as we go about our daily lives fighting this spiritual battle. Apart from Christ, we cannot have true victory. Through Christ, we can have true joy, peace, love, gentleness, faith, strength, and a strong testimony. Through Christ, we can know that we are never alone, that we have Someone who is fighting for us and leading us as we go about our daily lives. He provides the armor we need to defeat Satan when he tries to defeat us. Apart from the Gospel, we have no defense. But with the Gospel, we have the strongest defense.

Practical Implications:

Think: What areas of your life do you see Satan getting the upper hand? What are some Scripture verses you can claim to have victory in those areas?

Pray: Ask God to help you fight this spiritual battle. Ask Him to give you wisdom and strength as you go about your daily life. Ask Him to help you put on the armor of God and walk in the Spirit.

Do: Be thankful for the Gospel, and the victory you have in Christ. Don't let Satan get you down. Remember who God is and fight your spiritual battle through His strength.

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1 Peter 5:8a & Selected Scripture

In his classic parable, *The Screw Tape Letters*, C.S. Lewis warned that there were two extreme errors into which our race can fall regarding the devil and his demons. One extreme is to have an unhealthy interest in them and the other extreme is to disbelieve their existence. Lewis wrote that the demonic world actually delighted in either extreme.

In other words, when it comes to Satan, in particular, one camp overestimates his attributes and looks behind every tree for his presence while the other camp underestimates his abilities and doesn't give him a second thought. Both perspectives are dangerous.

And for the believer especially, who believes the record of scripture in the details regarding a literal Devil, the danger is in never giving him a second thought – refusing to stay alert to the danger and the deception and disruption that he can bring.

Many years ago I shared with our much smaller church family something I used to look forward to each year as a kid. It wasn't something I recommend, by the way. I couldn't help but think of it as I came to this point in our study.

My brothers and I, along with some friends from the neighborhood would go up to the corner house up our street at nightfall. In his yard were several peach trees. And there was a row of hedges about waist high that bordered his yard and – on the other side of the hedge row – a busy street.

That row of hedges gave us the perfect ambush site where we'd store a pile of peaches. Just as a car drove past us, we'd jump up and let our peaches fly.

Most of the time we'd miss, but sometimes we'd hear that gratifying thump and we'd know that some ripe peach just splattered the target. That was such a thrilling sound – remember, at

this point I'm unconverted – I have not yet been called into the ministry.

Every once in a while a splattered car would screech to a halt, and we'd hear someone get out – yelling and running our way. They obviously had anger issues.

But we had our escape plan . . . we'd run to the other side of the yard, also bordered by a hedge row and we'd dive headfirst over those hedges and cut through a couple of back yards and make our way home, in time for supper and family devotions.

I think if you were to ask the average Christian their opinion of Satan – and looked at the evidence of how they lived – I think the average Christian imagines that Satan is just this little mischievous guy in the neighborhood who comes out of hiding every so often and lobs a few peaches at us as we drive through life. He makes a mess every so often, but it really doesn't do that much harm . . . it's like a ripe peach hitting the target.

If you take a close look at what God actually informs us, it's a vastly different picture. For one thing, Satan isn't throwing peaches, he's firing flaming missiles – fiery darts (Ephesians 6:16).

He doesn't have a pointed tail, a pitchfork and a bad sense of humor, either. In fact, what God's word has to say about him lets us know that the devil isn't interested in making a mess – he's actually interested in destroying your life – and everything about your life that matters.

The battle is real . . . the stakes are high . . . and Satan is serious. Every believer is in a holy war for their testimony and their integrity and their perspective and their joy and their fruit-bearing and faith growing – every day, battling temptations and deceptions, thoughts, words, deeds and even our own treasonous hearts which often conspire with him – along with our

fallen nature and the fallen world system that surrounds us to bring us to unfaithfulness and prayerlessness and rebellious sinfulness. This is more damage than a little pile of peaches could ever do.

If you take your copy of the First Letter written by the Apostle Peter – First Peter – and turn back to chapter 5 – where we left off with verse 7, you’ll be reminded that Peter has just delivered an incredible promise – 1 Peter chapter 5:7;

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Whatever troubles you – take it off you and cast it on Christ. Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He, literally – and here’s the promise – because He is continually caring for you.

You are under the constant care of Christ! That’s all you need, right? I mean, you can stop right there and coast from that point right on into heaven, right?

Without hardly taking a breath, Peter goes on to write in the very next verse;

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
1 Peter 5:8

Just when you thought the coast was clear and the water was calm – you get this tornado watch. Be careful; be alert – there’s a prowling lion out there . . . who has a taste for morsels like you.

But I thought Jesus cared . . . isn’t that the perfect ending for this letter . . . end of story . . . Yes beloved, Jesus cares . . . but . . .

Just because Jesus cares doesn’t mean we can become careless.

- Just because Jesus is interested, doesn’t mean we can be indifferent.
- Just because Jesus cares, doesn’t mean we can coast.

Peter is writing this warning to believers. And he isn’t talking here about spiritual birth – that was a gift you never once worked for; but this isn’t about your spiritual birth, this is about your spiritual growth – and it demands your full participation.

He isn’t writing here about our spiritual *birth* – he’s writing about our spiritual *battles*. Which is why the Apostle Paul describes for us the armor we’re to put on daily as we enter the fight (Ephesians 6)

One author put it into perspective this way: Casting our care upon Christ describes our privilege; being alert describes our pilgrimage. D. Edmond Hiebertⁱ

This is going to demand that we have some understanding of this roaring lion – our chief adversary in the world today.

So what I want to do, Lord willing, is spend the next few sessions exposing the truth of Satan, from scripture so that we know what to be alerted to,

- described by the Apostle Peter as your personal adversary (here in 1 Peter 5:8)
- this one described three times by our Lord Jesus as the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

Paul told the Corinthian church that he was concerned that **[Satan] *not be given any advantage of the believer, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*** (2 Corinthians 2:11).

We don’t just want to understand Satan, we want to understand his schemes. The word Paul uses for schemes refers to Satan’s intellectual capacity to plan and scheme and design masterful strategies against us.

Who is this masterful schemer, really? Who is this creature whom Peter the Apostle will describe as a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour?

How does he operate? Why does Peter essentially deliver a spiritual tornado watch – for us to be alert to the designs of the prince of this world system?

With that in mind, I want to slow down at this text . . . not as though we've actually been racing through 1 Peter . . . just a few more weeks and we'll be through with this letter.

But let's take the time to ask and answer some of the most critical questions we might have about this dangerous opponent who wants more than anything to tempt and divide and deceive and destroy.

The first question we need to ask and answer is – does Satan really exist? Does Satan really exist? And the answer is absolutely, yes!

Even though nearly 1 out of every 2 people in America under the age of 35 believe Satan is simply a metaphor for a dark force or an evil energy, Biblical evidence alone is conclusive on this point.

If you combine Genesis chapter 3 and verse 1 which tells us that the serpent came to tempt and deceive Eve in the garden – along with 2 Corinthians 11:3 where Paul writes,

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray. 2 Corinthians 11:3

You find Paul validating the Old Testament record of Satan's temptation and the fall of Adam and Eve and then using that account to warn the New Testament believer.

In fact, by the time you get to the New Testament, evidence for the existence of a real, living, breathing Devil grows larger; in 19 New Testament Books, Satan is mentioned by one of his many names and Jesus Christ Himself personally refers to Satan 25 different times.

So if he doesn't exist, the Old Testament is confused, the New Testament is confused – and the omniscient Lord of the universe is confused.

That leads me to the next question – Who exactly is Satan? What we learn from scripture is at least four truths about the origin of Satan.

1) Satan was created along with the other angels

The prophet Ezekiel reveals some of the characteristics of Satan when he writes in chapter 28 of the original angelic primacy and beauty of Satan;

You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond . . . was in you on the day that you were created . . . Ezekiel 28:11-13

Satan was created along with all the other angelic host, before the universe was created (***Job 38:7 tells us that they sang as God created the universe***).

Secondly,

2) Satan is from the cherub order of angelic beings

We tend to think of Cherubs as fat little baby angels with bows and arrow in their chubby little hands. But the Bible informs us that the cherub is the singular word for angels belonging to the Cherubim (plural) class or order of angel.

Ezekiel's words continue in chapter 28 regarding Satan;

You were the anointed cherub . . . you were on the holy mountain of God . . . you were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. Ezekiel 28:14-15

Satan was evidently created a member of the class of heavenly beings known as cherubim – and Satan was uniquely close to the throne of God.

The cherubim are the angels, by the way, most closely associated with the presence of God.

In fact, when the Ark of the covenant was built and placed into the Holy of Holies – the very presence of God on earth during the Tabernacle and Temple period – you may remember that the Ark – that golden covered

box – was crafted with two cherubim on either side of the lid or the Mercy Seat – it was between these two cherubim that the glory of God hovered (Exodus 25:20).

When Solomon built his temple, the workers carved the design of cherubim into walls and doors; in fact, by God’s own design order, cherubim were embroidered into the very fabric of the curtain that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (**Exodus 36:35**).

Now we know from other passages that angels in general have the ability to change their appearance. Some in scripture saw them as simply men, such as in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah when they came to warn Lot and his family that God was going to send down fire and brimstone and destroy these cities (**Genesis 19**).

Others saw angels as bright and shining creatures (**Revelation 15**). We do know that just about every time an angel appears in scripture to some human being, they are evidently so incredibly unique and stunning in their appearance – as a general rule – that the first thing they say to people is, “Don’t be afraid.”

There is so much about the cherubim and seraphim (another class of angel) that we are not told, and much of what we are told we cannot comprehend.

The Bible says that Satan is a fallen cherub – a beautiful and brilliant creature, capable of masquerading with incredible deception.

Which leads me to my third observation – again from Ezekiel;

3) Satan was created as the highest ranking Cherub.

God speaks and says . . . ***You were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you from the mountain of God . . . O covering cherub.*** Ezekiel 28:16-17

The words ***anointed*** from ***verse 14*** and this description in verse 16 of the ***covering cherub*** indicate that before Satan sinned against God, he was the highest ranking angelic creature.

The New Testament agrees, describing Satan as the leader of all the other fallen angels who rebelled against God; in fact, the demons are actually called his angels. Jesus refers to Hell, in ***Matthew 25:41***, as originally designed for ***the devil and his angels***.

We’re told something else about the origins of Satan; number four:

4) Satan lost his high position because of pride and envy

People often respond to the idea of Satan with cynicism – in fact, they turn this created being against us by saying something like, “Why would God create Satan if He knew Satan would become His evil enemy? And while we’re at it, why would God allow Judas to be born, knowing Satan would one day inhabit him and betray the Savior?”

God created the angels and every human being with self-determination. That is, the ability and the will to defy God or love God.

In other words, God did not create robots – without the ability to obey or disobey, hate or love.

Actually, that would have been unloving. He created angels and humans with the ability to exercise obedience toward Him and submission to Him.

The truth is, you can’t create light without creating the possibility of darkness; you can’t create love without creating then the opposite option of hatred; you can’t create someone with a will and a heart without creating the potential for that will to disobey and a heart to defy.

Ezekiel tells us that’s exactly what Satan chose to do – speaking of Satan’s fall he writes;

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground. Ezekiel 28:17

By the way, nowhere in the narrative are we told that when Satan rebelled that he lost his beauty; his splendor; or his magnetism.

In fact, if Satan walked into this auditorium, without us knowing who he was, our natural inclination would not be to run away from him, but to fall down and worship him.

Just like the Apostle John, who was taken on a tour of heaven, and at the sight of an angel, he fell down and began worshipping him. And the angel had to tell him to stop.

Satan is the most stunning of all angels. He is described as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

He's still dripping gemstones and gold and brilliant enchanting glamor.

But all of that corrupted as he chose to defy God. Isaiah the prophet records this of Satan's fall from the glorious position from among the highest cherubim.

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'
Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

Isaiah 14:12-15

Imagine, Satan attempted to pull off a coup against the throne of God. And he actually convinces several million angels to follow him in rebellion. He is defeated with one wave of God's sovereign hand and sent packing to roam the earth until his coming incarceration. And by the way, he isn't any happier now than he was when he failed.

And you, beloved, have become his enemy – against you he wars and tempts and distracts as he attempts to dishonor our Lord but also to

stifle worship . . . which he so desired for himself.

How he hates the church – how he hates the gospel and the redeemed bride of Christ.

Let me quickly point out several designations in the Bible for the Devil, which reveal his strategies and schemes.

The Anointed cherub Ezekiel 28

He's called the anointed cherub, as we've already seen in Ezekiel 28.

Prince of this world John 12:31

He's referred to as the prince of this world, in John's Gospel. By the way, the word, "world" is the Greek word cosmos – it can be translated "ordered system" or "kingdom". He is the prince over this fallen world system.

The prince of the power of the air Ephesians 2:2

He's also called the prince of the power of the air. You could render it, "the ruler of the empire of the atmosphere". It's simply a phrase that conveys his leadership over, not only this fallen world, but all the fallen angels as well.

The god of this world 2 Corinthians 4:4

He's called the god of this world. The word for world in his passage is not cosmos, but aion (αιων) – you could translate it "age" – "this age". It's a reference to the present religions and speculations and opinions of this world which are counterfeit systems and philosophies. Satan is actually the one our world worships in their speculations and false religions.

The world tragically thinks they've created a religion or philosophy of the after-life that might include worshipping Buddha or Allah or the Jesus of Mormonism or the Krishna of the Baghavad Gita – but they, in fact have been deceived by the god of this age – the god of this

world who is behind these speculations and philosophies is the great deceiver himself.

The ruler of demons Luke 11:15

The Devil is also called the ruler of demons – otherwise known as Beelzebul. This name finds its origin in Canaanite idolatry – Baal being their chief god.

You can only imagine the blasphemy of the Jewish leaders who on one occasion said that Jesus worked through the power of Beelzebul – literally, the power of Baal.

Lucifer Isaiah 14:12

He's referred to as Lucifer – his original name which refers to his amazing created beauty and aura of splendid light – it literally means, "bearer of light". Which reveals the tragic fall of this angel who was created as the chief bearer of light now becoming the bearer of lies and deception.

Satan Job 1:6

Of course, he's called Satan, which simply means adversary or opposer – Peter will refer to that particular characteristic when we take a closer look at his warning.

The Devil Matthew 4:1

In the New Testament, one of the more popular names for him is the Devil, from diabolos which means accuser. The Devil accuses the believer before God, and accuses God before the believer.

In his attempt to divide the believer from the joy and assurance and power of His Savior, the Devil is always delivering lies of God to us – and he's constantly reminding God about the truth of you and me. And we're always giving the Devil fresh new evidence that he can take before God and say, "Look, I told you what they are like!"

And what is our hope? Our hope is that there is not only an accuser before God – the Devil – but there is an advocate before God – our Deliverer (*I John 2*) – John writes this to believers – *if anyone [of us] sins – we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

The Red Dragon Revelation 12:3

Another lesser known title for the Devil is **the Red Dragon** in *Revelation 12:3*. It's a term that describes his love for bloodshed and violence; his penchant for war and his lust for killing.

The Tempter 1 Thessalonians 3:5

He's called the Tempter in *1 Thessalonians 3:5*. By the way, let me remind you that Satan is not omnipresent. The Bible tells us that Satan went in and out of the presence of God in Job 1.

But because Satan is not omnipresent, he can't be tempting someone in Milwaukee and someone in Raleigh at the same time. And, for that matter, even if Satan is actually the one tempting you, the Bible says that to draw near to God is enough to cause the devil to flee from you! James 4:8 – more on that later . . .

But Satan is responsible – and from numerous narratives, we know that he happens to be informed of what's happening all over this planet through an amazing demonic network of communication which we can only imagine.

Think of it this way – we talk of Hitler bombing Great Britain – although Hitler never personally flew an airplane and dropped any bombs on London, he was behind it all – and we correctly refer to Hitler doing it.

Satan is behind it all! And with that, we're out of time . . . we've got to stop here. Stephen, you're leaving us a bit frightened . . . just a little nervous.

You're right . . . I am . . . and purposefully so.

I want you to leave you here because I want to leave you aware . . . you are at war. Satan is real. The stakes are high. And he wants to destroy you, deceive you, distract you, tempt and ruin you along with steal your joy, your testimony, your integrity, your hope, your worship and your obedient love for Christ.

Peter wrote to these believers, You have an amazing privilege and promise – you can cast all your anxiety on Christ because He cares about you . . . but you also need to stay alert – you’re in a spiritual tug of war – not for your

soul, believer; Satan has lost you to Jesus Christ forever.

But you’re engaged in a battle for everything Jesus stands for and everything you live for and everything the church works toward . . . so, Peter writes, be sober minded and be alert. Literally, wake up . . . don’t be caught off guard.

Lord willing, we’ll meet again next week . . . in the meantime, it’s okay to read ahead.

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i D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter (BMH Books, 1986), p. 313