

By Commissioner Jennifer Walker

Unfortunately the present postmodern western world view (one that prefers to adhere to the rational and scientific voices), discounts the reality of an invisible evil spiritual being who powerfully actively influences the world system and is totally opposed to God.

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. Ephesians 6:12 NIV

'The universe is at war- it is a civil war, a rebellion. We are living in part of the universe occupied by a rebel. Enemy occupied territory; that is what the world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.'

Jesus said, 'In this world you will have **trouble**. (Pressure, oppression, tribulation, adversity, crushing- like crushing grapes or olives) But take heart! **I have overcome the world.**" John 16:33 NIV

Martin Lloyd Jones says 'I sometimes think that our failure to realise the greatness of God's power in us is due to the fact we have never realised the power of the devil. How little do we talk about him, and yet in the New Testament his activities are continually emphasised.....nothing can enable us to stand against the wiles of the enemy but the power of God.'

Sun Tzu an ancient Chinese philosopher and high ranking military general and strategist wrote a book over 2,500 years ago called, 'The Art of War.' His book has become a classic down through the ages on how to achieve victory in the battlefield. One of his most famous statements is about being familiar with the enemy. He said,

Who is our enemy? He is a created, unseen spiritual being.

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a. Origin

Originally called Lucifer (Hebrew meaning 'Shining One; son of the morning' or 'Light Bearer'), he was the most beautiful, magnificent and wisest of God's created angels, holding the highest position of authority overseeing the angels surrounding the throne of God. He became proud of his abilities and beauty, assumed he was equal with God and consequently tried to usurp His authority (Isaiah 14:12–30, Ezekiel 28:11–19 KJV- the King of Tyre in Ezekiel is a parallel reference to Satan).

The book of Revelation describes a cosmic rebellion in heaven which resulted in Lucifer (also translated as 'great dragon' in some versions) along with a third of the created angels being banished from heaven (Luke 10:18, Revelation 12:3–4). His base of operations is now planet earth where he has dispensed a well organised army of evil angels to carry out his agenda.

Satan's rulership of the earth was gained when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. In aligning with the lies of the enemy, they disobeyed God and lost relationship and rulership; the right to administer earth's affairs (Genesis 3, Romans 5:12–17).

b. His nature

There are over 30 names given to Satan in the Bible and they describe his character. These include-

i. **Satan:** comes from a verb which means to be 'an opponent'.

He is the great opposer of God and humankind; He stands in opposition to God on the earth. He opposes His truth, His Kingdom and His people; doing everything he can to stop us becoming all we are in Christ.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV).

ii. **The Devil:**

The Greek word for devil (diabolis) means slanderer or malignant accuser. (NT uses this word 35 times) (Diabolic= of the devil) diabolical= very cruel, wicked, cunning) The devil's inherent nature is to continually point the finger- to slander, accuse and demean. He is the voice that tells us we're not good enough, constantly reminding us of past sins and failures, telling us we're unworthy of God's love and forgiveness.

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth— the one who accuses them before our God day and night (Revelation 12:10 NLT).

iii. **Wicked or evil one:**

*'.. but deliver us from the **evil one**' (Matthew 6:13).*

iv. **Beelzebub:**

Following Jesus healing of a blind and mute man the Pharisees discounted the power was from God by saying, *"It is only by **Beelzebub**, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons"* (Matthew 12:24 NIV).

Beelzebub means 'Lord of the flies.' The Jews regarded hell as a cosmic garbage dump, that attracted multiple flies and so Satan was termed Beelzebub; the Lord of the flies.

v. **Prince or Ruler of this world**

Three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus called Satan 'the prince of this world.'

*Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the **prince of this world** will be driven out (John 12:31 NIV).*

*I will not say much more to you, for the **prince of this world** is coming. He has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me. "Come now; let us leave (John 14:30–31 NIV)*

*...and about judgment, because the **prince of this world** now stands condemned (John 16:11).*

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During his 40 days in the wilderness where Jesus was tempted;

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8–9 NIV).

Rulership of the world system; its values, attitudes and beliefs was under the control of Satan and was his to give away.

*We know that we are children of God, and that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one*** (1 John 5:19 NIV).

vi. **Roaring Lion**

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the **devil prowls around like a roaring lion** looking for someone to devour* (1 Peter 5:8 NIV).

Like a roaring lion is hunting for prey, his nature is to destroy and maim.

*When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were **harassed and helpless**, like sheep without a shepherd* (Matthew 9:36).

These words in the Greek language describe a helpless animal that has been pursued by a predator such as a lion or bear. The wild beast of prey has captured the sheep and ruthlessly torn the victim's fleece apart with its claws.

This is how Jesus saw people; victims of a predator; flayed and mangled, torn apart by the circumstances of life, their life being drained from them because of sin and its effects (John 15 Jesus is the Good Shepherd who has come to our rescue).

Joy Adamson was a naturalist and author, married to a game warden in East Africa. One day her husband brought home three lion cubs, found after their mother had been killed. Joy nurtured the three cubs until they were grown and released them into the wild.

She then told the story of Elsa, one of the lionesses in her book titled '*Born Free*.' Other books followed; '*Living Free*' and '*Forever Free*'. The books were best sellers and each was made into a popular motion picture.

Joy forgot she was dealing with wild beasts capable of destruction. At the age of 69, while at a camp 30 miles from a telephone, she was attacked and killed by a lion. You cannot tame Satan, or say 'if I leave him alone, he'll leave me alone.' He is not a merciful being. His nature is hatred and he is bent on our injury and ultimate destruction.

c. **His weaknesses**

While it's true our adversary is a formidable foe, he is limited and has weaknesses:

i. **He is a created being, a fallen angel.**

The contest with God is not dualistic between two equal forces. Satan is not omnipresent (Can't be everywhere; although he does have an extensive host of evil angels to do his bidding); he's not omniscient (all knowing; can't read our thoughts, although our enemies can hear what we say and see what we do); and he's not omnipotent (all powerful, he has no power to create, only counterfeit).

ii. **He is a defeated foe.** Jesus is greater

iii. **Eternal fate is fixed.** (Revelation 20:10) Since victory of the cross, the disintegration in the world retarded and the reign of God restored. Satan is on a short leash until the return of JC.

d. **His tactics**

African hunters have a clever way of trapping monkeys. They hollow out a coconut or gourd and then cut a hole in it just big enough for a monkey's hand to pass through. Then they place some food inside the coconut; orange, banana or rice, tie it to a tree and then and wait for the catch.

Sooner or later an unsuspecting monkey swings by and is attracted by the delicious food inside the coconut. The monkey then slips his hand through the small hole, grabs

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iii. Destroyer:

Two of the names given to Satan in the Bible are Abaddon (Hebrew for destruction) and Apollyon (Rev 9:11) Greek for destroyer. Murder and destruction are his modus operandi. Jesus called him a 'murderer from the beginning' (John 8:44).

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I (Jesus) have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10 NIV).

Erwin Lutzer says, "No matter how many pleasures Satan offers you, his ultimate intention is to ruin you. Your destruction is his highest priority."

Other tactics include Discouragement; Disunity; Darkness (leads people into dark places eg. Depression, fear, ignorance), Confusion, doubt.

2. KNOW YOUR BATTLE STANCE

• Rescued

A few years ago when attending the Hillsong Conference I heard an amazing story from one of the elective speakers, Kreg Vaghne. He shared that in 1998 he joined an international team of Christians and climbed Mount Everest. The aim of the group was to trek for 35 days praying as they went for the people of the world and when they reached the summit of the mountain, they intended to raise a flag and proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord of all the earth.

When the team reached over 20,000 feet, Kreg nearly died when he suffered from an altitude sickness that caused a toxic bubble to form in the rear of his head. The pressure is so intense that it has the potential to pull the brain out of the head. Kreg was found in his tent blind and suffering from excruciating pain as his body began to break down. A doctor from a Spanish team of climbers was called on to help. He placed Kreg into a cortisone chamber which lowered the air pressure in his body. At best it was thought this would lessen the suffering as he died.

Miraculously Kreg survived the ordeal. He discovered on his return to the US two people had been prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray for him at the same time as he was dying. One person even had a vision of an angel on top of the red plastic body bag in which Kreg had been placed.

Even more amazing is that when Kreg was in hospital he and the rest of the team discovered that at the exact time as they were climbing the mountain there was a group of Satanists on the other side of the mountain intending to reach the peak and claim the world for Satan. One of their team had also suffered from the same altitude sickness. In the hospital they were able to share the message of Jesus with the Satanists who became Christians.

Satanists tried to claim the world for Satan. Rulership of the world already belongs to him, it was ceded to him in a transaction that took place in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve succumbed to his lies. BUT Jesus Christ has cancelled the contract! Through His death and resurrection the power of sin has been cancelled, Satan's control has been broken.

There is an incident recorded in the Gospel of Luke, where after Jesus had cast a demon out of a mute man, enabling him to speak again, some onlookers questioned where His power had come from and then claimed that it must have come from Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

Jesus refuted their claim saying that if that were the case then Satan's kingdom would be divided against itself and he would never do that. Then Jesus tells this brief parable in verses 21-22

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils (Luke 11:21-22 NIV).

Strong man= Satan. House/palace= world. Possessions/goods= humankind.

24/7 PRAYER RESOURCES

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Against Satan we are in a powerless hopeless situation with no hope of deliverance apart from an outside intervening force. No amount of legislation, social reform or aid will fix the inherent problem of sin.

Verse 22 The stronger one is Jesus Christ who came into the world to rescue us from our predicament, to break the power the enemy has over us.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8 NIV).

"...only by dying could he (Jesus) break the power of the devil, who had the power of death" (Hebrews 2:14 NLT).

Apart from the mystery of the cross where the Son of God died for the sins of the world and his consequent resurrection, there is no freedom, no redemption, no forgiveness. Jesus is the stronger one who has fought the battle and won. He has broken the power and bondage of Satan. When we receive Him, His victory becomes ours. We are not fighting for victory but FROM VICTORY!

For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, (Colossians 1:13 NLT).

There is one final verse that Jesus adds in Luke 11:23, *"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters."*

In other words there can be no neutral ground, no exceptions, no alternatives, unless you have received the deliverance and rescue that has come to us through Jesus, then you are still in bondage. We choose whether we will remain victims of Satan's powerful forces or victors through our acceptance of Jesus, the one who has come to destroy the works of the devil.

- **Be alert**

I want to consider some foundational teaching in this whole area of Spiritual Warfare:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7 NIV).

Be self-controlled and alert. *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings* (1 Peter 5:8 NIV).

We need to be positioned well, armed and ready for battle. Firstly we need to be submitted to God. The word translated as submit is a military term that means to align oneself under the authority of another. The picture is of an army in orderly arrangement under their commanding officer,

The key to victory is staying close to God. No way known can we defeat the devil and his demons in our own power; neither can we wash away our sins or be a holy people in our own strength. I like what A.W. Tozer says, 'I'm not afraid of the devil; sure he can handle me; he's got judo I've never heard of. But he can't handle the One to whom I'm joined; he can't handle the one to whom I'm united; he can't handle the One whose nature dwells in my nature.'

Victory is assured as we submit our lives to the authority of God through His son Jesus. It's not complicated. There is no plan B; no other way to win. Jesus is enough; everything we need is in Him.

Secondly, we are instructed to be self-controlled and alert. In other words be vigilant, attentive, watchful, focussed and on guard. The opposite of complacent; unconcerned, indifferent, apathetic. Ultimately this is an eternal, life and death issue- the enemy is like a lion on the prowl looking for someone to devour- and he will always head for the weakest in the herd first.

What is your attitude towards the enemy? Do you believe he exists? Are you ignorant? Some knowledge but doesn't impact faith much? Do you believe that this something only the weird Christians get involved in? Peter is instructing us here to wise up, to tune in on the spiritual radar into what is going on both within and without of our lives. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth that we are to be aware of Satan's schemes so that he might not outwit us (2 Corinthians 2:11).

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So what does being 'self-controlled and alert' look like? It may mean being prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray for someone who is in danger or difficulty; it is challenging and rebuking the lying voices in our mind that subtly come to diminish, degrade and discourage us.

One example, some time ago Peter and I were the guests at the Central and North Queensland Division Officer's Fellowship. On the second day I was to give the main speak on the topic of 'Spiritual Authority.' The only problem is that I woke up very sick. I had been vomiting during the night. I was feeling so bad that all I wanted to do was stay in bed. However it didn't take me long to realise this was spiritual warfare. The topic on which I was speaking was a direct attack on Satan's power. I took authority over the situation, took some medication, got up and attended the sessions.

• Resist

Finally, both James and John instruct the believer to resist Satan- and as we do he flees; he has to back off because he is a defeated foe. The word resist comes from a Greek word (antistete) that means to take a stand against; in other words we oppose the works of the enemy.

In order to resist we need to recognise that as God's children we have been given the **authority** of the King to transact Kingdom business on the earth on His behalf.

When Moses was directed to go to Pharaoh of Egypt and ask for the release of the Israelites, so that they could go and worship God, Moses felt totally inadequate for what proved to be a difficult, prolonged process. Listen to what the Lord said to Moses in Exodus 7:1 "See, **I have made you like God to Pharaoh.**" In our relationship with Jesus and despite the limitations of our humanness, we are to act like God in our dealings with Satan. We have been given the power through the finished work of Christ to function as He did.

*I have given you **authority** to trample on snakes and scorpions and to **overcome all the power of the enemy**; nothing will harm you (Luke 10:19 NI).* Serpents and scorpions are symbols of spiritual enemies and demonic power.

How do we resist the enemy of our soul? The same way as Jesus did; we speak words of faith and confront verbally. During the storm he rebuked the wind and waves saying, 'Peace, Be still' (Mark 4:30). To the demons he commanded them to leave, saying, 'Come out' (Mark 5:8). To the sick he said, 'Be healed, pick up your bed and walk.'

During the period of 40 days in the wilderness, when Jesus was tempted three times by the devil, he counteracted the lies and broke the power of the enemy with the truth of God's word. 'It is written...'

So when we are being tempted, accused or lied to by the devil we speak to him verbally and put him in his rightful place. Say things like; 'I rebuke you in the name of Jesus.', or 'I command you to leave/go in Jesus name'.

Our founder William Booth, taught this principle and gave an illustration in one of his addresses in 1883, about an illiterate miner in the north of England. After he became a Christian, he was plagued with thoughts about his past life, which made him doubt the reality of his conversion experience.

Booth writes, "To circumvent Satan, he hit at last upon the following device. He was a poor scholar, but he sought out somebody who could write, and made him describe on paper all the particulars of his conversion, the date, the place, the hour, what a devilish fellow he had been, how joyful God had made him, and what a wonderful change had been wrought in his life.

When it was all written, he folded it up, put it in his pocket, and the next time the devil came to try him on this point, he pulled out the paper, and spreading it forth said, "There devil, if thou can't read writin' there's the whole account of it." After that, Booth said, the man was not troubled by those thoughts again.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb (finished work of Christ) and by the word of their testimony; (authority of their words) (Revelation 12:11 NIV).

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In conclusion I am reminded of Song #1 (SASB) written by Martin Luther. Verse three says; *And though this world, with demons filled, Should threaten to undo us; We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, We tremble not for him, His rage we can endure, For lo! His doom is sure, **One little word shall fell him.***