

"DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE DEVIL?"

(Eph.6:11-12)

This is not so popular a subject (as) half-a century ago.

C.S.Lewis in The Case for Christianity (page 40), said, "One of the things that suprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously, was that it was always talking about a Dark Power in the universe....a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the power behind death, disease and sin."

Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong.

Christianity agrees with Dualism, that this universe is at war. But it doesn't think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it's a civil war, a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel.

I know someone will ask me, "Do you really mean, at this time of day, to re-introduce our old friend the devil....hoof and horns and all?" Well, what the time of day has to do with it, I don't know, and I'm not particular about the hoof and horns. But in other respects, my answer is, "Yes, I do."

2

Paul tells what he thinks of the greatness of the struggle which lies before them.

Life was a terrifying thing for these ancient people. They believed in demons and devils and evil spirits.

The believed the air was filled with these evil spirits, all determined to work men harm.

The words Paul uses...powers...authorities...world rulers..... all are different classes of evil spirits and demons.

The whole universe was a battleground. The Christian had not only to contend with attacks of men, but he had to contend with the attacks of spiritual forces which were fighting against God.

From experience we know this....there are active powers of evil in this world.

Robert Louis Stevenson once said, "You know the Caledonian Railway Station in Edinburgh? One cold, east windy morning, I met Satan there."

We do not know what Stevenson's actual experience was, but we recognize the experience. We have all felt the force of that evil influence which seeks to make us sin.

VERSE 10--No wonder he says, "Be clothed in the strength of God!

VERSE 11--Take a stand against the wiles of the Devil. He is cunning, subtle, ways. Deceit.

VERSE 12--The Christian life is warfare. "Wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

War....is so frightening. The odds are scary. A man may not live through the experience.

I read the story of a navigator on a B-29 bomber in World War II who was shot down and killed in his first mission over Europe.

As Christians, what are our chances that we will stand against our enemy Satan?

Remember, the war never ceases.

There are at least three good spiritual lessons for us in the closing verses of Ephesians.

First, the Christians foes; Second, the Christian's armour; Third, The Christian's resources.

We will confine our message now to the area of the Christian's warfare.

The military was deeply imprinted on Paul's mind. In Thess. he exhorted to put on the breastplate of faith.

Here, Paul is a portrait in every detail. (Chained) to a soldier and he uses his vivid imagination.

a Cherokee Indian - "lost one cow - Red all over except 3 white feet -
other foot just alike. lost yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow.
He uses the word "wrestle"....it is not an impersonal act, it is most
personal. Victor The Bear - outbawed -

Wrestling is a contact sport, hand to hand, foot to foot, face to face.

"We wrestle not against": First, Blood. Second, Flesh.

He names a hierarchy of evil:

(First)...the head ones, the leading ones, an order of evil angels.

(Second)...another order is Powers. In themselves, they are powerful,
have an inward ableness and endowment. In themselves they are powerful.

(Third)...another order of evil is the evil angels of the world. They
make up rulers of darkness.

It is a strange revelation....invisible unseen rulers bring conflict to
the world.

We sometimes feel, "Well, the world must be in gracious and good hands."
Then we pick up the newspaper and read of the out-break of violence and war.

(Fourth)...another order of evil angels Paul refers to as spiritual beings
of wickedness. Translated here, ("High places")..."In the heavenlies".

The whole earth is covered with these unseen and invisible enemies of
darkness.

The idea is staggering....terrifying!

Paul says your enemies are not material. They are non-material. They are not visible, they are invisible. They do not have a body and form, they are spirit.

He says that in Ephesians, "I fought with wild beasts." Beaten five times with forty stripes less one and thrice beaten with Roman rods. But these physical sufferings do not make up the real enemy.

The real enemies that he faced were invisible and unseen. Not flesh and blood, but the hierarchy of invisible, evil and fallen spirits.

I. EVIL REVEALED IN THE BIBLE

1. Garden of Eden.

The story of sin and evil does not begin in Eden. The story begins in the age of the ages beyond the foundation and creation of the world. The diabolical and fallen spirit was already present and uses the serpent to beguile and betray our first parents Adam and Eve.

2. Story of Job.

You can see all the providences that overwhelm him....

Wind that blew his house down,

Fires that burned up his property,

Thieves that took away his flocks,

Disaster that destroyed his children.

To Job as to us, they look like the providences of life.

These things happen because, unseen, unknown and invisible to us, there is an enemy.

6

He accuses Job in the presence of God himself. He afflicts the sainted man of the east.

✓ 3. Zechariah 3:1-3. The Prophet saw Joshua, God's High Priest, who ministered before the Lord. He saw him standing before God, dressed in filthy garments and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him, an invisible and unseen enemy to us, but nonetheless real.

✓ 4. Our Lord, driven into the wilderness to face the devil. The invisible world pressed him on every side.

✓ 5. Book of Revelation...a War in heaven against the Dragon and his angels. The conflict will continue until the end of the age.

II. ANGELS OF GLORY

✓ 1. Seraphim...meaning "The burning ones." Worship in God's presence, cover their faces with their wings and covering their feet....They cry "Holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is filled with His Glory."

✓ 2. Cherubim...another rank of angels. They were placed at the eastern gate of the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were driven out.

The figures were woven into the tapestry of the Tabernacle and in the Temple.

Two of them faced the Mercy Seat above the Ark of the Covenant and their over arching wings touched. They are spoken of in Ezekiel 1 and 10. In Revelation we see them as the Living Ones.

✓ 3. One angel is called Archangel. 1 Thess. 4 says the dead are to be raised from the dead by the voice of the archangel. In the Bible he is called by the name "Michael." His name is mentioned 3 times in Daniel, 1 time in Jude, and 1 time in Revelation.

Michael stands as the guardian angel for the people of the Lord; he is the archangel.

✓ 4. One angel is called Gabriel. He presents himself to the father of John the Baptist (Zechariah), as the messenger who stands in the presence of God. 4 times Gabriel's name is mentioned. Twice in Daniel and twice in Luke. In all 4 instances, he is identified with the redemptive work of Christ.

✓ 5. Besides the Seraphim, Cherubim, Archangel, and Gabriel the Messenger of the Lord, there are innumerable hosts of other angels.

Uncounted, innumerable, infinite number. They magnified the work of God rejoice and sing together in wonder.

Hebrews 12, speaks of a large company and Revelation describes them as 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands and thousands.

They are powerful:

Story of Hezekiah and Jerusalem under the iron hand of Sennacherib the bitter Assyrian.

That night in answer to the prayer's of Hezekiah and Isaiah the Prophet, only one Angel passed over the host of the Assyrians and 185,000 dead corpses were counted the next morning. Just one Angel did it.

Story in Matthew 26:53... Jesus said to Peter, "Put up your sword. For could I not ask my Father and he would send me more than twelve legions of Angels?"

Each legion would be 6,000 men. Twelve would be 72,000 Angels. Only one passed over the army and left 185,000 dead! That tells of the power of the Angels of God.

Hebrews 1:14: Angels are called "ministering spirits" sent from God to shepherd and guard and to keep God's saints.

These Angels sustain and care and keep and help and guide us.

They ministered to the Lord in the 40 days of Temptations and in Gethsemane.

An Angel opened the prison door for Peter in the Book of Acts.

An Angel stood by Paul in the hour of great trial.

An Angel gave John the Revelation on the Isle of Patmos.

III. DANGER OF SUDDEN ASSAULTS.

I wish we could close with the good Angels, but Paul says, "We must be ready for times of special assaults from evil."

Other Angels, bitter and dark, fallen Angels in Verse 12.

Prince of the Power of the Air....Lucifer....Satan is his name and he is the most powerful of all the princes that God created. He is above all of them

During the Middle Ages, in plays, he was always introduced as someone who had horns, a forked tail, a red suit, and a grin upon his face.

That pleased the Devil. 2 Cor. 11, said, "He is an angel of Light". 1 Cor. 4 called him "The god of this world." He is gifted, shrewd, brilliant, and apparently has the power to win.

He won in the Garden of Eden.

He wins of the human race, death is universal, pain, misery, heartache.

The Devil is not alone. In Rev. 12, it says that he took 1/3 of all the angels when he fell. Now I can not understand that, nor does Revelation explain it.

However, some angels chose to be with Lucifer and they were cast down with him and became evil spirits called Demons.

In Acts 10:38, we read that "Jesus went about doing good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil." When I read that and read our text Eph. 6:12, it sounds fantastic and like fairy tales. It is unthinkable, beyond imagination that such could happen on this earth.

But in experience, daily I see it and come in contact with it. There are souls who are led by these evil spirits!

We hear of it daily. Some one has committed a crime for no cause or reason. Some have in them a spirit of habitual criminality. They are possessed. Something evil is in the-r souls.

Such evil possession can be seen in leaders of violence and corruption.

They do not respond to gentle, sweet, redemptive, appeals, rather, they give themselves to destruction.

They push and peddle things that destroy boys and girls.....leaders of vice and corruption. They have another spirit.

Evil dwells within...some have a spirit of thievery, some are kleptomaniacs, compulsive thieves. What they get is not a necessity for life. They are not driven to steal.

Some are compulsive liars. Some are given to exaggerate. They take an ordinary situation and actually in reality is nothing. They misrepresent it by lying.

Where does this come from? The body, is just clay made out of dirt.

What is our deliverance? We have no strength of our own. There is no man who is equal or able to face Satan. He is superior to any of us.

Why are we not destroyed? Where can we find hope?

Matthew 17. on top of the Mount. The Lord is with Elijah and Moses.

The two Old Testament saints are speaking to Him about the death he should accomplish in Jerusalem.

At his feet are Peter, James, and John. Peter said, "Let us stay here on this mountain top, with joy."

But life always summons us back down to the valley. When the Lord came down there were the other nine disciples.

A father had brought a demented, possess boy and asked the disciples to heal him, to cast out the evil spirit of destruction and waste and they could not do it. They were helpless.

The Bible reveals why. While the Lord and Peter, James, and John were on the mountain, the nine were quarreling about who was greatest in the Kingdom.

They were talking about the inner circle he had taken with him up there. Quarreling whether they were greater. Power had gone from them.

The Lord said, "Bring the boy to me." He healed him, delivered him, cast out the evil spirit.

When the crowd had melted away, the disciples gathered around Jesus and said, "Master why could not we deliver that boy? Why could not we cast out that evil spirit?"

The Lord told them, "But this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

You cannot do it yourself! There is no deliverance in us. That work is done in prayer, fasting, casting ourselves upon the mercies of God.

If our warfare is won, God has to win it. He has to give strength. Our enemies are not material...blood and flesh, but invisible spirits, unseen.

VERSE 11--"Put on the whole armour of God that ye may stand".....we must get it from God.

Victory, peace & thought & deeds -

"Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy that attacks, ~~that~~
That is why you need spiritual strength received in worship services.

Faithfulness enables firmness of footing.

& when it is all over, you will still be standing up."