

## ***A STEADFAST PEOPLE (1)***

### **1 Peter 5:8-9a**

**April 26, 2009 – Grace Covenant Baptist Church**

#### **I. Resist the devil (5:8-9a)**

**“Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert.”** Peter’s final imperatives reiterate what he had already commanded twice in the letter in 1:13 and 4:7 in an eschatological context, with a view towards last things and the return of Christ. **“Sober”** and **“alert”** go together. One must remain clear-headed in order to clearly recognize danger. Peter says that the believer must always be on guard. In particular, vigilance is needed because the devil is on the prowl, **“like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”**

Remember the context and purpose of this letter from Peter to those who had been scattered abroad. They were suffering persecution, and Peter has reminded them throughout the letter that their sufferings would only get more intense. Some would die for their faith, including Peter himself. Those who were bringing such harsh treatment of Christians were only serving their father, this same devil whose mission is to search and destroy. The devil would use these persecutions in an attempt to get these believers to deny Christ and forfeit their eternal hope. The devil is a powerful, scheming enemy.

Remember the shepherd and flock picture that opened this chapter and the shepherds calling to protect the flock. Now we see Satan as the roaring lion, hoping to induce fear in the people of God, searching for lost sheep to swallow up, pursuing believers to destroy their faith and rob them of their eschatological reward. Note the contrast between the devil and God. In verses 6-7 we see God who tenderly cares for His children, inviting them to bring their worries to Him. He promises to care for them and protect them in Christ, who is the Chief Shepherd. Not so with the devil, who seeks to terrify rather than comfort. He is an angry, desperate, and defeated enemy. Make no mistake about it—the devil hates you, he hates God, he hates the kingdom of God, HE HATES!

We can now see why Peter says in v. 9, **“But resist him.”** As Tom Schreiner remarks, those who “do not fear his ferocious bark will never be consumed by his bite.”<sup>1</sup> So how do we **“resist him?”** We resist him first by...

#### **1. Acknowledging he is real**

**Recent Barna survey** (1,871 self-described Christians) – Four out of ten Christians surveyed (40%) strongly agreed that Satan “is not a living being but is a symbol of evil.” An additional two out of ten Christians (19%) said they “agree somewhat” with that perspective. A minority of Christians indicated that they believe Satan is real by disagreeing with the statement: one-quarter (26%) disagreed strongly and about one-tenth (9%) disagreed somewhat. The remaining 8% were not sure what they believe about the existence of Satan.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *NAC: 1,2 Peter, Jude*, 242.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/260-most-american-christians-do-not-believe-that-satan-or-the-holy-spirit-exists>, accessed 04/25/2009.

**ABC Nightline – “Does Satan Exist?”** hosted by Mark Driscoll and Mars Hill Church in Seattle, WA.<sup>3</sup>

- *Deepak Chopra* (Satan is a figment of our imagination conjured up to cast our guilt and shame upon – instead, blame yourself)
- *Carlton Pearson* (if we don’t think upon things like Satan that do not exist, then they cannot be an obstacle to us)
- *Converted prostitute* (I know Satan exists because I have felt him)

Many Christians really don’t have an answer. Here is what many think – If God exists, Satan must exist. For good to exist, God must exist and for evil to exist, Satan must exist. In this view, all good then is attributed to God, which is theologically correct. But attributing all evil to Satan is not. This sets forth a dualistic worldview which is antithetical to Scripture and at the end of the day you have not really solved anything as it pertains to the problem of evil.

So how do we *know* that Satan exists?

- Scripture!

In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 we read of this devil who was originally created an angel in beauty, in innocence, with the sole purpose of serving God. This angel subsequently rebelled against God and in his fall carried a fix number of other angels with him. This all happened at some point before this same devil appeared in the Garden before our first parents, Adam and Eve, disguised as the serpent. It is there in the Garden where the ploys of the devil are revealed. He is forever against God and against man – all men. It is also there in that Garden where his defeat is promised in Gen 3:15. This devil has been defeated at the Cross. There is nothing now that can ever change his defeat, Christ’s victory. This will be evident to all when is finally cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10).

The devil is mentioned numerous times in Scripture by no less than 20 names. He is best known as Satan (adversary) and the devil (slanderer). Here Peter uses both names. The devil is mentioned by every New Testament writer and some 15 times by Jesus in the gospels. One of those times is in the presence of the author of this letter.

### **Matthew 16:13-23**

We “**resist him**” first by recognizing he is real. We “**resist him**” secondly when by...

#### **2. Understanding his purposes**

**Think too much of him (more powerful than God; too much credit) or not enough of him (cartoon character dressed in red with horns, a tail and a pitchfork).**

Peter sets forth a real enemy, one on the prowl on this mission of destruction. How does he accomplish this? What is his battle plan?

- *Doubt* (Gen. 3:1) – “Indeed, has God said...?”
- *Deny* (Gen. 3:4) – “You surely will not die!”

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<sup>3</sup> Aired March 26, 2009.

- *Distort* (Gen. 3:5) – “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (see 3:7, 22)
- *Distract* (Gen. 3:6) – “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise”
- *Destroy* – “she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

**ILLUS: Suffering as it relates to his work.**

With this knowledge of the evil one, his existence and his purposes, we more readily recognize the danger we have in this enemy. Therefore, we must “**be of sober spirit**” and “**on the alert.**” The third way we “**resist him**” is by...

**3. Utilizing your defenses (v. 9a)**  
*How can we resist him?*

*How did Jesus resist the devil? (Mt. 4)*

*How can we resist the devil? (Eph. 6:10-20)*

- The belt of truth (v. 14) – Resist lying and false doctrine
- The breastplate of righteousness (v. 14) – This emphasizes our justification. We are to resist accusations of conscience because no one can bring a charge against God’s elect (Rom. 8:33-34).

**FLEE!!!** (1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22) When you do not flee from temptation, you give the devil a foothold. Ask Eve! Ask Moses! Ask King David! Ask Peter! Failed to be watchful in the Garden of Gethsemane, compromised his faith in the courtyard because he thought more highly of himself than he ought, having more confidence in himself to overcome temptation than in heeding Jesus’ words that he would fall.

- **ILLUS:** Imaginary spiritual line

**1 Corinthians 10:12-13** – <sup>12</sup> Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. *Peter failed to flee.*

**James 4:7-8** – <sup>7</sup> Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.