

Silencing the Schemes of Satan
Ephesians 6:10-18

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Text: ¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. ¹² For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³ This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. ¹⁴ Stand, therefore,

with truth like a belt around your waist,
righteousness like armor on your chest,
¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.
¹⁶ In every situation take the shield of faith,
and with it you will be able to extinguish
the flaming arrows of the evil one.
¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word.

¹⁸ With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and stay alert in this, with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Introduction: As Paul sat in a Roman prison, presumably in constant contact with Roman soldiers, perhaps he saw in their uniform a perfect illustration of the Christian life. We must have the armor of God as we stand against a very real, although allusive enemy.

The Awful Reality of Satan

(Contemporary Belief about Satan)

- The Truth about Satan
*The Bible declares that Satan is not merely a symbol of evil, but **He** is evil.*
 - Matthew 4:1-11—Temptation of Jesus from Satan
 - 1 Peter 5:8--⁸ Be sober! Be on the alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.

- The Tactics of Satan
Schemes

As I began to think about this phrase, I couldn't help but think about the piece written by Paul Harvey some years ago. In part the piece reads like this:

I would delude their minds into thinking that they had come from man's effort, instead of God's blessings;

I would promote an attitude of loving things and using people, instead of the other way around;

I would convince people that character is not an issue when it comes to leadership;

I would make it legal to take the life of unborn babies;

I would take God out of the schools, where even the mention of His name was grounds for a lawsuit;

I would come up with drugs that sedate the mind and target the young, and I would get sports heroes to advertise them;

I would attack then family, the backbone of any nation. I would make divorce acceptable and easy, even fashionable. If the family crumbles, so does the nation;

I would persuade people that the church is irrelevant and out of date, the Bible is for the naive:

I would dull the minds of Christians, and make them believe that prayer is not important, and that faithfulness and obedience are optional;

I GUESS I WOULD LEAVE THINGS PRETTY MUCH THE WAY THEY ARE!

Paul Harvey is not a preacher or a theologian, but I do believe he is on to a few truths here. But what does Paul mean when he indicates “the schemes of Satan.” To find the answer to this question I want you to consider with me another text, Genesis 3. For here, right at the beginning of creation, is the revelation of Satan’s schemes. In the next few moments, I want you to consider with me whether Satan has ever changed his scheme. I think not. The reason—he doesn’t have to, because his basic scheme since the creation of humanity still works.

The Schemes of Satan

The first thing you ought to notice in Genesis 3 is that the serpent is crafty. This personification of Satan in Genesis 3 is consistent with the word “devices” in 2 Corinthians 2:11 and Ephesians 6:11. The devil’s way is a scheming way. We see that here in Genesis 3. Notice 3 Schemes of Satan.

1. Satan causes us to doubt the Word of God.

Notice the way that the serpent begins the conversation with Eve. “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden.’” In Genesis 2:16-17 we read what God said. Satan comes behind that and distorts the word of God and thus creates a doubt for the word of God. Interestingly enough, we see from Eve’s response that she even added to God’s word for she added “or touch.” God, according to 2:16-17 never said this.

That still is the scheme of Satan. Take any issue that we do not like what God's Word says. Our first temptation will be to say, "Well, maybe that's not what God meant." We take away and sometimes even add to God's Word.

This is the place where all sin starts. Here's the way this doubt works. First, we doubt the word of God. When we begin to doubt the word of God, then we begin to question the Bible's accuracy. If we question the accuracy, we replace the truth of the Bible with another view—a view that comes from the world.

Someone has said it this way: "Satan puts a question mark where God put a period."

2. Satan deceives.

The second scheme of the devil is that he deceives. He lies! In the Gospel of John (8:44) Jesus said, "Satan does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him." In this same scripture, Satan is called a "liar and the father of all lies."

Once Satan begins to cause us to doubt the Word of God as accurate, he will begin to fill us with lies.

On October 12, 1998, six men were killed in the predawn hours while sleeping inside the rails of a train track. The incident took place around 3:15 A.M. when a southbound Union Pacific train with 105 cars was about fifty miles north of Harlingen, Texas. The crew was unable to stop the forty-five-mile-per-hour train in time and none of the six men were adequately awakened by the horn. Tragically, this is not an uncommon occurrence among undocumented immigrants and other transients.

There is a mistaken belief that snakes will not cross railroad tracks, therefore, it is believed that one can sleep between the rails and be protected from the snakes. This tragedy is only accentuated by the reality that this is erroneous information. Officials from Union Pacific Railroad have noted that their tracks are littered with snakes that have been cut in half while crossing the rails. The warm rocks under an elevated rail bed actually attract snakes at night.

These six men became victims of a lie, and countless others fall prey to a similar myth about a far more deadly snake, [the Devil]. We can be [fooled] into believing that there are certain havens where Satan won't go, but his deceptive schemes will make sure we are never beyond his deadly desires. The peaceful sleep that he offers is always between the rails of death and destruction.¹

3. Satan promises what he cannot deliver.

The Third scheme of Satan is that he promises what he cannot deliver.

Whatever the destruction of Satan, he works in this way. Consider the example of Jesus' temptation as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.

¹ From a sermon on SermonCentral.Com by Dr. Damian Phillips of Mount Olivet Baptist Church, Willisburg, KY.

⁸ Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

Satan could not deliver on this promise, and neither can Satan deliver on what may be promised today by his schemes.

The Available Resources for Us

- The Power of Christ

Ephesians 1:19-21

¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His vast strength.

²⁰ He demonstrated [this power] in the Messiah by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens — ²¹ far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

So, what should we do? Depend on it

- The Protection of the Christian
 1. Truth
 2. Righteousness
 3. Gospel of Peace
 4. Faith
 5. Salvation
- The Preparation of the Christian
 1. Word of God
 2. Prayer

The Awesome Reminder

You will be able to stand!

Martin Luther used to overcome temptation in a very graphic way. He said, “When the devil comes knocking on my door and asks, ‘does Martin Luther live here?’ I just get as close to Jesus as I can and I

find that when I am surrendered to Him that Jesus, Himself, answers the door, saying, 'no, Martin Luther used to live here, but he has surrendered control of this residence to Me.'" Martin Luther said, "when Satan sees the face of Jesus and sees the nail-prints in His hands, he turns and runs saying, "Oops, I must have the wrong address!"