



September 15, 2023

### **A Battle against the Forces of Evil**

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

As we near the middle of August and September, as happens every year, some begin to talk a lot more about the threat of severe weather from the Gulf of Mexico and Oceans near where I live. One such commentator mentioned that "the weather can be our greatest enemy!" When it wreaks havoc yes, it indeed can be another foe we have very little power over.

Let's now return with our focus of the last several Friday evenings to examining our formidable enemy Satan. The apostle Paul talks about the restraints imposed by God on certain events that will be delayed but then take place as the end of the age draws close.

Paul also talks about "the man of sin" and "the lawless one" who is yet to be revealed.

Notice how Satan will work through this human individual. "*The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish . . .*" (2 Thess. 2:9-10) There will be an end time manifestation of the man of sin through whom Satan works.

Paul also warned them that "*the mystery of lawlessness is already working*" (v.7) Satan has been troubling the saints from the early days of the church. He seeks those who have vulnerabilities he can exploit and then use them as his instruments. Paul warned Timothy and those who read his letter, "*But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*" (2 Tim. 3:13)

He also predicted "*But the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons.*" (1 Tim. 4:1) You and I face a formidable enemy, and we must know and hold to the truth, and expose and reject deception with the Word of God just as Jesus did when tempted and challenged by the Devil. I find it intriguing to read how our Savior responded to the Adversary of all who have ever lived.

The book of Revelation predicts the coming of two leaders of a kingdom of evil who are empowered by Satan. The world will be forced to worship the man called "*the beast*" who leads this ungodly system.

In reality humans are also worshipping the dragon, (the deceptive Devil). "*So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*" (Rev. 13:4)

John describes the dragon: "*So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.*" (Rev. 12:9)

The false prophet is described as having "*two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*" (Rev. 13:11-12)

This man masquerades as Christ (or appears to be Christ-like) but his words reveal his true nature and the influence behind them. These individuals along with the influence of the dragon will deceive the whole world or definitely most of it! "*And all dwelling on the earth will worship it [the beast], those whose names have not been written in the Book of Life . . .*" (Rev 13:8)

We, as disciples of our Lord and Master, realize we are in a battle against the forces of evil led by the dragon, Satan the Devil! And I might add, it IS a battle!

We are likened to soldiers and combatants in a wrestling match. "*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the*

*heavenly places.*" (Eph. 6:12) As each day goes on, can we not feel the pressure from many angles? Apart from God it can be overwhelming.

We need to put on and be wearing the entire armor of God so that we may stand victorious in the evil days, now and in the future. We indeed need to maintain the knowledge and awareness of Satan's devices, and not let Satan take advantage of us! (2 Cor. 2:11). Again, apart from God, frankly, we don't have a chance.

Jesus instructs His disciples to pray "*deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*" Our allegiance must be to the heavenly kingdom for which we are being prepared to serve under our King of kings, Jesus the Christ. We will be given the victory, but we must submit to God and resist the Devil! (James 4:7)

May our mighty God send us His Spirit of "*power and of love and of a sound mind*" as we battle this powerful and most formidable enemy.

In just a few days we will be observing the Feast Day of Atonement. This day clearly pictures the time when our enemy, our adversary, and the adversary of God, will be put away for good. That will be indeed good news for this strife torn world.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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