



"It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill."
—J.R.R. Tolkien

25-Jan-19

Who Is Your Adversary?

The many ages of man parallel the continuous rise and fall of nations and empires, advancing and receding like the tides of the sea. As one empire sinks, another rises. We, whenever and wherever we live, are subject to these surges on the current of history. Only [God](#) knows how they will turn out. As God's people, we may be pulled down in our nation's defeat or exalted by its victory.

The latter has been the case for the modern church in the United States, as it has enjoyed the success of our nation's global supremacy. However valiant our forefathers' victory in pursuit of liberty was, the sun seems to be setting on America, as well as on all the [nations of Israel](#). To those who are watching, it is growing apparent that an [adversary](#) worthy of our opposition stands before us.

The saints of God face a tireless, unremitting adversary. During our lifetimes, we may be subject to our nation's slow decline and the rise of Gentile powers, yet our chief adversary, [Satan](#) the Devil, will always be present to challenge us.

The apostle Peter writes, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). He portrays Satan as a vicious predator hungrily seeking its prey. Lions hunt in packs called "prides" that sneak up on unwary prey and catch the weakest or slowest in a herd. On the savanna, a lion's fur provides excellent camouflage, so that most prey must rely on other senses to detect its approach. Spiritually, we would be wise to ensure that our senses are on

high alert for Satan's approach.

Curiously, Peter describes Satan as "roaring," suggesting that he is not interested in stealth but proudly announces his presence to cause terror and panic. A person is much more likely to trip and fall when fleeing in terror than when standing fast in [faith](#). But Peter indicates that we have no need to fear him if we remain faithful to Christ: "Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in [the world](#)" ([1 Peter 5:9](#)). We can draw a measure of strength knowing that we are not alone in our fight—that our faithful friends and brethren have overcome similar attacks. If they can do it, we can too.

Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, exemplify this attitude in their resistance to Nebuchadnezzar's evil decree in Daniel 3. They reject the order to worship the image Nebuchadnezzar had constructed ([Daniel 3:4-6](#)). They do not try to fight the king's command but simply refuse to worship the image, which they know would be idolatry. They are faithful, keeping the standards that God had set, and by doing so, make themselves adversaries of Nebuchadnezzar.

Like the roaring lion, Nebuchadnezzar is furious, demanding that they either worship the image or burn in the furnace. He wants them to fear him more than God. The three friends answer his demand in [Daniel 3:17-18](#): "[O]ur God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

What an excellent display of faith! The friends know God has the power to deliver them, but they are not entirely certain that God will. He may intend that they become martyrs. Either way, they remain respectful, addressing Nebuchadnezzar as king and declaring that despite his threat of death, they would not disobey God by yielding to him. They would rather face the roaring lion head on than make God their enemy!

As fearsome as the roaring lion is, he is nothing compared to the Lion of Judah. Paul describes governing authorities, like Nebuchadnezzar, in [Romans 13:4](#), "For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil." How much more terrifying is it to become an enemy of God, who is called a "consuming fire" in [Hebrews 12:29](#)?

The God we serve is formidable indeed, and we do well not to cross Him. Consider Christ's teaching in the [Sermon on the Mount](#). In [Matthew 5:21-26](#), Jesus shows that

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under the letter of the law, murder was the actual killing of another human being, yet under its spirit, it is no longer acceptable even to be angry without a cause. From the court to the Sanhedrin to [hell](#) fire, we see the increasing seriousness of punishment in relation to the [offense](#). The sinner gradually moves from human judges to the ultimate Judge, who alone can condemn to the Lake of Fire.

Christ then goes on to illustrate the proper recourse, explaining that reconciliation can be made through seeking forgiveness—apologizing—and repenting. If we remain unrepentant, God remains our enemy, and He may "lock us up" to ensure we cause no further damage (see [Matthew 5:25-26](#)). God, the perfect Judge, would not find us guilty unjustly and deliver us to prison if it were not serious—and it is a serious thing indeed to be at odds with our righteous Creator.

Though we cannot make [peace](#) or agree with Satan lest we be opposed to God and perish, we can [make peace](#) and agree with God through [Jesus Christ](#) in humble, sincere [repentance](#). If we [sin](#) against God, we need to repent. If we sin against a brother, we need to humble ourselves and seek their forgiveness. It is as serious as murder!

Just as God desires that the sinner repent, He also wants the one sinned against to forgive the sinner when he repents. At various times in our lives, we will find ourselves in one or the other position, but it is paramount that we follow Christ's instructions lest we find ourselves at odds with more than our brother—with God Himself by ignoring His Word!

We can be thankful that God is [merciful](#) and rarely strikes us down immediately when we sin, as He did to Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah. Even so, we must always strive to walk as Christ walked and never take His mercy for granted. Solomon writes in [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#), "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." It is part of human nature to think that, because we have not been punished, we have "gotten away with" our sin. In our relationship with God, it is not this way at all, nor should we have this attitude in our relations with one another.

As we strive to live as Christ did, we will always be challenged by our spiritual Adversary, the roaring lion, and his minions. Like Peter, James instructs us, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" ([James 4:7](#)). We must never submit to him and thereby make ourselves an enemy of Christ, lest He "come to [us] quickly and remove [our] lampstand from its place" ([Revelation 2:5](#)). Instead, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" ([James](#)

[4:8](#), 10).

- Levi W. Graham

World News Highlights

[New York 'Celebrates' Legalizing Abortion Until Birth as Catholic Bishops Question Cuomo's Faith](#)

Fox News 23-Jan-19

[Information Wars Endanger Civilization, Say 'Doomsday' Experts](#)

France24 24-Jan-19

[Off the Charts: Holiday Heartbreak for Retailers](#)

Associated Press 24-Jan-19

[Majority of World Population Support Globalism, Survey Find](#)

StraitsTimes (Singapore) 20-Jan-19

[Shouting, Near Fisticuffs, Emotions High: Today's Washington Could Get Worse](#)

LMT Online 19-Jan-19

[This Chinese App Tells You if You're Within 500 Metres of Someone in Deb](#)

The Evening Standard 23-Jan-19

[The Naval Academy Is Deteriorating So Badly, Its Mission to Train Midshipmen Is Under Threat](#)

The Bristol Herald Courier 22-Jan-19

[China, Russia Building Super-Emp Bombs for 'Blackout Warfare'](#)

The Washington Free Beacon 24-Jan-19

[Pentagon: Chinese Military Units Training With Asat Missiles](#)

The Washington Free Beacon 23-Jan-19

[Satellite Imagery Raises Suspicion of Saudi Arabia's Ability to Produce Missiles](#)

SF Gate 23-Jan-19

New Transcripts

[1470c: They Know!](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 19-Jan-19

[969c: Humanism's Flooding Influence \(Part One\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 19-Dec-09

[970c: Humanism's Flooding Influence \(Part Two\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 26-Dec-09

Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Shelly Fenwick](#)

[Shelly Fenwick](#)

[Jan McCrae](#)

[Rosina Mohammed](#)

[Rosina Mohammed](#)

[Aaron Webb](#)

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Adversary](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Richard Ritenbaugh, responding to a challenge of our understanding concerning Satan the Devil, systematically substantiates Satan's existence. Christ was an eyewitness to Satan's fall from heaven, and Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 verify the veracity of this event. Jude and Peter add detail regarding the sins of the angels, and their confinement as demons. Sadly, we as humans share the prison cell inhabited by Satan and his fallen demons. Pride, vanity, presumption, and self-absorption led to Satan's demise—being cast out as a profane thing. Satan's madness (that he is his own god) is the spirit of this world, and he still possesses great spiritual and political power on this earth, even to deceive the very elect. We become protected from Satan's destruction by 1) the blood of

the Lamb, implying our deepening relationship with God; 2) the conduct of our lives, constantly adding to our character; and 3) the willingness to sacrifice for righteousness.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Stalked by Satan](#)

by Mike Ford

Peter describes Satan as "like a roaring lion." What made him make this comparison? Mike Ford shows that Peter's choice of predator is a very apt analogy of our Adversary.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Psalm 23 (Part 2)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 25-Jan-19**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

Daily Audio Programs

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage](#).

Date	Title
Sunday 27-Jan-19	The Whole Earth
Monday 28-Jan-19	Powerful Effects of the Holy Spirit
Tuesday 29-Jan-19	Concerning Edom
Wednesday 30-Jan-19	God Knows Our Heart
Thursday 31-Jan-19	Hebrews: Its Background (Part Five)
Friday 01-Feb-19	Achan's Sin, God's Punishment

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