

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Watch For The Adversary

by Dan Trygg

“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. ⁸ Be clear-headed. Watch. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”
1 Peter 5:7-10

This passage is all about God’s superintending care for us, even though we go through trials and sufferings brought on by the enemy. This passage is clear. **We are in a war.** We need to be watchful, because **we have an enemy, an adversary, someone who is set against us** and is looking for an opportunity to hurt us bad, if he can. **What do we know of this enemy?**

1.) He is here called “your adversary” (*antidikos*- occurs 4 times in NT; also in Prov.18:17 in LXX). **The word means “opponent”, especially an “opponent at law”.** This is *not* the word normally used for an enemy, one who is hostile toward us (*echthros* – 32 times in NT). This is a *specialized* word, a *carefully chosen* word, describing *someone who is arguing a legal case against us* – cf. Matt. 5:25; Lk. 12:58; 18:3; I Pet. 5:8. **He is a strategist, a cross-examiner...a master at trying to get us to say or do something that would incriminate us, ...something that he could use to his advantage.** In Revelations 12:10, **he is called the “accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before our God day and night.”** Much like the scene described in Job 1,2, there is a courtroom before the throne of God, where Satan and his minions are attempting to secure legal rights and permission to attack us. There are courtroom rules and procedures which must be followed, and ***Satan and his legal team labor to find avenues where legal protection against us may be compromised, or where an argument can be made to allow him an opportunity to move against us*** (e.g., Lk. 22:31 – “Satan demanded to sift you like wheat.”). Moreover, we learn from Job that even if we have done *nothing* wrong to create a legal attack, there could be *other* reasons why God may allow some kind of test to come upon us (cf. Eph. 3:10).

2.) He is called the “devil” (*diabolos* – 35 total times in NT, 31 times of Satan), **which means “slanderer, malicious gossip”** (cf. I Tim. 3:11; II Tim 3:3; Tit. 2:3). Although you can bet Satan has a crack staff of investigators, trying to dig up the “dirt” against you, he is not at all above stretching the truth, twisting things or using outright falsehoods in his verbal attacks. It is important to realize that it is not only against God that he attempts to pull this manipulative trickery, but **he works this kind of “spin game” in our own minds, as well as in the minds of others.** He tries to use what we might perceive to be negative self-talk to discourage and demotivate us. He also will attempt to stir up arguments and controversies with other people. He loves to exploit misunderstanding and miscommunication to his advantage. **If he can get us arguing and fighting with each other, we will not notice what he is doing, ...and he will keep us from thinking of God,** who is the One who can bring light into the darkness and order into a place of confusion.

3.) From Genesis 3:1 (cf. Rev. 12:9), **we know that he is very crafty,** more crafty than other beings. **He is shrewd, and waits for the proper moment** (Lk. 4:13), **and is adept at being sneaky.** Therefore, **we must be all the more watchful.** He is the master manipulator and deceiver, the ultimate con man. He will shake your hand with one hand, while picking your pocket with the other. He will appear to be your friend, but he has plans to steal from you, ruin you and kill you, if he can, ...all the while keeping the smile on his face. He will tell you to relax, put up your feet, and have more to eat, ...all the while sending for the hit man and butcher to come and kill you and cook you for dinner. If he can get you to relax and be unsuspecting, he has gained a *huge* advantage. **The Bible tells us to be alert, stay awake, be watchful. Why? Because the enemy loves to lure us into a false sense of safety so he can deftly ensnare us in some trap.**

4.) Jesus told us in John 8:44 that the devil is the father of lies. To lie is consistent with his nature, and he is the father of liars. **It important to recognize that he will work through others** (cf. Eph. 2:2). People who appear to be upright and good can be manipulated by him to where they begin to lie, and become entangled

in a web of deception. They come to be like him, deceiving and manipulating others. **Be on the alert, the devil's offspring are out there, people who have been reared and trained by him** (also in Jn. 8:44). They love to do the desires of their "father". Lying and slander can be attractive, and give perverse pleasure. **Have nothing to do with deception and lies, because that is the beginning of a slippery slope leading to disaster.**

5.) **He prowls about, looking for someone to devour.** He is *incessantly* looking for the unsuspecting, the preoccupied and unaware. When we are too caught up in our own stuff, distracted by entertainment and the multitude of inane things which the world offers, we can easily be led into a trap (Jas. 1:13-16), and be swallowed up before we know what overtook us (Gal. 6:1). Traps are easy to get into, and hard to get out of. **Satan is an opportunist.** He will not generally attack us with a frontal assault. We would get our hackles up and resist. No, **he wants to catch us unawares.** The element of surprise is a well-known battle strategy, and Satan is a master at using it. Note that he is "prowling about", or literally, "he walks about". He and his forces are *on patrol*. They move back and forth, continually monitoring peoples' lives, seeing who would be easy prey.

6.) **He is described as being like a roaring lion.** Lions will attempt to sneak up on their prey. They use their ferocious roar to terrify the prey, in an attempt to get it to do something foolish and impulsive. **Fear is a powerful tool to get people to try to deal with things in their own strength, and by their own devices.** That is a big mistake! That plays *into* the enemy's scheme. **The opposite of fear is faith.** Notice the verses immediately before and immediately after the one about the roaring lion. Verse 7 talks about how we must cast all our *anxieties* (fears) upon the Lord, knowing that He *will* care for us. Verse 9 exhorts us to **resist the one who is like a "roaring lion", standing firm in our faith**, recognizing that this is not a special, unique situation. Many other brothers and sisters in Christ, now and throughout time, have had to deal with the same kinds of tests and opposition. **God will get you through this, just like He has so many other believers.**

7.) **It is important to note that Satan is NOT really a roaring lion.** To resist an *actual* lion charging you would be a foolish course of action. He would quickly overpower you. The Bible does not say that Satan is a roaring lion. He is only *like* a roaring lion. **He is loud and scary sounding, but most of it is smoke and mirrors. Often, he is mostly bluster and bluff, and is not as dangerous as he appears, if we stand firm in the Lord and do as He says.** Satan's noise is an attempt to get you to cut and run. *If we keep our heads, and hide for refuge in the Lord, He will keep us safe* (Psa. 23; 91).

8.) **Nevertheless, Satan does have real power to hurt us, but only within God's permission.** When you read Job 1 and 2, you get an appreciation of the kinds of things the enemy can do. He can incite people against us, has power to cause natural disasters, and can afflict us with sickness. It is quite clear, however, that *he can only do what God allows him to.*

9.) **God is able to take the worst things that Satan can throw at us, and work them together for good in our lives** (Rom. 8:28). In the end, we can be confident that if we *trust* in the Lord, He will *strengthen, confirm, and establish* us. He will often even *restore* what the enemy may take from us. God will bring us victory in the end. **In whatever we face, we overwhelmingly prevail through God, who loves us** (Rom. 8:37).

10.) **We can and must resist the enemy.** The key to coming out well is that *we have to stand firm in the Lord*. No matter how it *looks or feels*, God will bring us through in victory, *if* we stand in *His* strength, not our own. James 4:7,8 tells us that **if we repent of our sin, submit to God and draw near to Him, then He will draw near to us, and we can effectively resist the devil and cause him to flee.** Note that *this involves a definite commitment of heart to obey God*. This is not just some ritualistic prayer, but a solid purposing of the heart. God will honor and protect those who honor Him, and come to Him for refuge (Psa. 91; I Sam 2:30b).

In closing, let me remind you that we have an adversary who is on the hunt, relentlessly watching how he can neutralize us and bring us down. **Do not think you can escape this. He is already at work in your life. Do you see where he is operating?** Are you *aware* of his schemes? Remember, cover and camouflage give him the element of surprise. He does not *want* you to know what he is doing. He does not *want* you to be mindful of him, or to recognize his activity. True, God *is* our strength, support, and defender, ...but *what does God tell us to do?* **Be clear-minded, watchful, ...and resist the adversary, strongly standing in faith.**