

"I Was Watching Satan Fall From Heaven Like Lightning" (Luke 10:18).

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - pastorpat@waukeshabile.org

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As believers, you and I are in constant spiritual warfare. Often, however, we fail to recognize our battles as such. In addition, we are often ignorant of Satan's mode of operation. And finally, we regularly fail to fight from a position of victory. Although this is a lengthy study, I would like to simply note several verses and then conclude by noting how we live from victory and not for victory.

First, let us begin by noting how the devil's defeat is already secured.

"But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" (Mark 3:27).

This parable tells us that Jesus has bound the devil and has placed him in a position of subjection. Jesus is the strong king who has conquered His enemies.

"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out" (John 12:31).

The devil's demise is certain. He shall be acted on by something or someone outside himself. God, in the cross, will overthrow the devil for good.

"and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged" (John 16:11).

God, as the authority, has already judged the devil. This past judgment continues to this day. "The perfect [tense] emphasizes the completed act of judging the present ruler of the world." (Rogers and Rogers, 219).

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Our Lord's victory over the devil is absolute and complete. His power is restricted and controlled. He can only do what God wants done. The devil's overthrow is certain.

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" (Rom. 16:20).

¹⁴ "[He made you alive,] having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him" (Col. 2:14, 15).

The words *canceled out* "was used for wiping out the memory of an experience, or for canceling a vote, annulling a law, or canceling a charge or debt." (Rogers and Rogers, 464).

"The perfect stands in contrast to the aorist in this section and fixes attention on the present state of freedom resulting from the action which was especially before the apostle's mind." (Rogers and Rogers, 465).

"Christ divested Himself at the cross of the evil power which had struggled with Him so strongly during His ministry in attempts to force Him to abandon the pathway of the cross." (Rogers and Rogers, 465).

¹⁴ "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Heb. 2:14, 15).

At the cross Jesus stripped the devil of his power to use death as an element of fear and bondage. The word "to render powerless" means "to render inoperative, to nullify, to make idle or ineffective, to render impotent as though no longer existing." (Rogers and Rogers, 520).

By rendering the devil powerless, our Lord frees His people from fear of death. "The word was used in the papyri for the release from a position of responsibility; e.g., a marriage contract, the superintendence of land under lease, the release from a municipal office, or the release of a slave." (Rogers and Rogers, 520).

The devil's demise was pronounced in the Garden (Gen. 3:14, 15), sealed at Calvary (John 16:11), continues in the present (Col. 2:14, 15), and completed in an imminent future (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; Matt. 25:41).

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Second, let us note how we fight from victory and not for victory. How should we treat the devil in light of God's work?

A. We need to be sober (2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Pet 5:8)

"so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11).

The devil has a plan of attack against you and God.

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11).

Most note how the word "schemes" is our English word "method." The devil has an intentional plan or method to his attack.

⁸ "**Be of sober** spirit, **be on the alert**. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:8, 9).

The word "sober" means "to abstain from wine." The idea is that we are cleared headed, not having a clouded mind. "To be alert," simply means "to stay awake." Basically, do not fall asleep.

B. We need to be standing (Eph 6:11-16)

¹¹ "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able **to stand firm against** the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, **so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm**. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵ and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith **with which you will be able to extinguish all** the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Eph. 6:11-16).

"Submit therefore to God. **Resist** the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

⁸ "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But **resist** him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:8, 9).

Although we do not fight the devil in our own strength and we are fighting *from* victory not *for* victory, it is still a real and genuine battle. His opposition to God and thus His people is real and "in time." We must go hard against the devil and his use of a fallen world system and his enticements toward our fleshly, fallen appetites.

C. We need to be submitting (James 4:7)

Submit therefore to God. **Resist** the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

These two opposing ideas are two sides of the same coin. Submission to God is a resisting of the devil. Although living in unbroken conscious submission to God is impossible this side of heaven, we should be standing firm by submitting to God. Thankfully, even in the absence of this conscious submission, God is victorious. We still have the unimaginable privilege of willfully submitting to God, and in so doing we are resisting the devil.

Notice the text. Resisting the devil is impossible in the absence of submitting to God. The emphasis should not be on resisting the devil but on submitting to God. The one automatically produces the other. Even though there are distinct periods when I am fully aware of the spiritual warfare I am in with the devil, I try not to give the devil any more affirmation than is necessary. My focus is on God and how loving, gracious, and generous He is toward me. My submission to Him is a consequence of the Holy Spirit's work in me and through me. Because of His gracious and generous acts in my behalf, the devil is resisted.

All of these verses shout one simple idea, "I reign because He does!" We have the victory in Christ Jesus our Lord over sin, death, and the devil. May He receive all the power, glory, and honor.