

# **THE BOTTOMLESS PIT & GOD'S LESSONS ABOUT THE DEMONS' LOCATION**

Revelation 9:1-2

Before we return to Revelation 9, which would be opening to one of the darkest chapters of the Bible, we should ask ourselves why would we even want to study through this chapter? Why do we need to study what God says about Satan, demons, and the bottomless pit? Is that something that believers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century really need to know?

The answer to all those questions is the same. A resounding YES. The truth is that God has warned us about our Adversary Satan (that by the way is the meaning of the name Satan, “adversary”), and commanded us to on guard against him.

On this Sunday morning, and a historic, evangelical, Bible-believing, Bible-teaching church: Most of us know far too little about the tactics, strategies, and methods of Satan.

## **Beware of Satan's Plans for Believers**

The bottom line is that if we are going to be on guard against our adversary, we need to know how to recognize his presence, face his onslaughts, and overcome his attacks against us, in the ways that God through His Word instructs us.

In Revelation 9 we will be taught an immense amount about the unseen and horrifically powerful kingdom of darkness that is shaping everything around us, more each day, against the God we love, serve, and belong to. But, before we dive into all that, we need to see why we even need to know all this.

Join me in 1 Peter 5 this morning, as we enter into the cosmic conflict; and understand what we are going to face more of each day, as we live in these times God calls the “last days”.

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Each of us face a very dangerous, clever, and powerful foe. He is the smartest, most powerful, and highest of all the angelic creatures God ever made. He is fallen, and wants

only to damage anything that is attached to God.

Peter here warns us that Satan can devour us. Like a lion he pounces and swallows us up. Peter knew that from personal experience.

Jesus had warned Peter to watch (be vigilant) and pray in the Garden of Gethsemane using this very same word (*gregoreo*, “vigilant”) three times (Matthew 26:38, 40, 41). Peter heard, did not obey, and ended up denying Christ three times.

Peter got devoured. If Satan can't devour us, he also tries to attack us like he did Eve when she listened to the serpent whispering lies, that Paul describes in 2 Cor. 11:3, 13-14 as the “angel of light”.

## Satan's Playbook

Are you aware that this morning Satan wants to poison your thoughts and emotions away from the purity of God's truth? His attack centers on our mind and emotions.

As the Father of lies wants to snatch the Word of God from us, so we think that sin is not so bad. As the Devil wants us to learn laugh at sin on television or at the movies, to dull our conscience, so it will no longer warn us of God's displeasure with sin. As Satan he wants to entertain us with sin so that we become very tolerant of it. Then he wants fill our mind with doubts, lies, and false doctrine to debilitate our will, confuse our emotions, corrupt our desires, and drawing our affections to the wrong things.

## Understanding Satan's Strategy

So Peter taught the churches to be on constant guard for Satan's attacks. This morning what exactly can Satan do? Paul warned in 2 Timothy 2:23-26 that Satan could “snare” believers. Turn there with me to see one way that Satan is at work every day among believers, trying to snare them.

2 Timothy 2:23-26 (NKJV) But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. 24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape **the snare of the devil**, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

## Satan is the Master Trapper

The word God uses for “snare” is *pagis*, which means<sup>1</sup> primarily: “anything which fastens” or “holds fast”, especially as in a “noose,” “snare,” or “net.” Satan is at work setting snares. He wants to get us fastened onto anything except God’s Word, God’s will, and God’s plan.

As believers, we can become ensnared by false doctrines (ones that are not grounded in the Word). We can also get ensnared by any of the “sins that so easily beset us”. But however Satan snares us, Paul says that we can get stuck onto that snares and become trapped in our minds, intoxicated by the devil. Here is what one pastor explains this condition:

It is only through God’s gracious provision of repentance and knowledge of His truth that anyone, including sinning believers, **may come to their spiritual senses**.

*Ananēphō* (**come to their senses**) literally means to return to soberness, indicating that falsehood and sin produce what might be called a type of spiritual inebriation, a stupor resulting in loss of judgment and proper control of one’s faculties. The destructive effect of false teaching and sin numbs the conscience, confuses the mind, erodes conviction, and paralyzes the will.<sup>2</sup>

Each of us needs to be constantly vigilant, always watching and on guard against any snares the devil places in our path, because:

## **Any Believer Can Get Snared by Satan**

Who can get snared? Back up to 1 Timothy 6:9 and see Paul’s earlier warning:

1 Timothy 6:9 (NKJV) But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a **snare**, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Satan traps believers into wasting their lives chasing after riches. These believers think they can handle all the lusts that are fed by riches. But they can’t. They are just self-inflicting terrible spiritual wounds upon their souls. As they weaken and get sick spiritually, they slowly drift away from the food and health for their souls that flows from the Word.

They also get distanced from encouraging Biblical nurture that flows from the gathering of the Body of Christ at His Church. Over time they become pierced, wounded, crippled,

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<sup>1</sup> Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G. (Eds.). (1964–). *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *2 Timothy* (2 Ti 2:26). Chicago: Moody Press.

sorrow-filled and unable to serve the Lord because of this self-directed, self-damaging pathway they have chosen for themselves and their families.

## **Even Mature Believers are Warned**

Satan is so strong that even godly, mature believers can get snared if they are not vigilant. Turn back to 1 Timothy 3:7 and not this warning, right in the middle of the qualifications for the leaders of Christ's Church:

1 Timothy 3:7 (NKJV) Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the **snare** of the devil.

So Satan snares, deceives, confuses, tempts, and seeks to disrupt God's work in us and through us. This is Satan's desire, but even more so the closer we get to the end.

One of the constant themes of the NT Scriptures is that we as believers love Jesus so much that we long for His coming. We are constantly reminded in Christ's ministry that we are like servants awaiting our Master's return. We are to be faithfully doing what He left us to do. That involves regularly checking the plan He left for us in His Word. Jesus said that daily eating of His Word was what He expected.

## **Only God's Word Prepares Us for Satan's Attacks**

That great statement we all know "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Matthew 4:4), comes in the midst of Satan's personal attack on Christ in the wilderness temptation at the launch of His ministry.

As we see the specter of ramped up attacks by the kingdom of darkness, we need to renew our devotion to the Word that feeds, strengthens, nourishes, sanctifies, and fills our souls with joy. The best way to be vigilantly resisting the Devil is by daily, personally pausing to read, listen, and prayerfully respond through a time of personal devotion in God's Word.

## **The Rising Tide of the Evil Empire of Darkness**

Now, turn back with me to 1 Timothy 4. Both Paul and John warned of the increasing influence that the evil empire of Satan would pour out as mankind hurtles towards the climactic final rebellion against God. Paul explained that the last days would be times of evil spirits.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NKJV) Now the Spirit expressly says that **in latter times** some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

Move on to 2 Timothy 3, where Paul continues to identify these times as when we realize Satan's plans for the "last days".

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV) But know this, that **in the last days** perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Then, God continues to warn that Satan will work so hard at snaring, deceiving, and neutralizing believers that the horrible condition of Word-lessness will lead to world-likeness.

## **Word-less Living Leads to World-like Living**

Note what Paul records from God in:

2 Timothy 4:1-4 (NKJV) I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine**, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

So, because of the growing evil that darkens the world leading up to the final rebellion, we are called to be alert, vigilant, and guarded against the schemes of Satan. Perhaps the best way to do that is to learn what God wants every member in Jesus Christ's church to be taught, contained right in the book we are called to study.

## **Doctrines of Hope & Victory**

In obedience to God's desire that we "read", and "hear", and "keep" (Rev. 1:3) these doctrines in Revelation, open with me again to Revelation 9.

The doctrines of hope, truth, grace, spiritual power, and Christ's victory over sin, death, spiritual wickedness and Hell are perhaps clearest in this chapter. We saw last time that the theme of this chapter is in portrait of the amazing contrast between the two stark choices every human will always face:

## **Christ Who Offers Endless Life & The Devil, his Demons, and the Destroyer from the Abyss, Who Offer Endless Death**

God has always offered humans a way out of their sin. Here, again He does the same, and here again, humans refuse to repent.

Next time we will begin to unpack the doctrines of this amazing chapter, starting with:

### **THE BOTTOMLESS PIT & GOD'S LESSONS FROM THE DEMONS' LOCATION (9:1-2, NKJV)**

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to **the bottomless pit**. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

There is a bottomless pit, mentioned seven times starting here in Revelation 9. This prison is filled with the worst of the worst. They are horrific creatures so vile that they are even more dangerous and destructive than normal evil demons.

Martin Luther, as he faced these truths we are pondering today, felt such real oppression from the kingdom of darkness that he wrote a teaching hymn to train the growing wave of new believers coming to Jesus during the Reformation. Those words are the third stanza of the great hymn: *A Mighty Fortress*.

## **Lessons for Living Today**

To prepare for communion, please stand with me and declare these truths we hold onto each day:

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.