

Know Your Enemy: His infernal majesty—Satan, demonic angels and you!

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

The Bible tells us that there is a war going on that we cannot see with our eyes. Spiritual warfare is a battle between invisible, angelic forces that affects you and me. Behind the confusion and uncertainty that exists today lies the craft and power of the great spiritual being Jesus called, “the ruler of this world,” the devil. Whether we realize it or not we are at war against the forces of evil and the battles are being lived out in our daily lives and the lives of those we love.

Even now, Satan and his worldwide legions are tightening his hold on this world and implementing his wicked strategies in an all-out surge of power. And you and I are caught in the crossfire!

Christians need to know what the Bible teaches about Satan, his angels and his ways. If we want to defeat the devil and his army we must learn to fight on a spiritual level. One of the first rules of warfare is *know your enemy*. If we are to wage victorious spiritual warfare we need to study Satan’s character, strategy and helpers.

The current popular preoccupation with angels is causing many people to ask, “Could I actually be touched by an angel?” Our answer to that question must come from the Bible rather than Hollywood. The Word of God says that every human who has ever lived has been touched by an angel. But before you get too excited you need to know that the angel touching your life is not one of the cute little angels you see in cartoons. This angel isn’t showing you your *Highway to Heaven* or protecting your *City of Angels*. He’s not the handsome, good-natured, slightly overweight, irreverent John Travolta-type *Michael* nor the wingless, bumbling Clarence-type helping us pursue *A Wonderful Life*. This angel used to be the anointed cherub of God—the most beautiful and powerful creature in the universe. Now he is the archenemy of God. Driven by pride and rebellion, he is evil to the core and locked in mortal cosmic combat with God and His people. He hates Christ and everything Christian. Meet his infernal majesty—Satan.

Satan and his demonic hordes touch the lives of every human being. They are superhuman, wicked and relentless. We are helpless against their power, but they are subject to *our* Master—Jesus Christ. And therein lies the key to overcoming the powers of darkness. In his classic statement on spiritual warfare above James tells us that the devil actually fears Christians who trust and obey God!

Trust and obedience scare the devil!

- I. Know Your Enemy: The fallen angelic general Satan leads an army of wicked angels called demons in vicious warfare against God and His people (Ephesians 6:10-12).
 - A. Satan’s character and activity are revealed in his names. These many names describe his evil nature and intent, and his awesome power. He is the believer’s supernatural and subtle enemy.
 1. Names reflecting his evil character: **Satan** (Zechariah 3:1, Revelation 12:9). A Hebrew word, *satan* means adversary or opposer; and it designates someone as a self-appointed rival of God whose purpose it is to set up a counterfeit and rival kingdom (Zechariah 3:1-2, Luke 22:31-32). **Devil** (Luke 4:2, Revelation 12:9). A Greek word, *diabolos* means slanderer or one who trips up. It pictures this person as uttering maliciously false reports that tend to injure the reputation of another. The devil seeks to defame God, His Son, His cause and His people. **The Serpent, Great Dragon** (Revelation 12:9). His subtle and beguiling nature as the sneaky snake of the Garden is also the terrifying fiery dragon of the Apocalypse. Like a subtle snake who is really a destructive dragon, he wants to devastate God and His people (2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15). **The Evil One** (John 17:15, 1 John 5:18). The Greek term *ho poneros* refers to one intrinsically wicked who is not content to be corrupt in himself but must seek to corrupt others.
 2. Names reflecting his evil activity: **Beelzebub** (2 Kings 1:2, Matthew 12:24). A Hebrew construction meaning “lord of filth.” These two words suggest flies swarming around foul trash heaps. Satan is the polluter of this world. **Ruler, Prince** (John 12:31, Ephesians 2:2). He rules the *cosmos*, the world system of wicked angels and unregenerate humans. This counter-kingdom over which Satan rules stands in defiance of God’s rule. **The God of This World** (2 Corinthians 4:4, Galatians 1:4). Satan heads up an anti-God philosophy that permeates the thinking of the unsaved. **Destroyer** (Revelation 9:11). **Tempter** (Matthew 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 3:5). **Accuser** (Revelation 12:10). **Deceiver** (Revelation 12:9).

- B. Satan's agenda is revealed in his fall. Because of his pride and rebellion, Satan went from being the anointed cherub of God to the archenemy of God. He carried his battle against God to earth, bringing with him one third of the angels when God banished him to this planet (Luke 10:18).
1. Satan's original sin: Pride (Ezekiel 28:11-19). In the sixth century BC Ezekiel prophesied against Ethbaal III, proud leader of Tyre (28:2) and enemy of God's people Judah. Then, in verse 11, the prophet turned his attention to the evil power behind the man—"the king of Tyre," Satan himself. Ezekiel 28:11-19 gives us a description of Satan's prefallen state and of his fall. He was the greatest of God's creatures and leader of the cherubim, a special class of angelic beings who serve as guardians of God's holiness (Genesis 3:24). Because of his arrogance and violence, God cast him from his privileged position to the earth. His ultimate punishment is the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41).
 2. Satan's original plan: Rebellion to usurp God's glory (Isaiah 14:12-17). In the eighth century BC Isaiah prophesied against the Assyrians by predicting their Babylonian defeat. He then added that God will also punish Babylon's prideful king (14:1-11). Then, in verse 12, the prophet turned his attention to the power behind the man—"the star of the morning," Satan himself. The five "I wills" of Isaiah 14:12-19 reveals that his ambitious plan is nothing short of replacing God. Satan wants to usurp God's power and authority so that he can receive God's glory.
 3. The origins of Satan's army: When Satan fell from his holy state in which God created him, a host of other holy angels fell with him (Revelation 12:4). These holy angels sinned when Satan did and in the same way. These fallen angels or demons joined the rebellion and serve their wicked ruler.
- C. His power and limitations are revealed in his rank. As a fallen cherub or archangel of evil, Satan has awesome supernatural powers. Even the archangel Michael did not take on Satan but let the Lord fight that battle (Jude 9). As a created being Satan is under authority (Job 2:6) and no match for the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 4:4) who created him (Colossians 1:16).

II. Remember Your Enemy's Ways: Satan is an evil supernatural being who is your powerful yet subtle adversary (2 Corinthians 2:11).

- A. Satan is a mean and powerful foe (1 Peter 5:8, Jude 9). He is not afraid of you, but he is afraid of your Lord.
- B. Satan is a deceptive foe (2 Corinthians 11:3, 14). His lies sound good and his stuff looks good.
- C. Satan is a relentless foe (Isaiah 14:12-17). He is after God's glory and his pride is insatiable.
- D. Satan is a wealthy foe (Matthew 4:1-11). He can offer every worldly pleasure and gain to those who will follow him.
- E. Satan is a hateful foe (Revelation 12:10). He hates Christians and accuses them constantly.

THIS WEEK: Are you waging victorious warfare? Are you walking in the light, the safety zone of submission to God?

1. Where in your life are you vulnerable to Satanic attack? You can readily identify these areas. These are the places in your life where you have not submitted to God. When you fail to trust God or obey God, the devil attacks you confidently. How have you moved out of God's safety zone of submission?
2. How can you beef up your defenses against Satanic attack? This is easy. When the devil sees a believer submitting to God through trust and obedience, he flees. You see...he's under authority and afraid of Christ! How can you move into the safety zone of submission in this area of your life?

NEXT WEEK: Prepare for the Battle: Basic Issue—God's provision for every Christian soldier!