

Uberwriters, LLC

Author: Brad Rahme

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Born Into War

*"And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." **Revelation 12:7-9***

My name is Brad Rahme. I'm Brother Peter's youngest son. I've backslidden more times than I care to remember. In sincere tears, I've also re-dedicated my life to the Lord more times than anyone I know. For years I thought I had a wire crossed wrong in my heart or I was simply too weak to live successfully as a Christian. Eventually, seeing a familiar, long stretch of wilderness looming I broke down and humbly asked the Lord for help. What He revealed completely changed my life. Permanently.

Most of us have heard the story of the war Lucifer began in Heaven and his inevitable fall. Today I want to look at this event a little closer. In the scripture above it says he did not prevail in Heaven but more specifically it says Satan was cast to Earth. The theology of why he was cast to Earth is beyond the scope of this devotional but there it is, written in black and white. Before you dismiss that as obvious, let it sink in for a second. We share a planet with the most evil being in eternity. A murderous warmonger. After his defeat in Heaven what was Plan B for him?

Adam's Treason

"Then God blessed them, and God said to them:"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:28

God created mankind as companions. When the Lord created Adam and Eve in His image, it was ultimately for the purpose of blessing us with a spiritual inheritance to rule and reign alongside Him. We were destined to live through eternity in a loving relationship with our Lord having the Earth as our dominion. Adam and Eve almost immediately abdicated this treasure by disobeying their generous, loving God. In one simple act they handed their entire dominion over to Satan. The war had just extended to the Lord's most treasured creation. From that day forward life became a bondage for us. The ground, because of sin, was cursed to yield food only through intensive labor. Women bore children only in pain and Adam and Eve experienced the most horrific event of all – separation from God. Despite the Lord's efforts to shield us, from that moment forward, every single man and woman is born into a raging war.

The Paradigm of Deception

*"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings." **Genesis 3:1-7***

In the passage above we can plainly see a conflict. Eve knows what God has commanded but since she has a free will she is flirting with desire. You can see her mind working as she ponders the Word of God (it may not have been in a book

yet, but it was still undoubtedly God's Word to her). Satan immediately opposes the Word of God and lies to Eve saying "You will not surely die". Notice what happens next – Eve reasoned. She sees the tree was good for food and pleasant-looking – how could it be that bad, right? The tipping point occurs when Eve reasons that God even said the tree was going to give a type of knowledge or wisdom. This was both an attempt at justification and the point at which Eve begins to trust her own understanding. Her conscience had been screaming that Satan was distorting the truth but Eve was in so deep at this point, it would have taken a lot for her to resist the deception. She was already entertaining the idea of sin. Sadly, Adam and Eve willingly disobeyed God and ate the fruit. Eve obviously had an idea of the danger she was in initially since she tells the serpent what God had commanded. The longer she entertained the serpent's voice however, the more his lies seduced her conscience. I believe this sequence is the paradigm (or re-occurring pattern) for every temptation and sin that occurs in our lives.

Your Adversary

"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."

1 Peter 5:8-9

If any scripture makes plain the battle we are in it's this one. The devil is clearly your adversary. And he is clearly seeking to devour you. Make no mistake, this is a battle of life and death. Notice that he walks about like a roaring lion. The danger is in his voice, not in his strength. If we resist his voice, he falters. All he has going for him is deception. When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior however, your spirit was raised from the dead. You were born into God's kingdom, out of the clutches of Satan and the price of your sins was paid in absolutely pure blood. This infuriates Satan. Since you are no longer a blind agent for him, at the very least your Adversary now wants to thwart the perfect plan of God for your life. Satan's overarching plan for believers however, is for you to be disqualified from your salvation (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The good news is that we have been enlisted as soldiers. And the better news is that we have been given weapons. Devastating weapons that are powered by God Himself.

The Paradigm of Victory

"For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons.⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds,⁵ [Inasmuch as we] refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed one),⁶ Being in readiness to punish every [insubordinate for his] disobedience, when your own submission and obedience [as a church] are fully secured and complete." 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (AMP)

When the Lord revealed to me the paradigm of deception I analyzed several times in my life that I had disobeyed Him. In my heart, I knew that every time I had stumbled, Satan had attacked me in my mind, in that specific sequence. His voice is rarely audible. It comes simply as a suggestion in the form of thoughts. In the form of carnal reasoning. The Bible says that as a person thinks in their heart, this defines them and leads to their actions (Matthew 15:18-20 and Proverbs 23:7). From my personal experience, Satan had often placed thoughts of despair, lies of hopeless outcomes in serving God, and frustration in my mind. This fuelled my heart's pride and anger at the trials I had to go through. Usually, when times got tough, I would end up getting beaten in my mind, and as a result, disobeyed the Lord. I knew what I was doing but could never recognize the Adversary in the details. I always seemed to get frustrated with the Lord or simply sin and try to block out my conscience with some justification. But recognizing the enemy is most of the battle. When you realize that you're in a war, and your mind is the battleground, you will begin to recognize the voice of the enemy. In verse five of the scripture above we can see that Satan is still trying the same old trick he used against Eve in the Garden of Eden. His ideas are lofty things that set themselves up against the knowledge of God. So how do we beat him? We take every thought and purpose captive to the obedience of Christ! It's as simple as that. Look at it this way: Jesus Christ is the Word (John 1:1-2) so taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ means that you have to take every thought captive to the Word of God. This means you need to speak the Word of God to negative thoughts! And guess what that means? Yep, you have to know the Word to use it as a weapon. In fact you have to be so militant you must be ready and willing to punish any slight slip of disobedience. That's when you'll experience the exhilaration of overcoming a trial you've never been beyond.

Our Example

*"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4 But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" **Luke 4:1-4***

In the scripture above we can see our awesome Lord literally whipping the devil like he should have been whipped in the Garden of Eden. What a champion! Jesus didn't even entertain the idea of sin or try to use reason to battle temptation. He simply used the Word as a sword. Notice that Satan came when Jesus was weak, tired and hungry. Expect that sort of sneak attack every time. Jesus stood strong and endured two more temptations beyond this one. Satan kept upping the "rewards" each time the Lord resisted him and even quoted scripture back to the Lord! We'll have to know the Word of God very well to grow into mature Christians, able to withstand these sorts of attacks. In Hosea 4:6 the Lord says "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" and we can see why. Many of us didn't even know we were born into a war. Armed with biblical knowledge, however, we have weapons that are devastating to Satan's forces. If we submit to God and stand rock-solid, forcefully resisting Satan, he will run like a scared rabbit every time (James 4:7). Learn to use your weapons!

As you go about your life this week, I encourage you to think over this devotional and try to recognize when your adversary is trying to tempt and deceive you into sin. Sin can be many things, such as worry, apathy, fear and pride. Recognize these negative thoughts and if you don't know a scripture to counteract them, find one with an online Bible or in your concordance.

May the God of peace be with you!

Brad Rahme