

SATANIC ATTACK

**“Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.”
—2 CORINTHIANS 12:7**

Contrary to what many believe, Satan is a literal being with a mind to think, a will to act and a purpose to accomplish. Paul’s thorn in his flesh was not a question of being in unfortunate circumstances, but is much more intentional, and its origin is in Satan.

We are all subject to satanic attacks, and there are three basic things we need to know in resisting the devil. The first is that Satan requires permission from God and is given boundaries. We see this in the story of Job. God set his prohibitions, and we can be encouraged by that, but the reality is God will sometimes give permission. Paul says because of surpassingly great revelations, he was given a thorn in his flesh to keep him from being conceited. The operative word is ‘given’, and it was given by God, not Satan.

The second thing is that God has a purpose in allowing satanic attacks. He did with Job and consequently, Job experienced God in a far richer, deeper way and he worshipped God. Another example is Jesus being led into the wilderness by the Spirit, not the devil, to be tempted by Satan. Satan asked to sift Peter like wheat. Peter was bold and outspoken, but after denying Jesus three times the night of His arrest, he was greatly humbled, and became the most powerful man in the first 12 chapters of Acts.

Thirdly, satanic attacks will empower us. James 4:7 says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” We do not resist what God in His sovereignty has permitted Satan, but we can resist what he attempts to do in our lives. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

We all deal with temptation, but if we are in Christ, it is controlled by God. The problem is that we get excited by the temptation, and when no one is looking, we actually look for the way in. But in looking for the way out, God’s grace is sufficient, however long standing our temptation may be. Christ’s strength is made perfect in weakness, and our security lies in a sovereign God who is at work in us. Though satanic attacks can be tough and painful, God uses them to drive us to a greater dependence on Him, so that we may experience His presence and strength in a way that will ultimately enrich our lives and bring us into a deeper knowledge of Him.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, keep me mindful when faced with temptation to always look for the way out, and grant me your strength in resisting the devil. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: What recent experiences have I had in resisting temptation?