

KNOWING THE ENEMY

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
—EPHESIANS 6:12

Scripture clearly identifies our number one enemy is Satan. He is mentioned 53 times in the Bible and on other occasions is referred to as Lucifer, Beelzebub, the dragon, old serpent, prince of this world and god of this age.

In Ephesians 6:11, Paul says, “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Notice the singular form - ‘the devil’s schemes’, but the next verse quickly moves to the plural form where Paul talks about the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil. This combination of the singular and plural is referring to the devil and his angels who are at enmity with God, and therefore, at enmity with all those who are in Christ.

These are formidable foes for several reasons. They are not physical or visible, but are “spiritual forces”. They consist of authorities and powers we know little about, and they operate in the heavenly realms. We associate the heavenly realms with the sphere of God and His activity, but it is in this very sphere the battle takes place and is unleashed on earth. Ezekiel 28:17 says of Satan, “Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom

because of your splendour.” And God’s response was, “So I threw you to the earth.”

In our western world, we live and function almost entirely in the physical realm with very little consideration of non-physical existence. Scripture teaches that we need to know that the enemy exists. We greatly delude ourselves if we doubt the existence of Satan and his demons or underestimate his power. C.S. Lewis very astutely writes in his book, ‘Screwtape Letters’, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which we may fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence and the other is to exaggerate their powers. The devil is pleased with either error.”

Satan’s assault on the human race began in the Garden of Eden and continues today. One of his best tactics is to subtly cast doubt in our minds. He said to Eve, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). The doubt Satan inflicted caused both Adam and Eve to act in independence of God. This is still Satan’s agenda today - to get us to act independently of God, becoming the gods of our own lives. That’s why we need to know the enemy; to recognize his coming, and to realize that many attempts to lure us away from God is the unseen enemy at work.

PRAYER: Dear God, help me to recognize Satan’s attacks and to stay clear of anything that attempts to lure me away from You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I believe in the existence of Satan and his demons?