

The Enemy of the King

Advent: Week 2

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The Fall that we see in Genesis 3 wasn't just an *accidental* Fall - it was a set-up by the enemy of God.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

—Genesis 3:1 (NIV)

Serpent: *For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*

—Genesis 3:5 (NIV)

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

—Revelation 12:9 (ESV)

The Bible tells us Satan is “crafty” and “the deceiver of the whole world,” which means we’re making a big mistake if we dismiss him or think we’re smarter than him.

Jesus: *... [The devil] was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

—John 8:44 (NLT)

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of

the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

—Isaiah 14:12 (NIV)

With his tail he dragged a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth....

—Revelation 12:4 (TEV)

War broke out in Heaven....

—Revelation 12:7 (Message)

This war spilled over onto earth as evil crept into the human heart, and our world became a battleground.

...the devil...rules the world, and his spirit has power over everyone who doesn't obey God.

—Ephesians 2:2 (CEV)

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature....

—Ephesians 2:1-3 (NLT)

The devil's supernatural power has the ability to blind us to the truth about Jesus Christ.

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

—2 Corinthians 4:4 (NLT)

“Ok, that's bad, but what's this got to do with Christmas?”

Christmas is a clash of two empires, between good and evil, of which we've only seen a small part of the bigger picture.

We have been drug into the fight because Satan hates God's goodness, and he knew how he could most hurt God—hurt the beloved people God created.

Our enemy is subtle, and at first our temptations can seem alluring, inviting, even what we most want, but as all of us discover, sooner or later, it's really a trap of the enemy.

Christmas signals God has opened a beachhead.

but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

—Luke 2:10-14 (NLT)

Thirty-three years later, the enemy seemed to have delivered a devastating counterattack.

...Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

—John 19:30 (NIV)

On the third day, the tomb was empty, and defeat had been turned into ultimate victory.

Rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! But terror will come on the earth and the sea. For the Devil has come down to you in great anger, and he knows that he has little time.

—Revelation 12:12 (NLT)

Satan knows he's defeated, but he isn't going to go out

without a fight and take down as many of God's beloved people as he can.

Jesus: Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

—Matthew 6:10 (ESV)

The Bible gives us tools to protect ourselves and even fight against the enemy.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

—Ephesians 6:10-13 (ESV)

Our enemies aren't people but Satan and the spiritual forces of darkness.

Christmas tells us that in God's perfect timing, He sent His only Son into this fallen world to begin the defeat of the enemy and open the door for salvation to those of us who choose to put our faith in Jesus Christ.

But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

—Galatians 4:4-7 (NLT)

God has given to followers of Jesus the full "armor of God" to not only defend ourselves but to also fight for Christ's

cause in our world today, to join him in bringing his Kingdom so that his will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints

—Ephesians 6:14-18 (ESV)

An Untrained Soldier is Just a Target.

—Sign at Scott Air Force Base, Bellville, Illinois

This Advent/Christmas Season is about God breaking into time and space, sending His only Son to confront and defeat sin, evil and Satan, and then point to a road for following His Son to the cross and beyond to eternal life that enables us to be more than conquerors.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

—James 4:7 (NIV)

Next Week: *Life Under the King's Rule*