

AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP

MIDWEEK SERVICE AND BIBLE STUDY

TOPIC: BEHIND ENEMY LINES Part 1

Wednesday, August 3, 2022

WE ARE AT WAR!

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Ephesians 6:10-13. 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 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. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

1 Peter 5:8-9. 8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Question: Are we truly at war?

Question: Who are we fighting against? What is the nature of this fight?

Question: What about our human opponents who are fighting us?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN JESUS' MINISTRY

Jesus led a relatively peaceful life until He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River and filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, as many would say today, "All hell broke loose!" The Bible records that the very first thing that happened after God said in an audible voice, "...This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17) was that "...Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1)

Jesus' public ministry began with an eyeball-to-eyeball power encounter with Satan himself! This is an account of the highest level of spiritual warfare ever recorded in history and it set the tone and the pattern for Jesus' entire ministry. The most serious, and ultimately fatal, blow that Jesus dealt Satan was His death on the cross, but that did not end the war. Now that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, the war continues.

Colossians 2:15. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Hebrews 2:14. Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

1 Corinthians 15:24-26. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Question- Should we ignore the devil? Does he have any powers? If so, how much power?

THE NATURE OF THE WARFARE

Jesus' coming to earth can be likened to a military invasion! He came with the Kingdom of God, and He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. He told His disciples to preach the Kingdom. Matthew 10:7-8.

Jesus came on the offensive! Satan, the ruler of this world, was being decisively attacked and is on the defensive. Before Jesus came, Satan's rule had gone virtually unchallenged for thousands of years. That is why he could offer the kingdoms of this world and their splendor to Jesus (Matthew 4:8). Jesus did not dispute his ownership. If Satan had not been the owner, the temptation involving them would have been a farce. Satan had, and still has, awesome power.

None of this should in any way cause us to forget that the ultimate owner of the whole world is God.

Psalm 24:1. The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it;

Satan never has been, nor ever will be, the owner of planet earth. His kingdom consists in the control he possesses over people who inhabit the earth, and he maintains that control by securing their allegiance through various means known as his wiles(schemes/strategies). Ephesians 6:11.

Likewise, the kingdom of God that Jesus brought is not a land that has territorial boundaries, but rather the reign of Jesus Christ over human beings. Wherever people declare their allegiance to Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God is in their midst.

The battle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan is essentially a battle for people and their allegiance!

The war is not over! While our enemies are already defeated, they are not dead, not even sickly. Even after Jesus's death and resurrection, the apostle Paul referred to Satan as "...the god of this age..." (2 Corinthians 4:4). Peter sees him walking around "...like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Like Paul and Peter, the best of disciples today avoid the mistake of naively underestimating the power of the devil. Satan is no wimp!