

SATAN IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

A Paper

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Introduction

Through the Pastoral Epistles, the apostle Paul exhorted for Christians to embrace truth, to teach sound doctrine, and to rebuke false teachers. Paul exhorted Timothy not only to advance the kingdom through effective and orderly administration of the communal gathering of believers, but also to protect and guard them from deception and false doctrines. According to Paul, doctrine was only sound so long as its foundation was in the teaching of Jesus Christ; therefore, the Pastoral Epistles presented an exclusive canon which allowed believers to discern what was true doctrine and what was false teaching. Likewise, the Pastoral Epistles equipped the early Christians with a means by which they might detect false apostles and ministers in the first century and beyond in light of approved orthodox beliefs and teachings.¹ However, rooted in the explicit nature of the aggressive attack of false teachers, Paul implicitly defined the identity of the true opponent of the Early Church.

Although the apostle Paul recognized the main antagonists of the church as individual human beings, he understood that their work of division and lies had its own source or cause just as his truth and teaching on good works flowed from the well of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, in an analogical form, just as sound doctrine and good works found its source ultimately in Jesus Christ, so did false doctrine and evil deeds reveal Satan as its place of origin.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the specific role of Satan as the true active

¹Ralph Earle, *1, 2 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, eds. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas, 341-418 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1978), 344.

enemy of the church as taught and implied throughout Paul's theology shown forth in the Pastoral Epistles in order to demonstrate in clarity his work against the body of Christ as well as his power and authority over those located inside the realm of dominion and reign. This paper will accomplish this task in three main ways. First, the topic will be addressed, identified, and described in the Pastoral Epistles coupled with a supporting biblical theology taken from the entire canon of Scripture. In addition, extra-canonical sources will be set forth to support the prevailing view of Satan as the penultimate opponent of the church and its teachings. Second, the paper will exclusively discuss the immediate role of this topic in the development and theology of the Pastoral Epistles. And third, the paper will conclude with certain implications and applications concerning the relevance of this topic in conjunction with the contemporary church.

Satan In The Pastoral Epistles And Beyond

In his writings, Paul acknowledged a particular, evil spiritual being whose purpose was not only to oppose God, but also His people. Paul referenced this personal character in various terms, but mainly he identified him as Satan or the devil.² Here, in the Pastoral Epistles, the name "Satan" appeared only in 1 Timothy in two accounts, and the title "devil" arose in three instances, two of which were found in 1 Timothy and one in 2 Timothy. In addition to these two main titles, Paul labeled this evil spiritual being as the "adversary" once in 1 Timothy 5:14, but later identified him as Satan in v.15.

²Daniel G. Reid, "Satan, Devil," in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 862.

Within the aggressive tone of the Pastoral Epistles regarding the obligations and commissioning of Timothy and Titus to proclaim and protect the faith, Paul addressed their common enemy immediately in 1 Tim 1:20. In response to the blasphemous words and deeds of Hymenaeus and Alexander, Paul committed to “hand them over to Satan” for correction and punishment. According to Paul in 1 Tim 1:18, he and Timothy were partakers in the good warfare which involved the defense of the faith which was borne from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Inevitably, as made known here in the context of vs. 18-21, any alternative to Paul and Timothy’s representation of the true faith resulted in becoming a participant in the world of Satan. In a brief description of these verses, Paul decided to exclude these two men from the fellowship of the church which placed them into the only other accessible dominion outside of the kingdom of God in creation, namely the realm of Satan.³

Later, in 1 Tim 5:15 Paul referenced Satan a second time in order to clarify the identity of the “adversary” mentioned in the previous verse. In this appearance of the title “Satan”, Paul linked the failure of the younger widows to control their passions, words, and deeds to following after Satan and acquiring a disposition which was indicative to those who belonged to his realm.⁴ Furthermore, in both 1 Tim 1:20 and 5:15 Paul implied the idea that any doctrine or behavior which slighted or contradicted from the truth always resulted in partaking in the work of Satan and being influenced by him in his

³Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2, Timothy and Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 81.

⁴Walter L. Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 184.

overall purpose to attack and thwart God's purposes and the work of His church.

In addition to his primary choice of the title "Satan", Paul also used "devil". Throughout the Pastoral Epistles the apostle's usage of "devil" occurred three times. First, in 1 Tim 3:6-7 Paul named the devil in two consecutive verses. In this section of the letter, Paul ordered Timothy not to allow recent converts to become overseers because of their spiritual immaturity and susceptibility to the temptations of the devil. Once again, he taught that any behavior or mindset which did not accurately correspond to the sound doctrine rooted in the gospel kerygma was representative of the devil and his kingdom as well as open to his influence and manipulation. Ultimately as seen in 1 Tim 3:6-7, pride was not a quality indicative of sound doctrine and produced a lifestyle which gave opportunity for the new convert to be trapped by the devil and to be brought under his condemnation.⁵ Second, Paul also used the term "devil" in 2 Tim 2:26. Although the translation of this passage has been often debated by scholars, the scope of academia have unanimously agreed that the usage of "devil" was in reference to the personal, evil spiritual being which was recognized under the same heading as "Satan". Similar to the above instances in 1 Tim 3:6-7, the devil was the one responsible for trapping and enslaving believers and non-believers.⁶ As evident in each of these direct allusions to Satan as the personification of evil whereby he stands in direct opposition to God, His righteousness, and His people, Paul presented him not only as the instigator of all sins,

⁵William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary: Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 127-8.

⁶Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 26.

but also the source of all deceit and evil behavior.⁷

The rest of Paul's letters set forth overwhelming evidence in support of this description and identification of Satan and his work of lies and deception. As noted earlier, Paul used the transliteration of the Hebrew word, *šāṭān*, more than any other reference in order to allude to this specific, evil spiritual being. Throughout his letters, Paul named him "Satan" ten times: Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:11, 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 1:20, 5:15. The identification of Satan as the "devil" occurred in Paul only half as many times, three of which were already addressed in the Pastoral Epistles above, and the remaining two resided in Ephesians. The citations for these instances are as follows: Eph 4:27, 6:11; 1 Tim 3:6-7; 2 Tim 2:26.

Apart from the traditional one-word treatment of the identification of Satan, Paul also alluded to him in various other ways. For instance, in 2 Cor 4:4 Paul called him the "god of this world". In addition to Satan's rule over the worldly kingdom, Paul also described him elsewhere as one who "disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14). This title was in agreement with the Pastorals' depiction of Satan as the author of all deception which comprised the main thrust of his nature and work.⁸ Not limited to a well-honed skill of mere deception, Paul taught in 2 Thess 2:3-9 that the "man of lawlessness" would be empowered by Satan himself not only to deceive, but to do various miracles, signs, and wonders. Therefore, as extremely demonstrated in this text, Satan had

⁷Clinton E Arnold, "Satan, Devil," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, eds. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1078.

⁸Sydney H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 193.

the power to play a more active role in using others as his instrument of evil.⁹

The rest of the New Testament also testified to Paul's portrayal of Satan as the underlying enemy of God in all of creation. For example, in Hebrews 2:14 the author argued that the incarnation of Christ was necessary in order to defeat and destroy the devil who had the power over all death. In relation to the satanic attack on believers, in James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8-9, the two authors warned believers to beware Satan's assault lest they give in to his temptations and are overcome by his power. According to 1 John 3:8-10, consistent and habitual sinful behavior was the main factor communicating that one belonged to Satan.¹⁰ Once again, in Revelation 20:7-8, John depicted Satan as the great deceiver who sets out to deter the entire world from the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ before he is forever cast into the lake of fire to endure eternal torment and punishment.¹¹

Another example from the Johannine corpus was found in John's gospel account. John recorded Jesus's words to his Jewish audience concerning the identity and character of Satan. Jesus expounded upon the meaning of the title He gave Satan as the "father of lies" as He declared that the devil "was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44).

In addition to the New Testament, the Old Testament portrayed Satan as the central, evil being who stood in opposition to God and ruled over a spiritual kingdom.

⁹Ibid., 198.

¹⁰Ibid., 204-7.

¹¹J. Dwight Pentecost, *Your Adversary The Devil* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1997), 188.

However, the New Testament and Old Testament both were in agreement that despite the power and authority this “Satan” had, he and his kingdom were ultimately subject to God and His divine will. This point was clearly expressed in the appearance of Satan in Job 1-2. Satan only had limited power over Job’s life and family. However, his immediate purpose in afflicting Job was to spurn him against Yahweh amidst the sufferings of his body and the false representations of God from his three friends.¹² In another example of Satan attempting to create division and disobedience between God and His people, he incited David to take a census of Israel which displeased the Lord in 1 Chronicles 21:1. Furthermore, in Zechariah 3:1-2 Satan fitted himself with the full meaning of his designated title as the accuser. In this text, Satan stood before the high priest Joshua to accuse him in the presence of the angel of the Lord and Yahweh.¹³

While the New Testament and the Old Testament contributed sufficient evidence which supported the concept of a personal, evil spiritual being set in direct opposition to God and His will, extra-canonical sources as well arrived at a similar if not identical conclusion. For example, the early Christian apologetic document known as the *Epistle to Diognetus* mentioned the devil only three times, but in each instance he always performed the role as a the great deceiver. Other such extra-biblical sources such as the *Life of Adam and Eve* and *1 Enoch* depicted Satan as a personal spiritual being of the highest order who appeared before the heavenly courts to bring evil accusations against God’s people.¹⁴ In

¹²Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, 862.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, 863.

addition to these Jewish documents, post-New Testament accounts such as *Ignatius, 1 and 2 Clement, Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas*, all retained a developed doctrine of Satan as the tempter, deceiver, evil one, and the ultimate enemy engaged in direct rebellion against God and His church.¹⁵ Thus, the overwhelming evidence found in the Pastoral Epistles, the New and Old Testaments, and in extra-canonical sources stood in stark agreement concerning the identity, character, and operation of the devil.

The Role Of Satan In The Pastoral Epistles

The Pastoral Epistles contained references and inferences towards Satan and his active role as the founding and ruling enemy of the church. The content of the Pastorals communicated that the opponents of the Early Church were a combination of heresies and an early form of Gnosticism due to the constant exhortations geared towards Timothy and Titus to lead believers in sound doctrine which was in accordance with the “words of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim 6:3). Thus, the core understanding of Satan’s attack upon the foundation and advancement of the kingdom of God focused on contaminating the clear gospel truth of Jesus and the apostolic doctrines.¹⁶ In order to succinctly grasp the full meaning of the devil’s function and role in the Pastorals, this section will briefly consider this topic in three main ways. The aim of the first section depicts Satan as the deceiver of Christians and those outside the body of Christ. The purpose of the second section defines the devil and his work in the temptation of believers and non-believers. The third section

¹⁵Arnold, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, 1078-80.

¹⁶Lea and Griffin, Jr., *1, 2, Timothy and Titus*, 27-30.

consists of an argument for the concept of Satan as the ruler of a spiritual kingdom.

In conjunction with Jesus' statements concerning the identity and character of Satan in Jn 8:44 and attributing to him the paternal title, "father of lies", 1 Tim 2:13-14 supported this view of the devil in an implicit manner under the umbrella of an understood interpretation of the Genesis account of the fall of mankind. Here, Paul justified his argument for the particular role of women in the church in vs. 11-12 by using the biblical illustration of the deception of Eve. Clearly, in these two verses deception was the key point being expressed. Furthermore, Paul simply quoted Eve's own confession of her deception as noted in Genesis 3:13.¹⁷ Unlike Eve's confession, Paul did not outright name her deceiver. However, in 2 Cor 11:3 Paul openly identified the "serpent" as the instigator of Eve's deception. Therefore, for Paul in 1 Tim 2:14 the implied deceiver was Satan.

Thus, from the beginning of creation Satan was at work in convoluting the truth of God to His people in order to influence them to believe a lie which led to an act of disobedience that brought with it massive implications for all of mankind (Gen 3:14-18; Rom 5:12-21). Adam and Eve had access to the soundest doctrine which descended directly from the voice of God into their perfect minds and hearts. However, Gen 3:1 described the serpent as "more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made." The traditional biblical understanding of the "serpent" in the Garden as Satan was manifested in Rev 12:9 and 20:2 where his name was mentioned followed by the

¹⁷William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2000), 135.

phrase, “that ancient serpent”. In both of the instances in Revelation, the referral to Satan was in conjunction with his primary work of deception of all nations. Therefore in Gen 3, the serpent proceeded to distort the pure doctrine Eve received from God with a false interpretation and teaching which caused her to sin through misplaced initiative and motivation. Therefore, under the deception of Satan the woman worked out his will by becoming an agent of deception to Adam. After all, Paul taught that Adam was not personally led astray by Satan, but rather he was deceived by Eve.¹⁸

Other instances in the Pastoral Epistles were in agreement with Paul’s concept of Satan as the deceiver of mankind and distorter of the perspicuity of God’s Word. For example, in 2 Tim 3:12-13 Paul warned Timothy of persecutions aimed at the godly despite the fact that “evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” The false teachers knowingly taught what they knew not to be true to the Ephesian church and functioned as instruments of deception. This point was solidified by the Greek passive participle, πλανώμενοι, which more than likely communicated the idea that Satan was the active agent of deception exercising his influence over the humans who were doing the deceiving.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, Paul made reference here to a commonly held concept of a two-fold nature of deception. When one deceives someone of the truth, he or she becomes susceptible to the false truth they

¹⁸John Calvin, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, Calvin’s Commentaries, vol. 21, trans., Rev. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 69.

¹⁹Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 561.

influenced others to accept as fact.²⁰

Furthermore, Paul delivered the word of the Spirit to Timothy in 1 Tim 4:1-3 that those who devoted themselves to “deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” would depart from the faith. Here, Paul was very blatant in attributing the false doctrines which ultimately “blinded the minds of the unbelievers” and caused Christians to fall away from the faith to actual demonic expression (2 Cor 4:4). According to v. 2, these teachings, though demonic and satanic in origin, were mediated through individuals as recognized by the Greek word, ψευδολόγοι, translated as “those who speak falsely” or as “liars”.²¹ Once again, these verses testified that the primary work of Satan in this world was to deceive and confuse all nations of the voice of truth from God spoken to His people. In addition to the evil deceivers described in 2 Tim 3:12-13 and 1 Tim 4:1-3, Paul warned Titus of certain deceivers in Titus 1:10-11 whose doctrines concerning circumcision were destroying families. Throughout the Pastoral Epistles, the apostle Paul equivocated the work of deception received from individuals as the direct result of Satan’s ancient purpose since the creation of the world of deceiving believers and non-believers. Therefore, any different doctrine or teaching which did not align with the apostolic doctrines was solely a result of the work of the great deceiver. Hence, in the Pastoral Epistles, Paul commissioned Timothy and Titus to retaliate against Satan’s primary manner of attack of deception and distortion of truth.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹George W. Knight III, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 189.

As seen in the above section, Satan had the ability to deceive those inside and outside of the body of Christ. In addition to this primary work of deception as the devil's main tactic against the church, Paul taught that Satan had the power and authority to set traps and send forth temptations for believers and non-believers to fall under enslavement and condemnation. Paul graphically revealed this truth in 2 Tim 2:24-26. As noted earlier, the translation of this passage has been debated frequently with several different options. The breakdown in *koine* Greek concerning the differentiation of the two pronouns, αὐτου and ἐκεινου, created a difficulty for scholars in assigning confident antecedents for them both in the context of v. 26. Traditionally, three main views were offered in an attempt to identify the antecedents of the pronouns.²² In one option, scholars suggested that the αὐτου was a reference to the "Lord's servant" mentioned in v. 24 and that ἐκεινου referred to God as the one whose will would be carried out. Another alternative that theologians argued for was that the αὐτου identified the devil as the one who has trapped the individuals, but the ἐκεινου again signified God as the one whose will would be accomplished.²³ A third option which was the traditional translation of v. 26 assigned the devil as the proper antecedent to both pronouns. Thus, Satan captured people and enslaved them to do his will.²⁴

In this text, for the fourth time in the Pastoral Epistles, Paul referred to a "snare"

²²A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987), 142.

²³Ibid.

²⁴J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Black's New Testament Commentary, vol. 14 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 190-2.

set by Satan. Two of those four appearances of “snare” were used in the phrase “snare of the devil” (1 Tim 3:7; 2 Tim 2:26). In both cases, the “devil” ought to be translated as a subjective genitive which allowed for a translation that was coherent with the theology of the Pastoral Epistles concerning Satan as an active enemy of the church. Hence, the devil was aggressively setting traps in order to capture and incapacitate believers and non-believers from knowing and doing the will of God.²⁵

Furthermore, the Pastoral Epistles alluded to various “snares” of the devil, namely pride, money, women, ambition, and other behaviors and lusts which conflicted with the godly life Paul exhorted Timothy and Titus to lead as examples of godliness for all men and women to follow (1 Tim 6:9). Ultimately, as seen in the context of 1 Tim 3:7, Paul defined the “snare of the devil” as falling into reproach or disgrace in the world.²⁶ Satan trapped believers in order to ruin and destroy their reputations and the confidence that the church ought to have in their good works. Also, the devil set snares for the lost in order to continue to enslave them in their sinfulness to his will so that he might use them as instruments of evil. An example of this within the context of the church, Paul warned younger widows to control themselves so that the “adversary” would have “no occasion for slander” (1 Tim 5:11-14). Also, the apostle beseeched Titus to live a life of integrity, dignity, and “sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us,” thus avoiding being caught in the snares and temptations of the devil (Ti 2:7-8).

²⁵Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 183-4.

²⁶Ibid., 184.

Paul understood that the devil assumed a fuller role in creation than perhaps the form of a chaotic, wandering evil being. From the outset of Paul's first letter to Timothy, the apostle presupposed upon his audience the truth that Satan had a spiritual kingdom in which he was a ruler equipped with power and authority to exercise and execute. Traditionally, scholars and theologians interpreted 1 Tim 1:20 within the context of church discipline. Both Chrysostom and Augustine, among other patristic fathers, affirmed that Hymenaeus and Alexander were separated from the assembly of believers in order to be punished and corrected in their flesh so that their spirits may be saved.²⁷ Also, Paul revealed this concept of excommunication in 1 Cor 5:5 in a similar context where members of the church betrayed the faith in words and deeds and needed to be rebuked and corrected. According to Pauline theology, for one to be expelled from the Christian community inevitably resulted in the person being transferred into the realm of Satan's rule and influence.²⁸ In this mode of excommunication the two men experienced the full power of Satan without the spiritual protection of the church. The full exposure to the power of Satan in his realm had the capability of affecting the inner man as well as the physical man as seen in the Old Testament account of Job. Moreover, Paul expressed the relevance of this type of social discipline in Ti 3:10 which was a common form of ostracism in Judaism.²⁹

Also, Paul expressed a similar inferred reference to the spiritual kingdom of Satan

²⁷Peter Gorday, ed., *Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, vol. 9 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 150-1.

²⁸Page, *Powers of Evil*, 203.

²⁹Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 69.

in 1 Tim 5:11-14. According to v.14, some of the younger widows had already “strayed after Satan.” The Pauline theology outlined in the Pastorals presented a “two-kingdom” construct. This idea is not to be mistaken for Martin Luther’s coined “two-kingdom” doctrine in the sixteenth century. Rather, instead of differentiating between a spiritual kingdom and a physical kingdom, Paul recognized a stark difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Thus, as portrayed in the evil deeds and speech of the younger widows in 1 Tim 5:11-14, Paul conveyed that such people do not belong to the kingdom of God or either have temporarily broken fellowship with the body of Christ. The unavoidable result of this type of behavior was that these people in turning away from a life indicative of the kingdom of God became residents of the realm of Satan and susceptible to his influence, power, and authority.³⁰

These three concepts of Satan’s role in the Pastoral Epistles brought clarity to who were the opponents and enemies of the church. Satan’s role as the deceiver shed tremendous light upon the truth that sound doctrine needed to be specifically defined and exclusive to anything contrary to the apostolic teachings and the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Tim 1:1-11). The devil’s role as tempter in setting various kinds of traps and snares for the Christians and non-Christians emphasized the great necessity for the leadership of these early churches to be grounded in godliness and truth, living lives full of good works (1 Tim 6:6; Ti 2:7, 14). Finally, the truth that Satan had authority and power over a specific spiritual kingdom contributed to Paul’s wartime mentality that believers needed to be united in faith, love, and good works in order to overcome a very evil and dangerous

³⁰Hendricksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy, and Titus*, 177-8.

enemy of the church and God (1 Tim 1:18, 5:14, 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; Ti 2:7-8). Thus, Paul's language of intensity throughout the Pastoral Epistles became amplified in light of the ever present assault and onslaught from an imposing kingdom on the hearts and lives of believers and non-believers.

The Doctrine Of Satan And The Contemporary Church

The relevance of this topic in relation to the modern-day church is exceedingly important to grasp. Within the first section of this paper, the doctrine of Satan as the active agent of evil and deception against the church was heavily realized in the Pastoral Epistles, the New Testament, the Old Testament, and a list of extra-biblical sources which was not exhaustive by any means. This evidence pointed to the regularity and consistency of the fact that the ultimate enemy fueling the constant rebellion against God and His divine will was Satan. He began at creation and will continue to incite division and deception in the world against God's gospel truth until the fulfillment of the complete and final restoration of creation (Rev 20). Therefore, the body of Christ must be aware of Satan as a personal opponent of each individual believer as well as the god of those who are not believers (Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 4:4). Thus, the church must prepare to oppose the aggressive attack of the devil in three main ways.

First, churches must choose their leaders and teachers carefully in order that they may efficiently equip believers for the ministry and for the building up of God's kingdom (Eph 4:11-14). Second, churches must emphasize the necessity for believers to grow in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:9; 2 Pet 1:8). Churches must

impress upon the believers the importance of being specific and precise in theology and sound doctrine which may only be found in ample study of the Scriptures. The only weapon that God has given the church in its battle against the assault of Satan is the Sword of the Spirit, namely the Word of God (Eph 6:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12-13). In Rev 12:11 John stated in reference to the conquering of Satan, “And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the *word of their testimony*, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”³¹ The contemporary church will only conquer Satan so long as it claims the promises of God in Christ as revealed in His Word which in it He has given believers “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3). Deception and lies are only false when in the presence of undisputable truth and fact.

Third, the contemporary church must face the attack of Satan with the shield of faith in the victory of Jesus over sin, death, and the power of Satan (Eph 6:16; Rom 8:1-4; 1 Cor 15:55-57). The church must recognize that in Christ believers have authority over Satan and his temptations (Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).³² The contemporary church must do as Paul commanded in the Pastoral Epistles and store up in their hearts and minds the endless wealth of sound doctrine that is in accordance with the glorious gospel in order that they might do good works whereby they guard themselves from the snares of the devil, rescue the lost and blind people who are under the rule and reign of Satan, and ultimately bring glory to God in heaven as the giver and victor of all they do and accomplish in Christ

³¹Scripture quotation was taken from the ESV translation of the Bible. Italics are the author’s emphasis.

³²Pentecost, *Your Adversary The Devil*, 162-3.

(Psalm 119:9; Matt 5:16; 1 Tim 4:16; Ti 3:8, 14; 2 Cor 4:3-6).

Closing Prayer Of Application

Oh, Great Father of mercies, I pray that You would give us wisdom and insight into all truth and understanding of Your Word. Would You answer our cry with the Psalmist to open the eyes of our hearts to the wondrous things in Your law? Lord, I give You thanks and praise for Your Son who was the propitiation for our sins, who was crucified, buried, and resurrected that we might be redeemed, forgiven, sanctified, justified, adopted, and eternally saved. Oh, God in heaven, please teach us Your ways and make known to us the path of life where there is the fullness of joy and at Your right hand pleasures forevermore. Help us Lord to be faithful in what You have likewise entrusted to us as faithful ministers and teachers of Your precious saving gospel of Jesus Christ our God and Savior. Let us be mindful of Satan and his hatred of You, Your Son, this world, and all that humbly bow before You and praise Your name above all names. May You unify Your people as one flock with one shepherd in order that we may fight the good fight of faith as one body in one fell swoop upon the principalities and powers of darkness in this world. Equip Your saints for Your good work, Great Shepherd of the Sheep. May we be faithful soldiers of the cross and love not our lives even unto death. For Your namesake and renown in all the earth, prepare and build up Your chosen ones to protect the faith and to send forth your people out into the world to unveil the gospel to all of those who are perishing in their sin and condemnation. Glory be to the One, true-living God in heaven and on earth alone. We lay these requests before the throne of grace

in the name of our one-mediator, intercessor, and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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