

## "How to Fight Your Dragon"

April 22, 2012

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Scriptural Foundation: 1 Peter 5:8-14, ESV

### Shepherd the Flock of God

<sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### Final Greetings

<sup>12</sup> By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. <sup>13</sup> She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. <sup>14</sup> Greet one another with the kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

One of my son's favorite animated movies is entitled How to Train Your Dragon. It is a nice little story about a community of Vikings who learn from infancy dragons are evil, they need to be fought, and ultimately killed. The youngsters learn to grow up to become dragon slayers and they take classes to help them. However, one little Viking named "Hiccup" stumbled upon a great discovery: Dragons are not evil at all. They are just misunderstood. He befriends one and trains it to let him fly upon its back. Hiccup then seeks to convince his whole community their ancient conflict is one big misunderstanding. Indeed, the Vikings eventually learn the dragon's motivation for pillaging the Viking village is the dragon's fear of a truly evil monster. The Vikings and the dragons eventually team up to defeat this monster and the story ends with the Vikings and the dragons, once perennially enemies, now working together to rebuild the village.

There is much to commend this film and its message. For instance, we are right to be slow in identifying evil in another person. We ought to quickly identify evil in ourselves and we ought to be slow in condemning another person. Sometimes people who we believe are our enemies are indeed misunderstood. But, with this said, this movie's world-view underestimates the amount of evil and the proliferation of evil which truly exists in the world and it suggests most conflicts we endure can be resolved through a long conversation.

The Bible teaches us our world is saturated by evil inside of our hearts, which is a part of us, as well as outside of us in the spiritual realm. The answer to our dragons is not simply to train them, but to fight them. We cannot overcome evil by understanding it and then emphasizing with it, but by using spiritual weapons God provides to defeat evil.

Peter takes up one of these dragons in our text and he calls us to understand this enemy as a forceful adversary which seeks to destroy us. We must resist him if we are to prevail. This dragon is not an adversary we can tame or turn into a friend. He is evil personified and he will not resign his drive to destroy us.

Revelation 20 describes this dragon and his end,

<sup>2</sup> And (Jesus) seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...

This dragon is wild and deadly and we must combat him or he will be our end. That is Peter's message. He calls this dragon by another name, the Devil. Elsewhere in Scripture he is called Satan, the Prince of Darkness, the god of this age, Lucifer, the tempter, Apollyon, which means "destroyer", and angle of light, and the wicked one. These are just a few of over forty names the Bible assigns to him.

Interestingly, the Bible uses two different animals to describe this beast. God calls him a "serpent" because this being is sneaky and crafty in twisting the truth about God, about life, about sin, about the Gospel, and this being is a serpent, not only because he is crafty, but because, in his craftiness and sneakiness, he is also very dangerous and poisonous. He is discrete, concealed, and shrewd and poison flows from his being. Subtlety is his advantage.

It is in the form of a serpent, a snake, he appeared to Adam and Eve to tempt them to believe his version of the truth over God's. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 11,

<sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

The Christian life is fairly simple and pure in its devotion and Satan, through his cunning and craftiness, wants to make it really complex for us and he wants to steer us away from the simplicity of our devotion to Christ. Here is what life is about for the Christian: It is about Christ and living for Him. It is about pleasing Him in all we do. It is a simple, pure devotion. Paul was concerned for the church in Corinth that Satan, by his cunning, would lead them away from that simple, pure devotion to Jesus in everything.

How effective is he in his cunning and deception in our lives? In Revelation 12, we read,

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world...

How effective is he? How broad is his reach? The Bible says he deceives the whole world.

It is not just a serpent Scripture uses to describe this being, but God also calls him a lion, as in our text. He calls him a lion because like a lion, this being hungers to devour all men and women. Peter's focus is not on the Devil's subtlety in the use of the term "lion", so much as his power, his strength, and his force. So, we focus upon this being as a lion-like creature.

From all the different designations God attaches to Satan, we must arrive at three key truths. First, this being is real; he is not make believe. Second, he is irredeemably evil. We cannot tame him. Third, he picks us and he opposes us at every turn. Because he is real and wicked and a hater, it is vital we understand him. If we do not know our enemy we will suffer under him.

The first question Peter helps us with is: What is this Devil like? We will look at some of the characteristics of this lion, this Devil, this dragon. We pick up the context in 1 Peter 5:6. In our previous study, we read these words in 1 Peter 5,

<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup> casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Peter is urging us away from a life of fear, of worry, and of anxiety. Yes, he says, persecution and hardship will come to us as followers of Jesus. Being a follower of Jesus does not make us immune from those kinds of extreme difficulties, but he tells us not to be afraid and not to live our life in fear. Instead, we should humble ourselves under God's mighty hand and know God is sovereign even in our hardship and persecution. This world is not ultimately sovereign, and God is sovereignly working out His wise and good design to bring us all the way to glory. It is God's sovereign we are under and God's sovereign, mighty hand is that very hand which is using the hardship to bring us to glory now and forever. We are to trust Him and humble ourselves under His mighty hand and cast our cares upon Him. God is working on our behalf and He is using evil people to bring His glorious design to completion in our life. That is Peter's message.

I love Psalm 34,

<sup>19</sup> Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

That is a real truth. The Bible does not make statements which do not mesh with our reality and experience. That is a promise.

Humility in the face of hardship and persecution does not allow us to shake our fist at God, become enraged at God, become disillusioned by Him, or accusatory toward Him. What does humility do in the face of suffering? It casts all of our cares upon Him. A humble heart prays in faith believing God's love, God's power, and God's wisdom to accomplish His purposes in us. Jonathan Edwards says, "Nothing sets a person so much out of the Devil's reach as humility." I believe that is why that commandment is set just prior to the discussion of the Devil.

After casting our cares upon the Lord, do we then sit back and take ease in this world? Is that our approach to the evil one? Peter answers, "No! That would be irresponsible. Casting your cares upon the Lord does not mean you now lead a passive life." He wants us to know casting our cares upon the Lord does not make us care-less people, leading a careless Christianity. That is the reason Peter launches immediately into Verse 8,

<sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

At the end, we will consider some biblical strategies which Peter commends for us to fight this dragon, this lion, but first we will consider four specific traits Peter assigns to this lion. First, this lion is an adversary. He is not neutral towards us. He is not someone who can be studied in a third person way, or an historical figure who works in many other people's lives and human history. No, he is personally involved in our lives and he is hostile towards us.

When we think of the Devil, we may not have any feelings of ill will or hatred toward him. Our position may be, "I do not know much about him," but please know that is not his position toward us. He knows who we are in great, intimate detail and we are on his mind constantly. When he thinks of us, he is filled with anger and hatred toward us.

Have you ever had a person hate you to the point of frightening you? I know some of you have. Some people receive death threats in this world. Some people experience physical abuse from people who hate them and who are angry toward them. Sometimes they receive violent assaults from close family members or complete strangers.

Imagine for a moment, as we consider this, what it is like to have a person who truly hates you to the point of wanting to hurt you, harm you, or kill you. Imagine for a moment you arrive home from church and you find a note tucked in the door of your house or your apartment. You open that note and it reads, "I hate you! I am coming after you. I plan to kidnap your children and take them from you. I, ultimately, want to take your life. Your misery is my very purpose." If you found a note like that stuffed in your door, what would your response be? I imagine, at first, a chill would run down your spine, "What is this?" Your next response may be, "I need help," and you call the police and get other people involved. You will likely take security precautions, if you know the person or if you do not know the person, to protect yourself and your family. You realize, suddenly, this is not imagination and it did not fly into the door; someone put it there and it means you truly do have an adversary, an enemy who purposes my harm and who is working actively toward that end.

This is our note stuffed into our door. Peter is alerting us to the truth we have that kind of enemy and he is a powerful enemy. He is not weak and Satan's goal is to rip our life apart and devastate us. We are foolish to be more concerned about some vicious human enemy who announces their purpose to harm us than we are about this spiritual enemy who is more powerful and more dangerous to both our physical and spiritual lives. Just because he is not a physical entity does not preclude him from doing greater harm and we need to understand that.

Why does Satan hate us so? What have we done to him? Satan hates us because he hates God, he hates God's glory, he hates those whom God loves, he hates we would worship Him and acknowledge Him and bring Him praise and we would serve Him, and he is bent upon robbing God of His glory in any way possible. He wanted that glory for himself. He was refused it so he becomes an adversary, first, of God and then of God's people. Please understand, his primary motivation, however, is a hatred of God Himself.

This being was created beautiful as the leader of the angelical world. Pride entered into his person and he lusted to be like God and to take God's place. He convinced one third of the angelic realm to join him in his rebellion. Revelation 12 describes what happened when he did,

<sup>9</sup> 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.

From that moment forward, the Devil despises the praise and worship which goes to God from the lives and the lips of His people. He hates us with an intense hatred.

Who do you wrestle with in your life? Who do you see as an opponent? Who makes life difficult for you? It may be the boss, a neighbor, a co-worker, a family member, a classmate. Here is what Scripture says about that, in Ephesians 6,

<sup>12</sup> 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.

Flesh and blood is not where the real opposition is. It is not denying there are people who make life difficult, but that is not where the real battle is.

Secondly, he is a slanderer. Peter's choice of a name to attach to this being is "Devil". The name Devil literally means "slanderer; one who harms through lies and accusations". Jesus uses this title of this being in His parable of the soils.<sup>1</sup> He explains the seed sown along the hard path is along the path of those who have heard, then the Devil comes and takes away the Word from their hearts. Satan uses this slander and accusation to rob God's people of this life-giving blessing of God's Word. How does the Devil rob us through his slander? The Devil, first, slanders God before men, then men before God, and finally men before men.

Let us consider how the Devil slanders God before men and let us follow the story of Job as we think about this, about who he is as a slanderer and how that truly harms us and what it does to us. In the story of Job, the Devil is central. He appears in the first chapter as the instrument through which Job's trials come. Satan's clear design in Job's life is to inflict hardship and trouble upon him in order to attack God's character. He is really wanting to get to God through Job.

In times of sorrow, heartache, pain, and trouble Satan will whisper to us, "God is not good." That is what he does in Job's life; he wants to bring about this trouble, this pain, this hardship so he can convince Job God is not really good. If he can get Job to that conclusion, he can move Job away from worship and away from bringing glory to God. That is his purpose.

As he pressures Job, he uses Job's wife to express his own slanderous argument,

<sup>7</sup> So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. <sup>8</sup> And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

I have read two verses of Job 2, but immediately following, in Verse 9, we read, "Then Job's wife said to him..." Satan goes out from the presence of the Lord, strikes Job, and then Job's wife comes. Do you see the connection? Job's wife says to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Are you still believing? Are you still going to be faithful to that God?" Here is her suggestion, "Curse God and die. He is not good. He is not worthy of your worship. Look at what He is doing to you."

The context of Peter's letter is persecution. He knows his audience is struggling under Satan's slander and accusations against God. Have you ever heard Satan slander God before you? Has there ever been a voice whisper to you, "God is not good. He does not care. He is not wise. He does not have a 'design'. He does not have a purpose. Perhaps He does not even exist." That is what Satan does and he does that to destroy us.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23

Secondly, Satan slanders men before God. Job story opens with such slander. Satan enters into God's presence and God communicates to Satan His delight in Job. Job is a sincere worshipper who lives a life of integrity, a life to God's glory,

<sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

It is as if the Lord is taking such delight and pleasure in the faithfulness of His servant. Satan hates this and he answers the Lord, in Verse 9, "Does Job fear you for no reason? Have you put a hedge around him? You are protecting him. You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions. You have increased his land. Of course he is going to stay true to you when you treat him that way. If You stretch out Your hand and touch all that is his, he is going to curse Your face."

Revelation 12 calls Satan,

<sup>10</sup> ...the accuser of our brothers...who accuses them day and night before our God.

He taken Job, this upright man, and he sets him before God and he gets to accuse Job before God. We have an enemy who takes our name and our person before the Lord often. That is his work; he accuses us night and day without interruption. This enemy knows our actions, our relationships, and our words. We do not have any indication Satan can read our minds, but he knows enough to be extremely informed about us as he accuses us before God. He is hoping some accusation will stick.

As I think about that, I ask myself, am I giving Satan any ammunition to use as he stands before God to accuse me? What effect does this have in Heaven? I can answer those questions, "Yes, I am giving Satan ammunition, but I do not want to give him any more. I am tired of that." The effect this has in Heaven is speculative. I do not exactly know, but we do have some hints in the story of Job, that God delighted so much in Job's blameless character, and that really tore into Satan. He hated that. He did not want God to delight in His people; he wanted God to grieve over His people. He did not want people to glorify God; he wanted God's people to bring shame upon Him. That is the reason he worked so diligently in Job's life, so he could turn Job and bring that accusation before God in Heaven and throw it in His face.

Ephesians 4:30 tells us not to "grieve" the Holy Spirit whereby we were sealed for the day of redemption. There is a response from God in relationship to our faithfulness. Satan's accusations fall powerless to condemn us, not because there is no truth in them, but because we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus. John bears this out in his first epistle,

<sup>2:1</sup> My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Jesus' blood is what makes us clean and forgiven. His righteousness clothes us so we stand before Him faultless, but this does not mean our sin is not a small matter. Our response to the grace of God is not one of carelessness, providing Satan an opportunity to grieve God with his accusations, but it is a commitment, all the more, to bring praise to the One who delivered us out of the domain of darkness and who brought us into the Kingdom of His own dear Son. Satan is standing before God today, tomorrow, and the next day to talk about us. Are we going to give him ammunition to throw into the face of God, which would grieve the One who sent His Son to die in our place?

Third, the Devil slanders men before men. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Do not be angry. Do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger." We see this in Job's "friends", do we not, in slandering Job and we know Satan is behind that. Paul tells us not to sin and not give the Devil an opportunity. Following that, Paul tells us, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander be put away from you." We are giving the Devil the opportunity when we allow these things into our lives.

When we speak evil of another person, Satan rejoices and he is likely involved. That is his *modus operandi*. He loves slander in all forms. He loves gossip, in the church especially, malicious talk, name calling, verbal abuse, quarreling. He loves all of that and he is behind it.

He is also a prowler. "Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion," our text tells us. He is a seeker. He is like a lion. He is powerful, but he is also stealthy. He does not always show us his teeth immediately.

We get torn up spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally and we do not always know what hit us. We think horizontally in a physically plane about getting torn apart in our lives, but understand, Satan likely has something to do with that. His fingerprints are all over the crime scene which brings agony and brokenness into our lives.

On a visit to Africa, with our missionaries Dave and Carol Beakley, we got to go to a game preserve and watch from a Jeep a lion stalking his prey. We sat in the Jeep for about forty-five minutes. That lion only moved about thirty yards in that forty-five minutes time. First, he was absolutely still and we could not hardly see him in the bush and his eyes were riveted on the prey, a little antelope. The antelope would raise its head and look around, but then the antelope would turn its head away from the lion and that is when the lion would take a few more steps. When the antelope would turn around the lion would stop. How patient this lion was. How crafty this lion was. He knew exactly when the eyes were upon him and he would not move, but when the prey's eyes were away, that is when he would begin to move.

That is the reason why, when we see this strategy, we must stay alert. We cannot turn our head away and think, "He is not around and he is not involved in my life." The moment we turn around is the moment the prowler comes closer and closer.

The end of that story is, there were a couple of young lions and after the forty-five minutes of stalking, they came loudly bumbling through the grass and the antelope took off. The lion was about ready to get his prey. Hopefully, there are a couple of bumbling demons around us who will awaken us to the fact he is stalking us. We should not need them because we have Scripture telling us this being is a prowler and he is stalking us. As a prowler he is going to look for the angle at which to approach us. This lion was positioned in a way so that, when the wind blew, it was blowing against him so his scent would not be caught by the antelope.

Maybe, as we watch out for Satan in one angle, he does not show up and we believe we are free and victorious. No, he is going to look for whatever angle is effective when we are not looking in order to get inroads into our lives. We need to understand that about him.

Fourth, he is a devourer. It is interesting Peter writes this as Nero is Caesar, ruling the Roman Empire, and Nero hates Christians. He is using them as a scapegoat for the fires which destroyed much of Rome and he uses real lions to violently devour Christians in the amphitheaters of the day. This is the image, but it is so far away from us we do not think about this when we think about a lion devouring us. But, they have real, graphic images of real, literal lions devouring their own. Peter tells us to take that graphic image we have of that real physical danger and understand it is greater in the spiritual realm. He is using potent imagery to talk about the Devil.

Jesus' description of him is this, in John 8,

*<sup>44b</sup> "He was a murderer from the beginning...there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character...he is a liar and the father of lies."*

In what sense does Satan devour us? It is in every sense: physically, spiritually, and in every way. Consider spiritually: Scripture tells us, in 2 Corinthians, the god of this world is blinded the minds of the unbelievers and he is working to keep people from seeing the Truth, the Light of the Gospel and of the glory of Christ.

That may be for unbelievers, but can he harm believers? In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul writes,

<sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Yes, Satan can harm the believer. In fact, Peter has a very specific experience with this, as we read in Luke 22,

<sup>31</sup> "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you,<sup>[d]</sup> that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."

Satan has set his mark upon Peter and that is why Peter writes from personal experience.

Paul calls this physically malady that hurts him every day as a "thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan".<sup>2</sup> He describes this physical malady as something Satan had his hand in. I do not understand exactly how Satan had his hand in it, but he does. He did with Job. He did with the Apostle Paul. In fact, to the church in Smyrna, in Revelation 2, John writes,

<sup>10</sup> "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested..."

Satan physically, whether it is through imprisonment, persecution, or maladies, has a part in that. Why don't we live in terror of him everyday? We do not, not because he is harmless, not because he pays no attention to us, not because he is weaker than we are, or not because he is imaginary, because we have a real Champion who has defeated him and He watches over us and He will protect us. That is Peter's point.

What are the strategies Peter commends to us. First, he tells us to be sober-minded. We are to engage our mind in the struggle and keep ourselves aware and in understanding of who this being is.

Earlier, in 1 Peter 1, Peter tells us,

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peter is telling us to be prepared like a soldier in battle with the loins of your mind girded for action and be sober-minded. Peter uses that term again in this text as well. It is the opposite of being drunken-minded.

Alcohol causes the drunk person to create a reality which is distorted; it is not connected to reality. God's truth, however, connects us to the reality which is. It may not be a reality we can see, feel, and touch, but it is a reality which is more real in the physical world, so we are told to be sober-minded and clear-thinking. Unbeliever's minds are blind to God and blind to the Gospel. Believers have been given sight to see, so we are to see clearly this world.

Jesus, in His Beatitudes, tells us, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."<sup>3</sup> Yet, as believers we are still in danger of having our thinking blurred and under the influence of fleshly passions, the pride of this world, materialism, false doctrines, and worldly philosophies. Satan uses all of these to cloud our thinking, about life, about self, about decisions, about relationships, and about worship.

How are we to be sober-minded? First, by avoiding Satan's elixirs, Satan's alcohol: false doctrine, ideas about sin which are small and not grievous, ideas about relationships vertical and horizontal, or the world's philosophies with regard to life.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we drink in the pure, clarifying Word of God. Paul tells us we need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.<sup>4</sup> We do that by opening God's Word and saying, "God, I need your thoughts to become my thoughts." The only way our thoughts become God's thoughts is if we take God's thoughts, as He has given them to us in His Word, and we meditate upon them, and we embrace them by faith.

In the second strategy, we need to be alert which is the opposite of being sleepy, careless, and unobservant. Too many believers are asleep in their approach to the Devil. They do not think about him at all and his strategies. They are ignorant as to what he is doing in their life. They are not seeing him at all. Peter tells us to be alert and wake up.

911 was a wake-up call to Americans regarding the enemy of terrorism. We cannot close our eyes to this threat any longer. During the years following 911, the government presented a system of colors identifying various levels of alertness. It changed from day-to-day, depending upon what they were seeing and hearing, the chatter.

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:7b

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:8

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:5b

Peter is telling us, with the Devil and the spiritual realm, it is always "Color Alert RED". It is always the highest level of our need to be watchful. He is always on the prowl.

The third strategy is to resist him. This is where we must fight him and engage him in battle. It will not be easy because it will be hand-to-hand combat.

We want comfortable lives, and I know I am that way. I would love to peacefully sit on a beach, soaking in the sun, going golfing, or taking in a show or two. I would love that, but that is not our lives in this world. We cannot get into peacetime mode. We must be in wartime mode. When we get up in the morning, we get up to go to battle.

I went to visit my son, Daniel, at Scott Air Force Base. He was learning some of the operations of the base. He had to rise at 5:30 am because the car was coming for him at 6:00 am to get back to the base. I noticed how easily he got up at 5:30 am. It was as if there was no complaining. I thought, when he was in high school, he complained a lot when he had to get up that early. The alarm went off, he got up, and, boom, he was out the door. This is life for him. I thought, "Here I am lying in bed and enjoying another hour or two of sleep." His mindset is that of a soldier because the Air Force trained him that way. One does not complain about the time to get up, one just gets up and does what one needs to do to get prepared in order to prepare for the day.

Peter tells us the same thing, "Resist him. Get ready for battle. Have this mindset, the mindset of a soldier. Do not let yourself think we can go back to being a civilian. We cannot. As we have entered into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, we have targets on our backs and we are in a time in which the battle is raging. There will be a day when the battle is over, but that is not today. Resist him. Be firm in your faith, knowing the same kinds of suffering were experienced by your brothers throughout the world."

I believe, particularly, Satan's assault here is not so much on temptation or deception, which is addressed elsewhere, as it is Satan's involvement in persecuting God's people. Peter tells us, "Resist him in reference to the suffering you are facing, because suffering brings about a battle of faith: will I stay true and faithful to God even though it hurts me; even though I will suffer for it; even though I will lose things which are precious, my house, my job, my health, my freedom, and my life."

Satan is bringing this suffering to us and he wants to shake us so we back away, because we know if we back away we will not face as much persecution and we may be free of persecution altogether. If we do nothing for God we will not likely be persecuted for God. We are to resist him, stand firm in our faith, and take the faith we have causing us to be under the spotlight of people who hate God and stand firm in it. We read in our text,

<sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever.

This does not tell us God will keep us from more suffering. Satan may harm us for a time, but he cannot ultimately harm us. God is the victor. Christ will not fail us. God called us to enjoy His glory forever and ever and God will get us all the way to that glorious day. Do not ever believe Satan is on the throne. He is not. God is the One who is ruling and reigning.

I conclude with words from John Piper, who writes about this text, "So, when Satan roars with suffering in your face and he threatens to devour you, do not say, 'Oh, I am eternally secure. This is no real threat.' Rather say, 'The God of all grace has called me to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus. After I have suffered a little while from your claws and from your fangs, He will perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish me. He is the God of all grace. He is the God of absolute dominion. Satan, you can maul me. You can even kill me, but you cannot devour me, for He has called me to glory and He will get me to glory.'"

Amen and amen.