

# Sheep in Wolves' Clothing

## Part 3

### Introduction; We must beware of 'wooly wolves'.

- A. A 'wooly wolf' is a 'wolf in sheep's clothing.'
1. Wolves have fur and sheep have wool. Wolves are not woolly unless they are in disguise. They are in disguise to get close to the sheep to devour them.
  2. This doesn't naturally happen. Wolves do not disguise themselves as sheep. However this had become a very common figure of speech. A wolf in sheep's clothing is someone who is a hypocrite. They are trying to fool us in order to take advantage of us.
  3. Wolves have always been thought of as evil and destructive.
    - a. The three little pigs and the big bad wolf...
    - b. Red Riding Hood and the Wolf...
    - c. The boy who cried, "Wolf"...
  4. God's word uses wolves to describe those who are wicked and self-serving and selfish.
    - a. John 10:11-12 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them."*
    - b. Luke 10:2-3 *Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves."*
    - c. Ezek 22:27-28 *"Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain. 28 Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had not spoken."*
  5. We need to beware of those who would seek to destroy us. It may be enemies who want to hurt us physically. We especially need to beware of those who would seek to destroy us spiritually.
- B. The Bible warns against spiritual wolves who would seek to destroy us eternally in hell.
1. *Matt 7:15-16 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"*
  2. *Acts 20:28-29 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock,"*
  3. Satan is the leader of all wickedness. Someone has said he is the "woolliest of all the wolves" —Joe Chesser; 'Wiles of a Woolly Wolf'. He tries everything to trick us.
  4. *2 Cor 11:13-15 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."*
  5. As the leader of all woolly wolves Satan has many different schemes and methods to get close to the flock of God and destroy them.
  6. *2 Cor 2:11 ...lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*
- C. When scripture wants to paint a picture of the ultimate peace and security it uses wolves and lambs living together.
1. *Isa 11:6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them."*
  2. *Isa 65:25 "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.*
  3. This is a picture of the peace and security and prosperity of the kingdom of the Messiah. It is a picture of our unity and brotherhood in the church today.

- D. We have been looking at “*Wolves in Sheep's Clothing*”.
1. We have been studying some of the ways Satan tries to deceive us, take advantage of us and destroy us eternally.
  2. In this last lesson we will consider how we can resist and overcome Satan and not fall prey to his schemes and devices.
- E. Today, ‘**How to Deny Satan.**’

## I. A Review of Satan's Methods...

- A. In the two previous lessons we looked at some of the tools of Satan.
1. The devil has many ways to deceive us and turn us away from the Lord. We considered just four of them in this series.
  2. First we looked at how Satan tries to **discredit** God and His word. He tries to make us think either there is no God or that God does not really care for us.
  3. This worked with Eve. She believed that God was keeping something good from her and she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree.
  4. *Gen 3:4-6 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*
  5. *2 Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*
  6. Satan uses the modernists, the humanist, the scientist, the atheist and many others to convince us we are here by evolution and not creation. They deny there is a God.
- B. Satan also tries to **distract** us from serving God.
1. Satan does not mind if we are religious. False religion is one of Satan's greatest weapons. He'll distract us with false religion or with the world.
  2. *Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."*
  3. Many think they are religious but they are not really doing what the Lord says. They think they are saved but they aren't. They are too busy with the things of the world. We must really beware of this.
  4. *Gal 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*
  5. These folks are carried away with another Gospel or false religion. They will be accursed.
  6. The devil also tries to **discourage** us and stop us in serving God. He wants us to think we are failures or worthless or that we cannot be a good Christian.
  7. *Matt 27:3-5 Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" 5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.*
  8. *Matt 26:74-75 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.*
  9. Both Peter and Judas were discouraged. Satan succeeded with Judas. Peter overcame him and returned to the Lord. We need to follow Peter's example when we are discouraged.
- C. Satan also tries to **delay** us. He wants us to put off serving God until it is too late.
1. Many know they should serve the Lord. However they are too busy with the things of the world to do it **now**.
  2. They say, “I'll obey the Gospel later,” or, “I just need to do certain things and then I'll follow Christ.” Satan has trapped so many with this thinking.
  3. *Mat 8:21-22 Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."*

D. Satan has many more schemes to look out for.

## II. We must *Deny* the devil...

A. We must **resist** Satan so we will not be fooled by him.

1. Too many, even some Christians, do not resist the devil. They try to see how close to the world they can come.
2. *James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*
3. *James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*
4. James says to resist Satan and stay away from him. We must make a choice. We cannot be friends with both Satan and God.
5. *Matt 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*
6. We must make a commitment. If we know someone is our enemy and wants to harm us we stay away from them. Satan is Christian's worst enemy. Yet many willingly associate with Him.
7. We become like those with whom we associate. We need to be careful about who our friends are. Are they righteous or wicked? Do they encourage us to be good or evil?
8. *1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*
9. Jesus uses the following illustration to describe the condition of the Jews of His day. They repented under John and many followed Jesus Himself. Yet they did not really fill themselves with God's word and righteousness. They would become worse and worse until they were destroyed.
10. *Matt 12:43-45 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."*
11. We must resist the Devil and His followers. We must make our stand with the people of God. If we really resist Satan as we should he will flee from us as he did Jesus Christ in the wilderness.

B. We must be **sober and alert**.

1. *1 Pet 5:8-9 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*
2. Peter says to be disciplined and watchful. We must be very careful because Satan is our adversary. He wants to devour and destroy us.
3. Peter uses the illustration of a lion in a forest. We know the lion is there and looking for prey. He wants to devour us. So we are careful and alert. We want to stay away from him.
4. Many Christians are not really watchful in spiritual matters. They do not watch out for the allure of wickedness. They dress and behave like the world.
5. They are not careful concerning the things they watch at the movies and on TV. They are not alert about the places they go. They do things and go places that allow them to be tempted and perhaps fall.
6. Peter then tells us what to do when we are confronted by Satan. We are to resist him and be steadfast in the faith. We are not to give up and go along.
7. Too many do this. They do not want to make waves. They do not want to go against the crowd. They allow themselves to be devoured by the world.
8. If we meet a lion in the forest and knew he was there we should be armed and ready to fight. We do know Satan is in the world and looking for us. We need to be spiritually armed and ready to fight.
9. *Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*
10. Our weapon is the divine word of God. We must know it and be ready to use it. When Jesus was confronted by Satan in the wilderness He did not fight him with Godly might and legions of angels. He simply said, *"It is written..."*
11. This is what we must do too. How well do we know God's word? Do we know what is wrong and why? Do we know it well enough to let it guide us in the spiritual battle for our souls? We need to study and

understand God's word and use it in our everyday lives.

C. We need to be dressed for battle.

1. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:10-20 how to be dressed for a war. This is Paul's discussion of the armor of a Christian. This passage tells us how to defend ourselves and how to resist Satan and cause him to flee.
2. **Eph 6:10-13;** Paul tells us how to be strong. We put on the **whole** armor of God. We don't just put on part of it. We put on it all. Each part has a purpose. If we are not fully armored, we will be in trouble.
3. We are in a spiritual battle. It is a battle of light and darkness. It is a battle for truth and error. It is a battle for our souls. If we lose this battle we lose everything.
4. The '**evil day**' we are preparing for is the day of spiritual battle for our souls. It is when Satan assails us with all he had to try to destroy us. Only by being properly dressed can we stand against his wiles.
5. We must **do all to stand**. Fighting Satan takes all we have. We cannot give 50% and expect to win. We must give the 110% if we hope to save our souls.
6. **Ephesians 6:14-17;** We stand fully dressed and ready to defend the truth and ourselves. Paul is in a Roman prison at this time and sees the soldiers fully dressed every day.
  - a. **Waist girded with truth;** The belt held everything together. Truth does it. It is the basis of all we do and stand for. It is what makes us free —John 8:32.
  - b. **Breastplate of righteousness;** Righteousness covers the heart and vital organs. If we are not striving to be righteous we are not dressed to fight against Satan.
  - c. **Feet shod with the Gospel of Peace;** We move forward by direction of the word of God. It provides man with peace from God. If we do not have the peace of God (Phil 4:7) we cannot push Satan and his minions back. We must be messengers of the good news of Jesus Christ.
  - d. **Shield of Faith;** We must have faith as a shield against Satan's fiery darts. Satan has many arguments against the Bible. It takes great faith in God to continually ignore these and remain faithful. The shield often saved the soldier's life. Faith in God saves our spiritual lives.
  - e. **Helmet of Salvation;** The *hope of salvation* (1 Thess 5:8) protects our head and mind. It is the goal we have. The mind looks to heaven and this stops the efforts of the devil to turn our minds away from God.
  - f. **Sword of the Spirit;** We do not defend ourselves & the kingdom of God today with physical weapons like guns and knives. We do so only with the sword provided by the Holy Spirit. This is the divine word of God. This is the **only** offensive weapon we have. The rest is defensive.
  - g. Jesus Christ very effectively used the sword of the Spirit in the wilderness —Matt 4:1-11. He showed us how to defend ourselves. We do not use physical strength but spiritual knowledge.
7. **Eph 6:18-20;** All of this armor is only useful if we pray without ceasing —1 Thess 5:17. We must depend on our General and Master. We must call upon the Lord to help us.
8. Prayer is so very important. Even Jesus prayed often. He showed us that God has no child without prayer. How often do we pray?
 

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian armour bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The meanest saint upon his knees.
9. This is the armor of those who will successfully stand against Satan and live forever with the Lord in heaven.

D. Satan is watching for an opportunity to devour us. We must watch and not give him an opportunity.

1. *Eph 4:26-27 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil.*
2. Satan can use our anger against us. He can use many things against us if we do not control ourselves. We must not give Satan an opportunity or foothold in our lives. An uncontrolled temper can do this.
3. *2 Cor 4:3-4 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*
4. The devil is the god of this age. He is so by blinding men to the truth that there is a God and there is a standard to live by. So many will be surprised in the day of Judgment that these things are true. We must be smarter.
5. *Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

E. We need to choose the Lord today.

## **Conclusion; Forewarned is forearmed.**

- A. We know Satan is out to get us. Therefore we must be ready.
- B. We get ready by becoming a Christian.
  - 1. We must believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins — see also Rom 6:3-7.
  - 2. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
  - 3. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
  - 4. *Acts 18:8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.*
- C. Can we help anyone serve the Lord today?