

The Soul - Eater

1 Peter 5:8-9 KJV Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: **[9]** Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

I. INTRODUCTION -- THE MAN-EATERS OF TSAVO

In 1898, two male lions stalked the construction region of what is now known as the Kenya Railways. Before the two lions would be hunted down, they killed 135 Indian and African laborers. There was a British officer in charge of building a railroad bridge over the Tsavo River. Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Patterson spent nine months pursuing the pair before bringing them to bay and killing them. He wrote about his quest in a book entitled *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo*. Interestingly this book remains in print despite being written in 1903-04.

-I read about this in the April 2002 issue of National Geographic magazine in an article

Maneless Lions in Kenya. As I read about the fierceness and terror that lions can strike in the hearts of their prey, my mind drifted to the passage that I read from 1 Peter.

-As I read about the characteristics of these lions, I begin to think of how the devil can be a lion and bent on the destruction of the saint of God. For that we reason, we must heed the words of Peter to be sober and to be vigilant.

A. Your Adversary, The Devil

1. General Quotes

T. Adams -- The devil is no idle spirit, but a vagrant, runagate walker, that never rests in one place. The motive, cause, and main intention of his walking is to ruin man.

Herbert -- No sooner is a temple built to God, but the devil builds a chapel hard by it.

Thomas Watson -- Why does this lion so roar but for his prey? He envies the soul its happiness, he lays the whole train of temptation to blow up the whole fort-royal of the soul. Why does he use such suitable baits?

Thomas Watson -- Why does he tempt to Delilah's lap, but to keep you from Abraham's bosom? The devil is angling for the precious soul; to undo souls is his pride; he glories in the damnation of souls; it is next to victory to die revenged. If Samson must die, it is some comfort that he shall make more die with him; if Satan, that lion, must be kept in his hellish den, it is all the heaven he expects, to reach forth his paw, and pull others into the den with him.

2. Biblical Quotes

John 8:44 KJV Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Psalms 10:9-10 KJV He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. **[10]** He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

Revelation 13:6-8 KJV And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in

heaven. [7] And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. [8] And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 13:39-40 KJV The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. [40] As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Psalms 7:1-2 KJV O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: [2] Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending *it* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.

-This “soul-eater” has a destructive capacity that is terrible to even imagine. Despite that fact, he is constantly working to deceive, disrupt, and destroy everything that he can in our day.

B. Examples of His Subversion

-Scattered throughout the Scriptures are many examples of how he deceived men into trading their souls to him.

- Adam gained a very worldly wisdom but lost fellowship with God.
- Cain gain self-satisfaction but lost the presence of God.
- Lot gained the fertile plains of Jordan but lost his testimony in Sodom.
- Eli gained a position but lost his sons to the devil.
- Achan gained the gold of Jericho but lost his family to a public stoning.
- Saul gained the spoils of war but lost his throne.
- Gehazi gained Naaman's wealth but lost his health to leprosy.
- Belshazzar gained the pleasures of sin but lost his kingdom in the night.
- The rich man fared sumptuously everyday on earth but lost his soul in hell.
- Demas gained the present world but lost God's blessing for eternal service.
- Pergamos and Thyatira gained prestige in their compromise with apostates and the devil but lost the importance of a love for the Truth.

- Laodicea gained worldly goods but lost their spiritual vision.

-Anytime we try to play on the devil's playground without sufficient strength we will lose every time!

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOULEATER

-As I read through the National Geographic article, I begin to notice some striking characteristics about the way these lions operated in killing their prey. The devil has operated as a lion since the beginning of time.

A. Lions Are Opportunists

-Lions are opportunists. A lion is not too proud to eat insects, porcupines, or grubs nor are they too timid to hunt a buffalo or a hippo. Whatever presents itself to a lion will most likely be added to the menu for the day.

-The soul-eater works in the same manner. There are events that occur in our lives that we find will bring us to a great point of opportunity for attack.

- Esau was extremely hungry after an empty hunt. The opportunity of hunger brought

him to a point of trading his birthright for a mess of pottage.

- Noah finally gets off the ark after the flood. In his excitement and freedom, settled down to a bottle of wine and his sin demanded a great penalty from one of his sons.
- Peter finds a time when his faith is very low and his future very uncertain. When a young girl exposes him to be one of the followers of the Lord, his curses ring out with denial.
- The clinking of coins tempts Judas. When the aftermath is all over, the thirty-pieces of silver have purchased a rope for him to hang himself in bitter defeat.

-Look around in your life . . . What time have we all not been in some situation as these?

- Tired from the hunt and driven by our own base appetites we sell things that are far higher in value. The future is slain for the fulfillment of the immediate.
- Exhilarated from some successful project only to find in the subsiding glow of victory that in a moment when spiritual discernment and self-control were low, the cost demanded something dear to us.

- There have been times of great disappointment and duress when our faith was microscopic and the incriminating voice of the devil insured a response that caused us to sink even lower.
- Other times came when we bit the lure of materialistic things that when they finally were in our hands, they were worth much less than what we had perceived them to be.

-This is the way the soul-eater works. He is constantly working toward destruction and whatever opportunity that is afforded; he does his best to capture the prey.

-The soul-eater does not have a bit of discrimination as to whose soul he will take. He will attempt to fell the mighty cedar just as he works to destroy the scrub pine. It does not matter to the soul-eater whether he gets the most mature saint or the newest convert, just so he gets them.

-Years of service or just a few days of introduction does not matter to him, he wants everything he can see.

B. Lions Hunt the Separated

-We find that:

- First, lions are opportunists.
- Secondly, lions hunt those that are separated.

-Lions are particularly keen to those who get separated from the herd, whether it is a sick elder or an inattentive youngster. Whatever is separated is usually attacked.

-The more willing we are to begin to remove ourselves from the spiritual safety of a local church, the more liability that we open our lives up to.

-These lions would attack those elder buffalo that were weary from the journey. The more they lagged from the herd, the more dangerous that they position became.

-The same was true for the small, innocent and immature elephant cubs were. Lions do not normally attack adult elephants but when one of the cubs was separated from the pack, they became fair game to the lion pride.

-Over the years, I have watched spiritual lethargy, apathy, and complacency destroy many. I have

also observed spiritual immaturity slay its share too.

1. The Deadly Path -- John Carroll

Over the last year or so, I have been introduced to a very formidable spiritual voice. As the months have passed, I have allowed some of his insight and wisdom influence me in a very significant way. A few days ago he wrote a post on an internet forum to which I belong to. It speaks much to this issue of those who decide for whatever reason to separate themselves from a local congregation or even a body of ministerial peers who once held them to some sense of accountability. While it was written to ministers, the same patterns hold true for all who choose to get isolated from a local church body.

His post is as follows (with some adaptations):

After all, gentle readers this isn't the first time we've seen this type of scenario play out. The moves were choreographed a long time ago, and any of us who have been around a while have seen it over and over again.

Here is how it goes, usually:

1. Brother So-and-So gets to running with a few folks who have been liberated from the church. Brother So-and-So gets told how much bigger the body of Christ is than those narrow-minded Apostolics have led him to believe it is. They ask him to join in some of their meetings, give him good offerings, and tell him how his ministry is too big to be confined to that little legalistic, pharasaical box he is playing in. Major ego stroking is a part of the process.

2. Brother So-and-So starts finding fault with the brethren who built the platform he stands on and gave him the opportunity to have a ministry. He notices how judgmental they are toward his new friends out yonder in Libertyville, while the friends all mouth platitudes about how much they appreciate their heritage, and the good things they received while they were still in bondage, etc. The contrast looks very stark.

3. Brother So-and-So finally achieves exit velocity. He assures all his friends that he hasn't changed his mind about anything he believes, that he just feels as if this is what God wants him to do. "My wife and I still believe in holiness, yes sir! We just feel that God has led us to minister on a broader

stage...whatsamatter, don't you trust us???!!!!"

4. All is well for a while...then suddenly, Sister So-and-So starts feeling frumpy and old-fashioned among the bejeweled, painted, coiffed, and "stylish" ladies she is now in fellowship with. They all, with that precious manner women know very well how to put on, reassure her that they accept her just as she is..."You look sweet, dear, with that lovely long hair and those dresses down past your knees...you remind me of my sweet, godly old grandmother who used to rock me on her lap and sing hymns to me...you are just lovely."

5. Sister So-and-So starts "feeling" in her spirit that the Lord is dealing with her about the standards...she reads Romans and Galatians over again and has an epiphany...she has been duped into bondage!"

6. She takes her revelation to dear Brother So-and-So, who has amazingly been feeling the same things.

7. Sister So-and-So goes to the beauty shop post haste, followed by a visit to the mall where bifurcated garments fill her shopping cart. Good deals and big sales are divine confirmation...Glory!

8. Brother So-and-So assures his friends that while they may see some things differently regarding "non-salvational issues," he will NEVER change his stance on the New Birth. No Sir, never!

9. Trinitarians start "ministering in the spirit" to him and Sister So-and-So, and are they ever on target! Man, he can't remember EVER having anyone in the "old" church minister in the gifts with such accuracy and detail...and with such a spirit of love!!!

10. Brother So-and-So starts wondering, "Surely these people couldn't operate in the spirit like this if they were lost, like I have always believed they were, not having been baptized in Jesus Name....hmmmm."

11. Brother So-and-So opens up to his new buddies about his thoughts and gets major affirmation. "Brother, I will never forget when God showed me how much bigger His Body was than I always thought... Man, it was like getting saved all over again!"

12. Brother So-and-So feels like he has been set free. His ministry is going to really take off now. The chains of legalism have finally been broken. He is "free yes free indeed."

From here, the story varies, but in most cases, it gets sadder and sadder. Look around at the kids of most of these cases, and you find a lot of them rejecting Pentecost of any kind totally and completely. Not always, but often. So this is a grievous thing. I know I will make a lot of you spitting mad with this post, but I have seen this enough up close and personal to hate seeing anyone start down this road of compromise.

C. Lions Will Hunt At Night

-We know that:

- First, lions are opportunists.
- Secondly, lions hunt those that are separated.
- Thirdly, lions will hunt at night.

-There are some parts of Africa that the day-time temperatures are well over 100 degrees and the only thing that the lion pride will do is seek for shade and places to stay cool. However, when the sun begins its descent, the restlessness and hunger starts stirring the group.

-After the sun has set and the temperature is beginning to cool down, the lions begin to move

out and work under the cover of darkness. It is during the night that they have to compete with the much-despised hyena. If a lion has a sworn enemy it is the hyena. Far too many times, a pack of hyenas have been run off from the kill of a fresh zebra by a pride of lions and this only heightens their hate.

-It is in the midst of darkness that the lions move with stealth and secrecy to prey upon some unsuspecting herd of buffalo or bedded down zebras.

-The soul-eater works in this fashion also. There are very few men that I have known who have not had to endure their own personal “dark night of the soul.” When our spirits are much depressed and despondent, the soul-eater seeks out that advantage.

-When we feel that isolation from God, our words can pour out like these:

Psalms 42:3-5 KJV My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where *is* thy God? **[4]** When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a

multitude that kept holyday. [5] Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

-Consider another passage of a man who is on the “low limb”:

Psalms 102:1-11 KJV <A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.> Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. [2] Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day *when* I call answer me speedily. [3] For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. [4] My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. [5] By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. [6] I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. [7] I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. [8] Mine enemies reproach me all the day; *and* they that are mad against me are sworn against me. [9] For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, [10] Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

[11] My days *are* like a shadow that declineth;
and I am withered like grass.

-When we find that great depression settling in on our souls. . . The soul-eater is lurking and watching our every move. There may be a myriad of reasons for the darkness. . .

- Physical sickness.
- Spiritual burdens and concern for others.
- Overwhelming obstacles.
- Problems that seemingly have no end or a solution to.
- Financial difficulties.
- Relationships that have been forsaken and ruined.
- Family strains with those closely related to us.
- Jobs that are filled with seeming dead-ends.

-The darkness of difficulty often brings the soul-eater into our line of sight.

D. Lions Often Work in Packs

-We know that:

- First, lions are opportunists.

- Secondly, lions hunt those that are separated.
- Thirdly, lions will hunt at night.
- Lastly, lions often work in packs.

-Lions are very cautious in the beginning stages of the hunt. They are very careful when they begin to approach the kill. Their carefulness is clearly seen in their working in packs.

-Temptation is much like this.

James 1:14-15 KJV But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

-There are multiple tentacles attached to the sin that the soul-eater will entice a man with. When this sin ensnares a man there are many consequences of the sin that he never factored into the equation.

- What he thought was the height of pleasure will suddenly become bitter pain.
- What he thought was worldly fulfillment will be great spiritual emptiness.

- What he thought would be greatly liberating will become utterly enslaving.
- What he thought would be the key to happiness will be the prison of despair.

-One lion will attack head-on and once the main attacker has the attention of the prey, two or three others will attack the flanks of the prey.

-The soul-eater uses these same tactics in our world today. Saints of God are attacked with not one or two but with multiple kinds of temptations exalting the system of this world.

1 John 2:15-17 KJV Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **[16]** For all that *is* in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,** is not of the Father, but is of the world. **[17]** And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

-This attack is constant and unrelenting from these three areas. Whatever avenue that he can attack from, he will do so. He will attack from the outside through the world or he will attack from the inside in our homes.

-He will work to isolate those in a marriage (husband and wife). He will work to isolate those in the family (parents from children). He will work to isolate siblings from each other.

-The soul-eater will work in churches. He will get men chasing money and prominence. He will work toward disunity to the destruction of the whole purpose of the church. He will confuse the direction of the church with incessant gossips, in-fighting, and constant bickering. Spiritual immaturity will be the king of the hill.

-The soul-eater is constantly working to recruit more members in his battles. Far, far too often we who are the church find that we unwittingly buy into the plan of the soul-eater. We must grow up!

Ephesians 4:14-16 KJV That we *henceforth* **be no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **[15]** But speaking the truth in love, may **grow up into him in all things**, which is the head, *even* Christ: **[16]** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every

part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

III. CONCLUSION -- THE REMEDY IN FIGHTING THIS SOULEATER

-So lions work in these patterns:

- First, lions are opportunists.
- Secondly, lions hunt those that are separated.
- Thirdly, lions will hunt at night.
- Lastly, lions often work in packs.

-Despite this attack of the soul-eater, Peter left us with some very valuable advice as to how to defeat him.

-Be Sober . . . Peter is calling for sober-minded thinking that is tempered by godliness. Our thinking must be balanced and disciplined. We cannot allow the allurements of worldliness and false doctrine to prevail in our relationship with God.

-Be Vigilant . . . The saint of God must stay awake and constantly on the alert for any opening the soul-eater might be attempting to take.

-**Resist** . . . The saint of God must take a stand against the wiles of the soul-eater.