

A Shield Against the Darkness

By Pastor Miguel A. Canete, M.A.

The Bible teaches that we have a ferocious enemy. One who "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 P. 5:8 NIV) One whose desire is to attack us again and again, until he can tear our lives to pieces. But, can Satan attack Christians any time he wants? The Bible's answer to this is "no." The apostle John writes that "He who was born of God keeps [us], and the evil one does not touch [us]," (1 Jn 5:18 NASB) So the devil cannot even touch us unless God, in His sovereignty, allows him to do so. However, I'm afraid many believers are convinced that Satan can attack them whenever he wishes. Some go as far as to think that every headache they get, every time their car or their computer breaks down, and any other problem they may have is the result of an act of Satan. But, how does this thinking square with the biblical teaching that the enemy cannot even touch us? It doesn't! Nevertheless, many of us seem to have trouble believing God in this regard.

The problem with this lack of faith is that the Bible teaches that our faith is our shield against the attacks of Satan. In Ephesians 6:16, Paul writes, "Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." (NIV) Please note that the fact that Paul tells us to "take" the shield of faith, so we can stop the attacks of the devil, indicates that if we don't take it -- if we don't trust in the Lord -- his darts will hit us. So, when we do not believe the promises of God -- in this case, His promises of protection -- it is as if we let go of the "shield of faith" and, then, our unbelief leaves us exposed to the darts of Satan. This is one reason why many believers are constantly harassed by the devil.

The story of Job is a good illustration of the teachings found in 1 John 5:18 and Ephesians 6:16. In it we can see how Satan had to specifically ask for permission before attacking Job because, in his own words, God had "made a hedge about him and his house and all that he ha[d], on every side" (Job 1:10 NASB). There was a shield of protection around Job! For this reason the devil couldn't get his children into an accident, and neither could he damage his car or his computer! He could not even touch this man of God! Also, in the New Testament we see how the Lord told Peter that Satan had "asked" to sift him as wheat. (Luke 22:31) So it is clear that the enemy cannot attack us at will because, as David said, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped." (Psalm 28:7 NIV) That's right, dear friend, God is a shield around those who trust in Him!

Now, please don't understand me as saying that if we have enough faith the devil will never attack us again, because that is not what the Bible teaches. From time to time God will allow him to attack us. This is part of our spiritual growth. Also, our sins can give room to demonic attacks. (Eph. 4:27) But the idea that Satan can constantly harass us is not a biblical one.

Dear friend, it is true that the devil came "to steal and kill and destroy," (Jn. 10:10 NIV) but it is also true that Jesus came "to destroy the works of the devil." (1 Jn. 3:8 NASB) So, if we have an unshakable faith in God, He will stop every dart of Satan aimed at us, and he won't be able to touch us. (Eph. 6:16, 1 Jn 5:18) And if our trust in God and His promises is our shield, the enemy will never be able to stop us from living a victorious Christian life, reason why we will be able to say with the psalmist, "All the Lord's promises prove true. He is a shield for all who look to him for protection' and He 'rescues me from my enemies. You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies..." (Psalm 18:30, 48 NLT) Amen!