

# TARGETS

## Where the Body of Christ is Under Attack and How To Fight back



**Health** ~ *How our bodies have been targeted for destruction*

- **TODAY:** There are **three groups of people** I would like to try and reach today. My aim is to...

- Wake-up those who might be a little **complacent**
- Sober-up those who feel **invincible**
- Comfort those who are **overwhelmed**

The Word tells us **the devil has come to kill, steal and destroy**. In some ways, with all the practice he had and the depth of depravity in the human heart, it seems like he should be a bit more successful at making the lives of believers more miserable than he is. My sense is that we are receiving much more oversight and protection from God than we could ever imagine. The Lord must be much more hands-on than we could ever imagine him to be. What a marvelous thought. **“If God is for us, who could be against us!”** (Rom 8:31)

- **The Story of Job...** We can't attempt to understand the relationship between the affliction of man at the hands of the Devil without starting with the story of Job.

• **Round 1: Job loses his farm, hired hands and children**

- <sup>8</sup> The LORD asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. **He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil.**”
  - God describes Job as **“blameless”** - It means that no matter how horrible his offenses may have been, all the charges against him have been dropped. Absolutely no blame attaches to him, because the very one he offended has exonerated him.
- <sup>9</sup> Satan replied to the LORD, “Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. <sup>10</sup> **You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property.** You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! <sup>11</sup> But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!”
- <sup>12</sup> “All right, you may test him,” the LORD said to Satan. “Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but **don't harm him physically.**” So Satan left the LORD's presence. (Job. 1:8–12 NLT-SE)
  - Soon after that, Job's oxen and donkeys were stolen, his hired hands were killed, fire fell from heaven and killed his sheep and shepherds, raiders came and killed his camels, servants, and children. He and his wife lost everything!

• **Round 2: Job loses his health** (boils from head to foot)

- <sup>4</sup> Satan replied to the LORD, “Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. <sup>5</sup> But reach out and **take away his health, and he will surely curse you** to your face!”
- <sup>6</sup> “All right, do with him as you please,” the LORD said to Satan. “But spare his life.” <sup>7</sup> So Satan left the LORD's presence, and **he struck Job with terrible boils from head to foot.** (Job. 2:4–7 NLT-SE)
  - "When the devil had finished all this tempting," reads Luke 4:13, "he left [Jesus] until an opportune time." **It is the timing of the Devil's attacks, as much as the magnitude of them, that can crush us.**

- <sup>8</sup> Job scraped his skin with a piece of broken pottery as he sat among the ashes. <sup>9</sup> His wife said to him, “Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die.”
- <sup>10</sup> But Job replied, “You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?” So in all this, Job said nothing wrong. (Job. 2:8–10 NLT-SE)

• **Round 3: Job’s “friends” come to comfort him**

- <sup>11</sup> When three of Job’s friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. <sup>12</sup> When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. <sup>13</sup> **Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words.**
- <sup>1</sup> **At last Job spoke, and he cursed the day of his birth...** (Job. 2:11–3:1 NLT-SE)
  - For the next 36 chapters, Job and his three friends go back and fourth, trying to discover between the reason behind Job’s demise. Each of them, including Job, thinks he has some insight into the reason why Job has suffered so intensely.
  - Finally God answers Job’s request, but God’s response was nothing like Job had anticipated. Job wanted a legal hearing, an opportunity to prove the illegality of God’s onslaughts against him. But instead of answering Job’s charges about his unjust treatment, God asked Job questions! Rather than explaining the theory of evil or the role of suffering, God rebuked Job for presuming to challenge His ways.
- <sup>1</sup> Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind: <sup>2</sup> **“Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? <sup>3</sup> Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.** (Job. 38:1–3 NLT-SE)
  - In more than 70 questions—none of which Job could answer—God interrogated Job regarding numerous aspects of inanimate and animate nature. Though Job was dumbfounded by this barrage of questions, he did meet God face to face. This reassured the complainer that **God had not abandoned him after all.**
  - What was the purpose of God’s rebuking response? By displaying His power and wisdom, God showed Job his ignorance and impatience. **Though people cannot understand God’s doings, they can trust Him. Worship should stem from an appreciation of God Himself, not a comprehension of all God’s ways.** Even when we are puzzled and perplexed, we should still praise!
  - This divine confrontation is the Bible’s longest recorded oration by God Himself. Through it all, Job was silenced, humbled, and repentant! In the end, **Job responds to God in brokenness and humility...**
- <sup>2</sup> “I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. <sup>3</sup> You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’ It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me. <sup>4</sup> You said, ‘Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.’ <sup>5</sup> **I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. <sup>6</sup> I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.**” (Job. 42:2–6 NLT-SE)
  - Eventually, God restores what was taken from Job.
- <sup>12</sup> **So the LORD blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning.** For now he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. <sup>13</sup> He also gave Job seven more sons and three more daughters. <sup>14</sup> He named his first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Kerenhappuch. <sup>15</sup> In all the land no women were as lovely as the daughters of Job. And their father put them into his will along with their brothers.

- <sup>16</sup> Job lived 140 years after that, living to see four generations of his children and grandchildren. <sup>17</sup> Then he died, an old man who had lived a long, full life. (Job. 42:12–17 NLT-SE)

- **The Elephant in the Room: Why does God allow Job's suffering?**

- First of all, it shows beyond any question that **people of faith can and do experience terrible afflictions according to the will of God**, yet through no particular fault of their own.
- Secondly, the first two chapters clearly establish **the real struggle in the book is not between Job and his God, but rather between God and Satan**. It is a celestial battle, fought on earth, a sort of duel between good and evil.
- Where is the common territory upon which these two inscrutable adversaries can meet? And what common weapon might they employ that would be truly equitable to both? **The answer, of course, is man**. Human beings, soul and body, are the dueling ground where heavenly powers clash. For this is the only way in which the Lord Almighty can begin to prove moral supremacy over the Devil without in any way drawing upon His infinitely greater resources of brute strength.

- **What Every Human Faces at Birth:**

- The influence of **original sin** (Gen 2-3, Rom 5:12, 19-20)
  - Through the Fall of Adam and Eve, the harmony of creation was also destroyed. If we continue to read the Book of Genesis, we see how Adam and Eve became aware of their sinful condition, they were driven out of the garden, and they were forced to live by the sweat of their brow. The beauty and harmony of God's creative plan was disrupted. This was not the way it was meant to be. Once sin entered into life and into our world, all harmony with God, with self, with each other, and with the world around us was shattered. We call the Fall and its results "Original Sin."
  - Each one of us is heir to Adam and Eve. Their sin shattered God's created harmony, not only for them but also for us. We experience the effects of Original Sin in our daily life.
- Add to that, the impact of **generational sin** (Ex 20:4-6, Ez 18:30-32)
  - **What is generational sin?** It is disobeying God's commandments by sinning against His laws. It is also worshipping anything other than God.
  - Generational sins are **weaknesses** or **tendencies** that are handed down to us through the generations from parents or members of our family. These sins can involve behavioral patterns and ways of thinking that keep us trapped in the past. *Even though sin can be passed down through the generations, each person is responsible for his or her personal sins against the Lord.*
- On top of all this, we have the influence of **cultural sin** to contend with throughout our lives.
  - **Our sin and our culture have come together to keep us in bondage and brokenness...**to prevent the healing of our wound. Our sin is that stubborn part inside that wants, above all else, to be independent. There's a part of us fiercely committed to living in a way where we do not have to depend on anyone—especially God.
    - **C. S. Lewis** wrote, "A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. **Now God designed the human machine to run on himself**. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other."
      - Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. **But my Kingdom is not of this world.**" (John 18:36 NLT-SE)

- **Do not love this world nor the things it offers you**, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. **These are not from the Father, but are from this world.** And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. (1 John 2:15–17 NLT-SE)
- **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world**, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is **good and pleasing and perfect.** (Rom. 12:2 NLT-SE)
- You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: **If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God.** (James 4:4 NLT-SE)

## - The Battleground that is our Physical Bodies

### • The Enemy has a terrible plan for your life!

- **The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy** (*while expending the least amount of energy and effort possible - My thought*). (John 10:10 NLT-SE)
  - Here is the "Super-Amplified Version" of John 10:10..."The thief wants to get his hands into every good thing in your life. In fact, this pickpocket is **looking for any opportunity** to wiggle his way so deeply into your personal affairs that he can walk off with everything you hold precious and dear. And that's not all — when he's finished stealing all your goods and possessions, he'll take his plan to rob you blind to the next level. He'll create conditions and situations so horrible that you'll see no way to solve the problem except to sacrifice everything that remains from his previous attacks. **The goal of this thief is to totally waste and devastate your life.** If nothing stops him, he'll leave you insolvent, flat broke, and cleaned out in every area of your life. You'll end up feeling as if you are finished and out of business! Make no mistake — the enemy's ultimate aim is to obliterate you...."
- **Illustration:** Your friendly neighborhood prowler. When it comes to our health, the enemy is an incredible "opportunist." Typically, the Devil does not spend his time devising intricate plans of attack on your health. He is simply "prowling around in your life" **looking for weaknesses; for opportunities to take advantage of you, your family, your friends, your church and your nation.**
- **An Opportunist...**A person who exploits circumstances to gain immediate advantage rather than being guided by consistent principles or plans. Opportunism is the conscious policy and practice of taking advantage of circumstances – with little regard for principles or with what the consequences are for others. Opportunist actions are **expedient actions guided primarily by self-interested motives.**

## - So, how do we fight back against the Devil's attacks?

- Ask for what you need...
- Steward well what you've been given...
- Trust God to protect you, teach you and lead you...
- Stay alert to the enemies strategies and keep slamming the door in his face!

**Now, let's take aback some of what the enemy has stolen!**