

How Satan Attacks The Church

Introduction. Satan attacks the people of God. He always has (Revelation 12:17). The church is the institution of God on the earth to provide strength to Christians. Satan will tear down the church at every opportunity. Paul urged Timothy to suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ (2 Timothy 2:3). If we are to be victorious, we must not be ignorant of his schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11). Let's consider four ways Satan attacks the church.

I. ***He Blinds The Minds Of Unbelievers***

- A. He keeps them away from the truth and the church (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). He accomplishes this through ignorance, pride, lust, and the wickedness that results from his dominion over this life's affairs.
- B. Liberalism, the cults, world religions, and humanism are a constant menace. The leaders of those movements, like their evil masters, can transform themselves into angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). The doctrines taught in the name of biblical truth are sometimes frightening (Acts 20:28-32; Titus 1:10-11; 2 Peter 2:1-3).
- C. The church faces a constant barrage of error, all of it ultimately spawned by Satan (1 Timothy 4:1). We can defend ourselves against the assaults of the wicked one (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Ephesians 6:13-18).

II. ***He Destroys The Credibility Of Christians***

- A. Jesus warned Peter of temptation (Luke 22:31). Satan wanted to destroy Peter's faith, to shake him and make what was genuine in him blow away in the wind. If he had succeeded, Peter would have been useless to God. Satan is the architect of temptation (1 Chronicles 21:1; John 13:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).
- B. Peter, remembering our Lord's warning, warned us in 1 Peter 5:8. Satan attacks Christians, trying to destroy their faith and trust in God, thereby rendering them ineffective for the battle. We must resist temptations in the faith and be not like the seed that fell on the rock (1 Peter 5:9; Luke 8:13).
- C. God knows how to deliver saints out of temptation and can keep faithful saints from the hour of temptation (2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 3:10).

III. ***He Tears Down The Foundation Of Families***

- A. Modern challenges to the family are as deadly as they are real. Consider just a few examples:
 - 1. Atheism is the philosophy that there is no God.

2. Relativism is a popular point of view which states that there is no such thing as absolute truth.
 3. Modernism, also known as theological liberalism, rejected the concept of authority in religion and stated that religious beliefs must pass the test of reason and experience.
 4. Postmodernism accepts all religions as true, provided that no one of them claims to be exclusively true.
 5. Hedonism, from the Greek word for pleasure, is a philosophy which holds that man's chief and highest goal is pleasure.
 6. Universalism denies the reality of eternal punishment and postulates the eventual salvation of all.
 7. Materialism is an obsessive preoccupation with worldly possessions.
- B. To meet these challenges, we can serve God faithfully in our families. It may be a simple idea, but it is true. Serving God has always been the best way to stay strong spiritually and survive the attacks of a hostile culture! Daniel's three friends are a great example.
1. In the familiar story of Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were strong enough to risk their lives rather than worship the image Nebuchadnezzar built.
 2. Threatened with death, they simply stated their faith in God (Daniel 3:16-17).
 3. There is more than a coincidental link between these men's strength in God and their previous service to God. They had the spiritual strength necessary to meet their test because they had been serving God before the test arrived.

IV. *He Demolishes The Leadership Of Churches*

- A. Paul taught in Ephesians 4:11-12 that God gave certain "gifts" to men. These "gifts" were men who would instruct and guide the church so that it would grow.
- B. Paul also told Timothy that leaders must be well-qualified for their positions. Otherwise, they may "fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:7).
- C. There is no one in the church Satan would rather destroy than leaders. This, too, is an area where Satan has had much success. Elders, deacons, and even preachers have been devastated by Satan's attacks, whether through sexual sin, pride, or materialism. Many have been led away by false teaching as well.
- D. All brethren in a congregation need to be able to look up to men who will set a good example (1 Timothy 4:12). The results for the church are tragic. When the shepherds are destroyed, the flock will scatter.

Conclusion. How can the church defend itself against such assaults of the wicked one? Paul gives the answer in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 and Ephesians 6:13-18 lays out the necessary armor. Apart from the word of God, our ability, intellect, skill, and ingenuity are useless. We successfully fight the noble war by living in obedience to scripture. Obey the Bible today, become a Christian, and fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 1:18).