

## **487 Having done all, to stand**

In Mark 3.25 the Lord Jesus said - "A house divided against itself cannot stand", and in last week's Reflection we applied this truth to the United States of America, for so long the strong "global policeman" but now a deeply divided country led by an elderly president who is clearly out of his depth. The result is a more dangerous world with both Russia and China "flexing their muscles" as they strive for dominance.

Behind these new global, political realities of our times lie the old, old spiritual realities, where Satan still seeks to thwart God's plans and God's people whenever and wherever he can. Yet it is easy, and foolish, for us to forget his malign activities. Our best course is to know about him from Scripture, so we don't write him off as fairy-tale and we don't give him any more attention than he deserves.

Satan's very name, of Babylonian origin, means "opponent, adversary, accuser" Two key Old Testament passages, addressed on the surface to the "prince" or "king of Tyrus", and to the "king of Babylon", are seen to apply at a deeper level to Satan himself, this once-glorious created being. In Ezekiel 28.11-19 we read that Satan was "perfect in beauty ... in Eden the garden of God ... the anointed cherub ... walking in the midst of the stones of fire ... perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee". Then in Isaiah 14.12-15 - "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation ... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high". Satan is fallen, due to ambition and pride.

In the New Testament Satan is called - "the enemy ... a murderer from the beginning ... the prince of this world ... the god of this world ... the prince of the power of the air ... the tempter ... the adversary the devil, as a roaring lion ... that wicked one ... the accuser of our brethren ... the dragon, that old serpent ... the Devil" (Luke 10.19 / John 8.44;12.31 / II Corinthians 4.4 / Ephesians 2.2 / I Thessalonians 3.5 / I Peter 5.8 / I John 5.18 / Revelation 12.10; 20.2). He is described in Strong's Concordance as "the arch-enemy of good". We get the message about Satan - we need to know how to respond.

The good news starts with the fact that Satan has been defeated already, for - "... the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3.8). God's victory has truly been won

through His Son on the cross, but that victory is yet to be acknowledged by all, hence the “house divided” that is this broken world will remain divided and dangerous until every knee does bow, and every tongue does confess, that “Jesus Christ is Lord” (I Corinthians 15.50-58 / Philippians 2.9-11 / Revelation 20.10-21.8). Meanwhile Satan is still at work - for the time being, and only under the Lord’s allowance: “ ... your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, (still) walketh about, seeketh whom he may devour ...” (I Peter 5.8).

The good news continues. Jesus has given His power to His followers – “Behold I give unto you power ... over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10.18-20). We have Jesus’ own example – “Get thee hence, Satan”, while quoting Scripture at him (Matthew 4.10). We are told in James 4.7 - “resist the devil and he will flee from you”, and in response to the devil’s “roaring-lion efforts” intended to scare us - “Be sober, be vigilant ... whom resist stedfast in the faith ...” (from I Peter 5.8,9 again).

In resisting Satan’s efforts to tempt or to thwart, we are always to proclaim both the victorious Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the victorious power of Jesus’ shed blood (eg., Romans 3.23-26). On our own against Satan we have no chance, but praise God, when Satan is confronted with the Name and the blood of Jesus, he is the one with no chance – and he knows it.

Resisting the devil and his wiles also involves our wearing the “armour of light” and the “whole armour of God” (Romans 13.12 / Ephesians 6.11). We “fight the good fight of faith” (I Timothy 6.12), “standing fast in the Lord” (Philippians 4.1), and remembering always that - “the battle is not yours, but the Lord’s” (I Samuel 17.47 / II Chronicles 20.15). As “strangers and pilgrims” (I Peter 2.11), we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5.11).

In ways such as these, using God’s resources and following God’s guidance, by His divine grace we are surely “able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6.13). Thereby Satan is seen off, God is glorified - and we are found faithful.