



14 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. (Hosea 5:14-15)

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. 13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. 14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen. (1 Peter 5:8-14)

For all of the wonderful works God has made, Satan has a counterfeit. There were two Trees in the Garden at Eden; two ways of life (the Narrow Way that leads up to Heaven, and the crowded and Broad Way that leads to destruction); two kinds of prophets (false and true); there are two kinds of angels - holy Angels of God and the fallen Angels of Lucifer; and two kinds who follow the Shepherd to pasture (innocent lambs and ravening wolves). There are two lions as well - the roaring lion that is Satan, and the Lion of Judah which brings judgment to the wicked and mercy to the forgiven. *Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.* (Rev 5:5) It is that *roaring lion that walketh about seeking whom he may devour* which is the focus of the first two verses of our text today (8 & 9). This lion has wounded the heel of the Lamb of God, but the Lamb has finally and unconditionally crushed the lion's (serpent's) head and defeated that old Serpent.

Most hunters experienced in the African safari know a wounded lion is twice more dangerous than those who have not been wounded by man. It is true as well that Satan, as a fallen angel cast down in his rebellion from Heaven, is also deadly and dangerous to the unsuspecting soul that has not come to place his trust in that mighty Lion (the Lord Jesus Christ) who was the one to cast Lucifer down in primitive eternity past. He licks his wounds and seeks to mar or destroy all that God has created, but especially the crowning pride of His Creation - Man! The scourge of disease, parasites, and thorns are the mutating works of Satan by way of the sin that he introduced to our federal parents - Adam and Eve. He can be both passive and aggressive depending on the vulnerabilities of his prey.

The Roaring Lion

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

A prepared defense is always more effective than a simple disregard for contingent dangers. Belshazzar and the inhabitants of Babylon were having a riotous drinking party when the walls of the city were breached and the city was taken. Sobriety is a wise demeanor for all good men and women in all circumstances. Sobriety in worship has nearly disappeared in our churches. Many would believe that a drunken orgy were apace if they stepped into many of our charismatic churches. Watchfulness is also essential. The devil's footsteps can be heard always just beyond the doors of the church. He is not only a stealthy serpent who creeps and slithers out of the sight of the prey, but also a roaring lion whose ferocity is without the burden of mercy. Just as he stealthily deceived our first parents in the Garden, his approaches have similar effect on the greater majority of the human race. If cunning and stealth will not work, he will resort to outright persecution and character assassination of the righteous. The author of the text today was well aware of the need for vigilance for he fell asleep thrice in Gethsemane while the Lord was in His greatest distress.

Characteristics of the Lion

1. He is subtle. Even the pet cat has patience and cunning in slowly sneaking upon a bird on the lawn. He will wait indefinitely for the right moment to attack. The lion is no different for he is a member of the feline family. The wicked are his cubs: *9 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.* (Psalm 10:9-10)
2. The lion, as is Satan, is wide-ranging in his hunt. He may leave for a time when he realizes his presence has been noticed and return later to devour the weak of the herd. His lair is in the covert of the rocks, and he makes the entrance there seem free of danger; but please note that there are a variety of footsteps going into the lair, and none coming out! *And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* (Job 1:7)
3. The lion does most of his hunting in darkness for his eyes are suited with an enhanced night-vision. Those men who love to carouse under the cover of darkness have made themselves very susceptible to the untimely attack of the lion.
4. The lion and his namesake, Satan, is persevering. He takes no vacations, and all hours of the day are his venue. *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.* (Rev 12:10)
5. The lion and Satan are diligent in their pursuit of souls. He knows his time is fleeting and must act with immediate dispatch to accomplish his greatest evil. *Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* (Rev 12:12)
6. The lion is merciless to his prey. He cares not the grievous pain his teeth and claws inflict, and may even enjoy playing with his helpless prey. He may bring a young deer to his little ones (demons) and teaches them, too, to treat the innocent baby with impunity. The savage animal kills to satisfy the calls of nature; but our adversary reaps no benefit from the destruction of men. His exertions serve only to increase his own guilt and misery; yet is he insatiable in his thirst for our condemnation.

The Christian's Defense

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your

brethren that are in the world. God has provided us with a wide arsenal of weapons with which to confront this merciless enemy. We have mentioned sobriety, vigilance and faith. But the accomplished biblical scholar will be emboldened, too, with a knowledge of God's Word that will be devastating to Satan and render him helpless before the Light of Christ. *11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph 6:11) 6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. (Hosea 4:6)*

Resistance to Satan may not always stop his terror to the Elect, but it will limit that terror to the flesh only while preserving the soul. *10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* The Church is enriched by the blood and tears of the saints. The Reformers suffered burning at the stake rather than deny God's Word. Suffering purifies the soul of the saint and perfects his testimony. It is to the glory of God alone that any can withstand the Devil and his charms and terrors.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. Sylvanus (Silas) was a fellow servant of Paul who preached the Gospel confirmed here by Peter. Peter is writing from Babylon (not the seat of the great heresy that sits on the seven hills of Rome as some presumed to suggest). It is interesting to note that Peter could not have been a Roman priest today because he was married with family; Marcus however was a son by fellowship and not of blood.

The benediction is beautifully expressive of the change made by Christ from that of a rough fisherman to an Apostle of the Church of Christ. *Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.*