

Doctrinal Summary of
Satan & Company: Seeking to Attack and Devour

In 1 Peter 5:8 Peter commands believers to be alert because Satan & Company are seeking to attack.

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

The words “be of sober spirit” are translated from the Koine Greek word νήψατε (“naeps-ah-teh”) which literally means, “you all are commanded to perform the action in a point in time to not be under the influence or control of something in your body or mind.” While certainly physical intoxication of one’s body by alcohol qualifies, the usage of νήψατε here is in reference to one’s control of his own mental faculties. Thus, the believer is commanded by Peter to be completely in control of his mental faculties, not letting outside exigencies affect his thought process, mood, or mentality. The believer is also to be on the alert.

The words “be on the alert” are translated from the Koine Greek word γρηγορήσατε (“grae-go-rae-sah-teh”), which literally means, “you all are commanded to perform the action in a point in time to be in a state of continued mental awareness that pays attention to what is being experienced directly or indirectly.” It identifies that an individual is paying close attention to what is going on, not only in his own interactions, but also in the peripheral interactions of others in his field of view. This is in its most basic form a command to pay close attention to what is going on with oneself and in the area immediately around oneself. This is because Satan & Company are seeking whom they can devour by means of their twistings of righteousness deployed personally in their strategy of deception.

Peter compares Satan & Company’s focus on attacking believers as being like that of a lion. As the lion prowls around looking for his next meal, he does so with his eyes, ears, and nose attuned to everything around him. Being an apex predator, the lion does not have much to fear in his hunt and moves forward looking for his prey. But the lion also attacks the weakest prey, rather than the strongest, since this allows for a greater conversion of prey to meal. Prides hunt herds together, sending some lionesses down wind of the herd to ambush the heard once the rest of the pride begins to chase them.

While some tactics between the lion and Satan & Company may have parallels, Peter’s focus is on the similarity between the lion’s seeking and Satan & Company’s seeking. Both seek to find the weaker, easier prey in order to better convert the prey to their meal. The word “seeking” is translated from the Koine Greek word ζητῶν (“zae-tohn”) which literally means, “performing the continuous type of action as a matter of principle to zealously strive to accomplish a desired objective based on his own initiation.” Satan & Company’s principle of operation (the norm by which they operate) is described as a zealous pursuit to accomplish their desired objective of devouring believers.

The word “devour” is translated from the Koine Greek word καταπιεῖν (“kah-tah-pi-ein”) which literally means, “to perform the action in a point in time as a matter of purpose to be swallowed up completely.” Thus, Satan & Company are constantly and zealously striving to swallow up the believer through their strategy of deception, capturing them away from walking with God, and plunging them into an apostate thought process by which Satan & Company can continue to depart the believer from the truths of God’s Word and kingdom one attack at a time. The believer must stay alert so as not to be overtaken by the attacks of the attackers.