



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

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***Revelation 12:17 "So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."***

I watched Donald Trump's thunderous speech last night. He spoke to a friendly crowd that applauded, cheered and chanted many times. He made no pretense in declaring that we are at war with terrorist groups that want to destroy America. This war is different than other wars. The enemy isn't from one country. They don't wear uniforms and march, like soldiers of long ago did. The enemy isn't distinguished by red coats like the British were long ago. They aren't wearing a certain shaped helmet like the Germans of the first world war. Politicians and strategists will argue about what is the best way to deal with this threat. National security will be a huge topic in deciding which candidate is best suited to keep us safe.

But there is another war that you won't hear the candidates talking about. It's a spiritual war. It's been going on for 2,000 years. It is even harder to detect this enemy than modern terrorists. Our passage today reminds us that the dragon, called Satan earlier in the chapter, is bent on making war with the people of God. He wants to destroy Christians. Satan will use disguises to accomplish this. He will use terrorist. He will use college professors who deny the existence of God and the inspiration of the Bible. He will use religious leaders who stray from God's word and lead flocks of followers into the happy land of "la-la." Satan will use the media and social media to twist the truth and create a fog around what is right. He will use the pressure of popularity to influence the fashion industry and Hollywood movies and the music industry. He will make wrong seem right. He will fill the air with violence and filthy language to such an extent that we become numb to those things. Satan will even use family members to soften our stance and move us away from Christ. Our enemy is smart. He has many weapons and many soldiers.

He will attack the family because that is the foundation of society and the image of our relationship with God. Divorce and the redefining of marriage are every day bombs that Satan lofts through the sky. He will use alcohol and drugs to deaden our senses and to weaken our stance with God.

He will attack our congregations because that is the source of encouragement and one connection we have with God. He will make a great discontent between what happens on Sunday and the rest of the week. He will turn worship into something that is not relevant or else transform it into a place where man is praised and happiness is the message. The modern church doesn't even realize that Satan is using it to fool the masses into thinking that they are following God. He will use members to turn against members to keep the church away from it's purpose and focus.

**(OVER)**

He will attack your soul with everything he has. He will use discouragement, temptation, worry, stress, and innocent things such as a full schedule and busy lives to keep you away from God. The less you pray, the less you open the Bible, the less you worship, the weaker you become. He knows that. He will pull the plug on your soul so that what faith you have slowly leaks out. It's so gradual that you won't notice it until it's too late.

Across this country side, lies the carnage that Satan has caused. Broken homes. Broken vows. Broken hearts. Heretics. Apostates. False brethren. Shipwrecked faith. Divided churches. Weak congregations. Dead faith. And lives that are convinced that they are going to Heaven because they are "good" people, and Satan knows better.

It's ugly out there. It's hard to know who to trust. It's hard to know what's on the up and up and what's just a disguise to confuse us and deceive us. If you are a Christian, Satan has you in his radar. He has been firing shots across your bow since the day you obeyed Christ. Some of us see this and are aware. Many have no clue. They do not realize that they have been traveling through lion country for a long time now. Every day, that lion, Satan, is seeking to devour. He's patient. He's watching. He's waiting for a moment when we are not sharp. He's looking for a moment when we are tired or alone. He's looking for a moment when we are discouraged. He's ready to pounce. He's watching. Our enemy never goes to sleep. Our enemy never takes a day off. Before you get to the office, he is there. Before you reach your vacation destination, he is there. He's waiting for you at home. He will not quit until he has destroyed your faith in Christ. Ignoring him is what he wants you to do. Pretend he isn't there, and he will just smile.

In this spiritual battle, we don't have a candidate that we can vote for that will keep us safe. It's up to us. This is why the Bible uses military words such as: be alert. Be sober. Be watchful. Be diligent. Be on guard. Asleep at the post is surely the moment the enemy has been waiting for. Not paying attention is his dream come true. It can happen anywhere. Sitting in a college class and never realizing that the professor is chipping away at your faith. It can happen at a family reunion and the temptation to do wrong is disguised as a family member. All around us Satan is trying to get you to take your foot off the accelerator. He wants you to slow down with Jesus. He wants you to back off with the Lord. He wants you to think that you've done enough. Stop helping others. Stop shinning your light. Stop being so good. Stop teaching. Stop believing. Stop. Stop. Stop. That's what Satan wants. He is at war with you.

Can you win? Is there any hope? The Corinthians were told, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory." The key word in Revelation is "overcome." James said, "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Jesus said to pray that you enter not into temptation.

Yes, you can win this war. It won't be by your smarts or your strength, but with God's help. God must be with you at all times. God must guide you. God must help you. God must forgive you. God is there, but you must invite Him into your day. You must include Him, listen to Him and follow Him. As Joshua understood, "The battle belongs to the Lord."

So, as the children sing in VBS, "be careful little eyes what you see..." There is a war going on. The political candidates of today do not see it. This war is worse than anything the terrorists can do. Fear not the one who can kill the body and do no more. Fear the one who can kill the body and the soul.

Lion country-be careful. The lion is watching you. Be smart. Be spiritual. Be alert.

Roger Shouse

