

THAT ANCIENT SERPENT

“The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” (Rev 12:9)

There are approximately 2,700 different kinds of snakes in the world. They do not chase down their prey like a lion, they kill by ambush. Note the contrast. When the deer is killed by a lion, there is the adrenaline rush, the increased heart rate, the mad rush to escape, the fast chase, and finally the fatal stroke. The serpent, by contrast, does not have the speed to chase down a deer. The serpent captures the deer in an ambush.. In October 2011 officials in Florida found a 76 pound fully intact deer in the stomach of a 16 foot Burmese python. The snake weighed 215.4 pounds and the girth of the snake’s stomach stretched to over 44 inches to accommodate the kill. The deer was dead, but we may be absolutely certain that the snake didn’t outrun him! Remember, the devil is described as “that ancient serpent”! He too kills by ambushing his victims.

- Remember! That old serpent has an amazing track record of success. He somehow seduced perfect people in a perfect environment to disobey God. (Gen. 3:1 - 7).
- Remember! The Lord predicted perpetual enmity between the “Seed” of the woman and the “seed” of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) That “enmity” is still evident for all to see.
- Remember! Before the serpent would be destroyed, he would bite the heel of our Deliverer.
- Remember! When Cain got mad at his brother, the Lord warned him that “sin was crouching” at his door (Gen. 4:7). Unfortunately, Cain paid no attention to that warning!
- Even without arms and legs, that “old serpent” has been so successful that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

The serpent kills in three different ways. (1) Sometimes the prey is eaten alive and dies inside the serpent. The serpent’s teeth are slanted in such a way that once the prey is in it’s mouth, retreat is impossible. (2). Secondly, snakes known as “constrictors”, can wrap themselves around their prey and squeeze them to death. (3) Finally, some serpents have deadly venom that can kill or paralyze their victims. In each instance, however, the victim is ambushed. The serpent cannot chase down a victim as other predators do. If sin is crouching at the door, maybe it would be wise not to go through that door.

A visitor to the Westminster Abbey described seeing many closed doors that were of no interest. One door, however, had a sign saying “Do Not Enter!”. For some reason, this was the door that intrigued him. This was the door that tantalized his curiosity. Interestingly enough, this was the only door that he really wanted to open. Touche! How reminiscent of Eden! Adam and Even could freely eat of every tree in the garden, but the serpent strategically positioned himself at the only tree forbidden to them. The rest is history. Do you understand this strategy? The serpent cannot catch you unless you go through the door he is watching. When that old serpent ambushes someone, it is not an accident. He is the father of lies and specializes in luring unsuspecting souls within striking distance..

Paul was concerned that the Corinthians not be deceived by the serpent (2 Cor. 11:2, 3). That old snake is so cunning that we must exercise extreme caution to avoid being ambushed. Consider, for example, the case of King Solomon. Moses forbade three things for the kings of Israel. They were not to multiply horses, wives, or silver and gold (Deut. 17:16, 17). Incredibly, Solomon sinned in all three categories. Note that the Devil did not coerce the King to go through these forbidden doors, he enticed him! The Serpent messed with his mind until Solomon actually chose to do the very things that God forbade. BEWARE! Unless we are careful, he will also do the same for us!