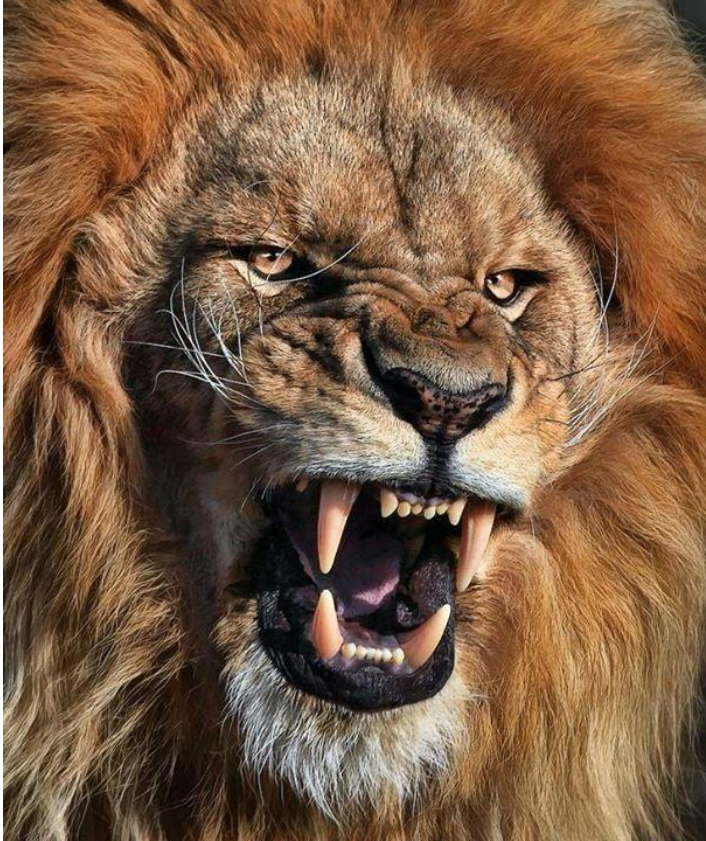


Bible Class

8th January 2026

As a ROARING Lion

1 Peter 5:8



Passage for consideration

1 Peter 5:8: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Peter is exhorting his readers in practical ways, and is writing here to enthuse readers with a sense of urgency, and to be alert, in their interactions both within the ecclesia, as he writes to both elders and younger ones, all members of the flock, - and also without the ecclesia with interactions with society at large.

He urges them to be sober and vigilant. In this context he is not specifically reminding them to avoid strong drink, the Greek word for sober is *nepsate*, which has a wider meaning than in English. It means to be calm, circumspect, discreet and of sound judgement. To be vigilant is to be watchful, and on guard.

He uses the words in similar contexts here:

1 Peter 1:13: *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

1 Peter 4:7: *But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*

Again, the context reveals that Peter was in Chapter 4 talking about trials which would come from without the ecclesia – verse 12-16, and in

chapter 5 how to manage behaviour in the face of trials within the ecclesia – the need to be ever alert was because the end for some – could come at any moment. This advice is appropriate therefore for every generation! But in Peter's day particularly, - there was the growing oppression of the Romans in Judea and Jerusalem, with Roman Legions sent from Syria to deal with the growing Jewish insurgency – and the fall of Jerusalem would only be about 30 years time, then for the Ecclesia there was the Jewish persecution of Christians, the persecution by the Romans, then the corruption within ecclesia, - then the corruption within the heart! So many layers of threat to the purity of the doctrine, and living the Life of Christ! Peter was warning that challenges come unawares even from within an individual!

Jesus himself warned of the deceitfulness of the heart, how the wrong thoughts and attitudes can enter the mind so easily:

Matthew 24:48-50: *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,*

Who is this adversary the devil wandering around like a roaring lion? Already the above remarks show that the author believes they relate to challenges in general as well as specific difficulties.

But...we should be aware that this verse is used to support false teaching about fallen angels. That the *adversary the devil* is a fallen angel, who was booted out of heaven by God after the Creation, because of misbehaving, and has been a complete nuisance ever since and is now targeting weak and vulnerable brothers and sisters. This is a very popular teaching - particularly amongst Jehovah's Witnesses (they are not by the way) Pentecostals but is complete invention, and dreamt up by incompetent and ignorant preachers, who made a patchwork of unrelated verses to fit their preconceived ideas.

The truth is easy to establish:

The word for adversary in Greek is *antidikos* and means 'adversary at law'

The word for devil in Greek is *diabalos* and means ‘accuser, slanderer, defamer, or detractor who deliberately accuses others’

This is specifically what Peter was referring to – it is why he chooses those particular words, under Divine inspiration.

So in this case was an opponent at law who maliciously accused those living the life of Christ – the persecutors of Christians.

There are many examples to demonstrate this where the current law of the land was used to challenge the Truth of God:

Acts 4:1–3: Peter and John are arrested by the priests and temple guard for preaching in Jesus' name and held in custody overnight.

Acts 5:17–42: All apostles are arrested by the high priest and Sadducees, freed by an angel, re-arrested, beaten, and released.

Acts 12:1–5: King Herod arrests Peter during the Passover, planning to bring him to trial later, but an angel frees him.

Acts 16:23–24: Paul and Silas are severely beaten and imprisoned in Philippi.

Acts 21:27–36: Paul is seized by a mob in the Temple in Jerusalem and arrested by Roman soldiers.

Acts 23:10: Paul is taken into custody by Roman soldiers to protect him from a dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Just some examples of where this happened. Now Peter is saying the same is going to happen to those to whom he was writing: to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

In all these places again, Jews from the local synagogues sought to disrupt and break up the evangelist's work. But also, it was about this time that the persecution by Nero and then Diocletian the Roman emperors against Christians commenced.

Peter warned about this consistently, and in no place does he ever suggest that the enemy is some weird heavenly apparition with a long

scaly tail, pitchfork, horns and of a strange red colour as copied and borrowed from Greco-Roman pagan ideas about the god Pan the god of nature and fertility, and popularised in the medieval ages to frighten people, and then later in the Victorian era. No, these silly childish ideas coming from ignorant superstitious times, are just useful accessories for corrupt pastors to scare their congregations and have nothing to do with the Bible.

Instead, as we can see, the Apostle and the Lord Jesus always warned that the adversary, and the false accuser, was more likely to be found in the human heart, and can overtake a person unawares very quickly, so that alertness is required at all times:-

Luke 21:36: Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

That the devil – the *diabalos* the false accuser, the liar who is the adversary, is always present, and not always an enemy at law – but mostly in fact the enemy within! As Jesus reminded the Jews:

John 8:44: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

But the devil can be overcome - *Resist the devil and it will flee from you* says James the Apostle, and 1 John 3:8-10: *He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

So why did Peter describe this opponent at law, this false accuser as a roaring lion?

Well, in the immediate context he had been talking about the flock:

Verse 2: *Feed the flock of God*

Verse 3: *being examples to the flock.*

Verse 4: *Chief Shepherd*

Verse 5: sheep-like traits: *submit ...humble*

Peter is reminding the flock to look after each other, and submit to one another, and work together, and to be ever mindful of the instructions of the Chief Shepherd, but to be alert vigilant – watchful, and calm – not to panic! When panicking, and running around bleating – how can all eyes be watching out or ears listening for the roaring of a lion!

So a lion is introduced to show a mortal danger to the flock.

It may be that Peter had this passage in mind: Psalms 22:13,21 *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion... Save me from the lion's mouth: ...*

Or maybe the destructive power of the lion in Psalms 7:2: *Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*

Psalms 17:12: *Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*

What is interesting is that the Apostle described the Opponent of Law –as a lion in 2 Timothy 4:17: *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* It is extremely likely that Paul was referring to the Emperor Nero.

Hopefully these thoughts will contribute some light on the understanding of this passage.

Brother Terry