

EXPOSING THE TACTICS OF THE ENEMY! : PART 1

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Published On : June 24, 1998

Last Updated : March 12, 2023

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As our Christian faith is increasingly maligned with each passing year, and as we Christians are ostracized more and more from society due to our faith in Jesus Christ, and as persecution against the Lord's children also intensifies around the world, more and more of the Lord's shepherds will hopefully emphasize the fact that God's children are truly involved in genuine spiritual warfare. As I point out in articles such as "The Battle is Not Yours Alone!", this war is not being fought with nuclear weapons, or with fighter jets, or with missiles, tanks and guns. Rather, it is being waged with words and thoughts. Furthermore, the battleground for this war is not some distant, foreign land. Rather, it is in our very own minds and hearts.

It is for this reason, that in writing to the brethren at the Church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul admonishes us to bring every thought into captivity. In other words, we must control our thoughts, and not allow the enemy -- Satan -- to poison our minds with his lies and doubts, as we see by this verse:

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"
2 Corinthians 10:5, KJV

While this ongoing spiritual conflict between the children of the Lord and the children of Satan is worldwide in scope, and is often recognizable through real, physical persecution against our Christian brethren in foreign lands, or in more recent years, through legal battles within the United States itself, it is also comprised of many smaller, hidden battles which are being waged on a daily basis in our personal lives, in our families, or else in the group of Christians with whom we fellowship. This may take the form of our congregation at church, or a gathering at home such as a home fellowship or home church, or even online through some form of electronic fellowship -- such as the social networks -- which are many.

While some Christians are quick to recognize when spiritual attacks originate from without, it is those which are born within our own fellowship which can do the most severe and lasting damage. Sadly, sometimes the tools for these attacks can be those very Christians whom we have viewed and trusted as our own dear brethren and fellow laborers in the Lord.

Considering the clear Scriptural precedent, that this occurs should really come as no surprise to us. As I point out in other articles, the First Century Church was plagued with these kinds of problems. Back then, the primary conflict was between the Lord's Disciples who viewed Salvation as a free Gift which was obtained through faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone, and their legalistic Jewish brethren who tried to place an obstacle in the path of new Believers by insisting that one still had to adhere to the Mosaic Law in order to merit Salvation. This is a topic which I discuss at length in other articles.

In short, these legalists tried to make Salvation a matter of both Grace and good works through the observance of the Mosaic Law, as if to suggest that the Blood of Jesus Christ was not a sufficient ransom price to cover the debt for our sins, and thus purchase for us Forgiveness, Redemption and Salvation. Of course, as many modern Christians realize, this doctrine of mixing Grace with works was quite clearly contrary to the Original Teaching which the Lord imparted to the Twelve Apostles, as well as to the Apostle Paul. It is no wonder then that the Apostle Paul was forced to dedicate

so much of his Epistles to exposing this treacherous false doctrine. His thoughts are summed up quite well in the following verse:

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Romans 11:6, KJV

As Paul clearly informs us, either we are saved by the Grace of God through Jesus Christ alone, or else we are saved by our own good works. This difference of opinion in the First Century Church became so severe, that the Apostles had to begin issuing warnings to their flocks to beware of these false brethren who had come in to spy out their liberty, and to draw away converts from the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These sober warnings are easily recognizable in such verses as the following:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

Romans 16:17, KJV

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him . . . For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15, KJV

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:"

Galatians 2:4, KJV

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."

Philippians 3:2, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

Titus 1:9-11, KJV

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

Titus 3:9-11, KJV

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

1 John 2:19, KJV

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive

a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

2 John 1:7-11, KJV

As we have already seen, these deceptive, false brethren to whom the Apostles were referring, were the Jewish disciples who were still under the Mosaic Law. Even though they claimed to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for the sins of the world, they later left the fold of the First Century Church; which according to the Apostle John, simply proves that they were never really true disciples to begin with. As you may recall, Jesus likewise experienced the very same thing with some of His followers, as we see by these verses that are found in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John:

"I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are

spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"

John 6:48-67, KJV

Moving up to our present day, just as the legalistic Jews who still observed the laws regarding circumcision endeavored to defeat the First Century Church from within, today, that old serpent Satan continues to use the very same tactics in order to try to divide and defeat God's children. Many fellowships and flocks have already been infiltrated by pastors, priests, ministers and shepherds who boast of impressive credentials, but whose doctrine consists of damnable heresies. Through their smooth talk and debonaire style, they have been given charge of, and spiritual authority over, many of the Lord's children. I am reminded of the following verse from the Book of Psalms where King David acknowledges the craftiness of his enemies:

"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

Psalms 55:21, KJV

While these people claim to be Christians who trust solely in the Blood of Jesus Christ for their Salvation, once they slyly con their way into the sheepfolds of the Lord, little by little they begin to poison their flocks with a twisted version of the truth. Just like the unbelieving Jews of old, they "offend" the brethren by placing doctrinal stumbling blocks before them, which eventually cause some of them to completely fall away from the truth. As I point out in the article "Have You Read the New Scriptures Yet?", slowly but surely, these wolves in sheep's clothing replace the true Spirit-filled Word of God with the spiritless doctrines and traditions of men. What some of these subtle leaders teach from their pulpits is nothing short of candy-coated poison! The Prophet Isaiah issued the following sobering warning regarding such workers of darkness:

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Isaiah 5:20, KJV

Jesus was fully aware of the false shepherds and the false prophets which would enter the flocks once He had returned to Heaven. That is why, prior to His departure, He left His Disciples with some very sound advice. Some of that wise counsel is found in the following verses:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7:15-20, KJV

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber . . . And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers . . . All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them . . . The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy . . . But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep."

John 10:1, 5, 8, 10b, 12-13, KJV

It is important that we recognize that it is not only the leader of a church or fellowship whom Satan can use in order to achieve his objectives. That serpent can just as easily use a rebellious brother or sister who is not fully yielded to the Lord's Spirit. While I do not believe that Satan can totally possess such people, even the Scriptures inform us that it is within his power to temporarily use them, until they once again submit themselves to the Lord. Consider the following verses which clearly support this possibility:

"But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Matthew 16:23, KJV

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Luke 22:31-32, KJV

"And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."

John 13:27, KJV

Thus we see through the examples of Peter and Judas that when one is not completely yielded to the Lord due to pride, stubbornness, or some other sin of the mind or heart, he or she can indeed become a pawn of Satan, either knowingly, or unknowingly. I also discuss this topic in articles such as "Are You Clean Every Whit?".

If your church or fellowship does become the object of such a severe attack, exactly how should it be dealt with? Again, a full answer is to be found in the Word of God. Thank the Lord that we don't have to try to reason these things out in our own minds, or with our own human wisdom. All we have to do is turn to the Lord's wonderful counsel in order to find what we are supposed to do. Thank the Lord for those men who faithfully wrote down the Lord's teachings, as well as their own experiences during the development of the Early Church. So what do the Scriptures advise us to do concerning those brethren who simply refuse to yield themselves to the Lord after several admonitions?

If you recall the verses that we examined earlier concerning false brethren and troublemakers, they included some rather strong phrases such as the following:

1. avoid them
2. let him be accursed
3. from such withdraw thyself
4. A man that is an heretick . . . reject
5. receive him not into your house
6. neither bid him God speed

The following verses also inform us to treat an unrepentant person as a heathen man, to let them be accursed, and to rebuke them sharply:

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and

tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Matthew 18:15-17, KJV

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."

1 Corinthians 16:22, KJV

Note: [anathema = accursed]

"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;"

Titus 1:13, KJV

Thus, collectively-speaking, Jesus and the Apostles John and Paul provide us with the following counsel regarding how to deal with unrepentant brethren:

1. avoid them
2. let him be accursed
3. from such withdraw thyself
4. A man that is an heretick . . . reject
5. receive him not into your house
6. neither bid him God speed
7. let [him] . . . be an an heathen man
8. rebuke them sharply

Thus we see that if an individual is rejecting the doctrine of Jesus Christ, or acting in an unchristian manner, if he refuses to repent and make amends, he is to be shunned after several admonitions. Some time ago while I was counseling a certain person, I mentioned to him that there are times when instead of praying for certain people, we may need to start praying against them. As I recall, this person was a little surprised and taken back by my counsel. However, we know for a fact that on certain occasions, the Disciples did in fact pray against -- or even curse -- their unbelieving enemies. For example, in the Book of Acts, we find the Apostle Paul cursing the evil sorcerer Elymas with blindness, as we see by this group of verses:

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they

found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

Acts 13:6-12, KJV

Now, obviously, many people are aware of the fact that Jesus instructed His followers to love our enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully use us. Yet here we clearly see Paul cursing a man with blindness. Was Paul out of the Spirit when He did this? Was he not manifesting the love of God towards this man? Obviously, chastisement is precisely what this man needed to put the fear of God into him! As I have pointed out many times before, there is always a balance to be found in the Scriptures, but we will never find it if we just hastily take one verse and make a doctrine out of it. Thus, we need to remember that Jesus also said the following:

"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

Matthew 12:30, KJV

This is precisely what Elymas -- the evil sorcerer and Jewish false prophet -- was doing. Not only was he not believing in the Lord himself, but much worse than this, he was doing his best to prevent this hungry deputy from believing in Jesus as well. This is one kind of situation which God will simply not tolerate!

When someone attempts to prohibit a Christian from witnessing to others, he had better watch out; because the Lord may very well stop him in his tracks; just as the Apostle Paul did in the case of the sorcerer Elymas. It would appear that winning this deputy to the Lord must have been a very important part of God's Work and overall plan at that time. Perhaps this man

went on to win his entire town to the Lord. Another thing you need to realize is that Paul received the power to strike the sorcerer with blindness from God Himself; so obviously, he was in the Lord's Will when he cursed Elymas. It should be clear then that it is very dangerous business to impede God's children from carrying out their evangelical work, or to stand in their way! Jesus Himself highlights this same point when He says such things as the following:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Matthew 18:6, KJV

"The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

Mark 14:21, KJV

Think about it. Judas Iscariot was one of the very Twelve. He knew Jesus personally and lived with Him for some three years. He heard the truth straight from the Master's own mouth. Yet look what Jesus said of him. As we know, while Judas didn't literally have a millstone placed around his neck, he did go and hang himself after realizing the error of his ways, as we see by the following verses:

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

Matthew 27:3-5, KJV

"Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

Acts 1:18, KJV

Just as Judas betrayed his Master, sometimes our very own brothers and sisters in the Lord can become more of a hinderance than a blessing when they are not fully yielded to God's Spirit. While in their state of delusion, they may actually be fooled into believing that they are doing good

and working for the Lord by stirring up trouble within the fellowship. The truth of the matter is that they are doing the exact opposite. Not only are they fighting against us, but as we have already seen, they are fighting against the Lord Himself. This is why we also find verses such as the following in the Bible where we are specifically warned to not touch God's anointed servants:

"Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

1 Chronicles 16:22, KJV

"Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Psalms 105:15, KJV

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matthew 25:40, KJV

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."

Zechariah 2:8, KJV

While the last verse is actually referring to Israel, it can also be applied to any true Believer and servant of the Lord. So in truth, when our Christian brethren turn against us, and purposely hinder God's Work and fight against us, they aren't just betraying us, they are really betraying the Lord Himself. Unless they desist in their foolish behavior, they may have to face some very serious consequences, and they won't like it! As I point out in articles such as "Beholding the Evil and the Good", our Heavenly Father can be a very firm, but very loving Disciplinarian. As we read in the Scriptures:

"Open rebuke is better than secret love."

Proverbs 27:5, KJV

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement,

whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Hebrews 12:5-8, 11-13, KJV

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God . . . For our God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 10:31, 12:29, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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EXPOSING THE TACTICS OF THE ENEMY! : PART 2

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : June 24, 1998

Last Updated : March 12, 2023

God Desires Repentance Forgiveness And Healing, How To Deal With Extremely Recalcitrant Brethren, Confronting Accusers And Troublemakers, Incest Occurs In The Church At Corinth, Commit Reprobates And Troublemakers Into The Lord's Hands, God's Unorthodox Methods Of Communication, Problems In Our Ministry, My Opinion Regarding Confrontations And Debates, God's Word And A Case Of Spilled Milk, Casting The Truth To The Ground, Neither Cast Ye Your Pearls Before Swine, Root Of Bitterness, Esau's Mistake: Don't Fail To Take Hold Of The Grace Of God, Keep Alert Sober And Vigilant, Fight The Good Fight Of Faith, Put On The Whole Armor Of God, Endure Hardness, Satan The Subtle Serpent Quietly Creeps Into Our Fellowships, Devil's Tactic Is Divide And Conquer, Attack One Person At A Time, Begin With Weakest Link, Counterfeit

Milk Milkweed And Snake Milk, Destroy The Leader And Sheep Will Scatter, Caiaphas And The Sanhedrin Plot Against Jesus

Continuing our discussion from part one, while God may be forced to deal with us due to our rebellion and foolish behavior, as I mention in the series "Hell, the Lake of Fire and Universalism", the Scriptures also make it very clear to us that His ultimate desire and goal is not to destroy us, but rather that we will repent, and find both forgiveness and healing. Consider the following group of verses:

"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer."

Isaiah 54:8, KJV

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Ezekiel 33:11, KJV

"For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

Lamentations 3:31-33, KJV

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village."

Luke 9:51-56, KJV

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to

repentance."

2 Peter 3:9, KJV

However, at the same time, until a true spirit of repentance enters into the heart of a recalcitrant brother or sister, exactly what are we supposed to do? How should we deal with them? As we saw in part one, in extreme cases, the Lord and His Apostles recommended excommunication from the Christian fellowship. But is even that always enough?

In severe cases where an unrepentant brother or sister has begun to seriously hinder God's Work, it seems to me that we really have no choice but to change the manner of our prayer; and instead of praying, "Lord, please help that brother", we have to pray, "Lord, please stop that person from doing what they are doing! Please stop them in their tracks and prevent them from further hurting your Work!" What else can we do? It would certainly be a lot less severe than how the Apostle Paul was forced to deal with the evil sorcerer Elymas in the Book of Acts.

If a brother or a sister backslides from your particular church or fellowship, and then subtly begins to spread lies, rumors or other malicious propaganda about you in order to sow dissension and discord, and perhaps even to fuel very negative publicity, and instigate a public outcry against you in your local community, are you really going to just keep praying "Oh Lord, please help that person!" while you are losing the weaker members of your fold one at a time? I hardly think so!

In the case of Jesus and the Apostles, they did not hesitate to challenge their accusers, and confront the troublemakers head on. Jesus went into the court of the temple with a whip in His hand. Paul blinded the false prophet and sorcerer. The Apostle Peter and his companions said "We ought to obey God rather than men" -- Acts 5:29 -- and these are just a few Scriptural examples. Remember this: If you give the Devil an inch, he will take a mile!

If you are a true shepherd of the Lord who loves his flock, you are going to get angry in the Spirit really quick, and you are going to rebuke that person! You are NOT going to pray fFOR him, you are going to pray AGAINST him! In other words, to balance out all of the previous Scriptures, yes, we are supposed to love our enemies. However, if they don't respond to that love; if they do not respond to the prayers

that you have prayed on their behalf; and if they not only continue to resist God's Spirit, but actually begin to fight against you and undermine the Work the Lord has given you to do; then it is definitely time to change the nature of your requests before the Lord, in my view. As I shared with you in part one, the Book of Proverbs informs us that "Open rebuke is better than secret love" -- Proverbs 27:5.

In some cases, problems can develop within our fellowships which are so severe, that we are advised to simply commit the troublemakers into the Lord's hands. Depending upon the gravity of the situation, God may in turn simply hand over the troublemakers to Satan in order that they might feel his wrath. As sad as this may be, sometimes this is what may be required in order to wake up certain people, or at least to save their soul.

This is precisely what the Apostle Paul had to do regarding certain members of the Church at Corinth. As you may know, ancient Corinth was noted for its carnality, lasciviousness and promiscuity. Sadly, the First Century Christian Church there had to deal with this problem as well. When Paul was informed of a case of incest occurring within the Church, he wrote a stinging rebuke to the Church, in which he wrote the following:

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

1 Corinthians 5:3-5, KJV

As you can see from the previous verses, not only was this sin not done in secret -- Paul says that it was "reported commonly" -- but it also seems that the wayward brethren in Corinth were quite puffed up -- or proud -- about it. Paul was basically telling the leaders in Corinth to just give up on the offender, and to let Satan have his way with him. If Satan destroyed the man's flesh, Paul writes, then so be it.

At least he will stop sinning, and maybe his spirit will be saved. Even two thousand years later today, that is still a very powerful judgment to pass on someone. The main point to consider here, is that sometimes the situation can be so bad, and the individual so backslidden, that there is really nothing more to do other than to commit them -- and their fate -- to the Lord.

If you are interested in learning more about the topics of repentance, forgiveness and Divine Chastisement, I encourage you to read articles such as the following:

Are Personal Tragedies Due to Sin?

Beholding the Evil and the Good

Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?

Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement

The Fruits of Disobedience

What It Means to Repent

You will find links for all of the aforementioned articles at the end of this same series.

Having now shared all of the previous information with you, I would like to relate to you a personal experience of mine which occurred a number of years ago.

Allow me to first mention that I believe that God can speak to us in any way that He deems appropriate. Furthermore, I believe that sometimes the methods He chooses can be rather unorthodox. However, if it gets our attention, and causes us to see what the Lord is trying to show us, then that is what is most important. Some worldly people who don't understand the things of the Spirit will probably view the following incident as being rather absurd. However, for those of you who are sensitive to the Spirit, perhaps you will be able to relate to this unorthodox means of communication.

At the time that I wrote the original version of this series, for a period of several weeks, I had been dealing with some people who were involved in this ministry who simply were not yielding themselves to the Lord. This was not my observation alone. Other brethren took notice as well, and later agreed that I had acted appropriately in dealing with the people who were causing the problem.

For the record, I do not like to confront people. It drains me both physically and spiritually. In fact, I do not like to

become entangled in doctrinal debates either. As I explain in the article "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?", not only is it because debates likewise drain me physically, and spiritually, but it is also because I consider them to be an exercise in futility, as well as contrary to the counsel that we find in the Bible. Please refer to the aforementioned article for more details.

Due to a particularly evil, extremely condemnatory message which I received at that time from one of these unyielded people, I became physically sick with a very upset stomach. I have suffered from digestive problems -- including ulcers -- since I was a young boy; and I learned a long time ago that drinking milk helps to alleviate my stomach problems. So upon reading this one particular message and immediately becoming sick afterwards, I began drinking milk as I always do.

At that time, during one of my short breaks from working on an article, I returned to the kitchen in order to take back the empty cup, along with a few other items. While doing so, I accidentally spilled the small remainder of the milk on the floor. Thinking nothing of it at the time, I cleaned up the mess, finished my business in the kitchen, and then returned to my work with a new glass of milk.

Several hours later, I stopped to take another break, and to once again return the empty cup to the kitchen. To my extreme surprise, I repeated the same exact accident I had performed only a few hours earlier. However, this time it stopped me in my tracks. I just received that sudden witness of the Spirit that the Lord was trying to tell me something. At first, I tried to ignore it, thinking to myself, "Oh well, you can't cry over spilled milk." But then the Voice of the Lord came through loud and clear with the following verse. I mean the verse just popped into my mind:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"

1 Peter 2:2, KJV

All of a sudden I began to understand the message! Twice I had spilled milk on the floor. Milk is symbolic of the Word of God; and twice I had spilled the Word on the floor. What could this possibly mean? Again, the answer came to my mind in the form of the following verse that is found in the Book of Daniel. I received this second verse immediately after

receiving the above verse that is found in the first Epistle of Peter:

"And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered."

Daniel 8:12, KJV

Needless-to-say, after receiving these first two verses, I began to view my two accidents of spilling milk on the floor as no accident at all. God was apparently trying to show me that in some way, I was allowing the truth of His Word to fall -- or to be cast down -- to the ground. After receiving the first two verses, another one entered my mind which left me with no doubt -- and which clearly confirmed -- what the Lord was trying to show me. That verse was the following:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

Matthew 7:6, KJV

This final verse was rather difficult for me to receive. In fact, I was so taken back by it, that I was even thinking to myself, "Lord, this can't possibly be Your voice. The person who is causing this trouble in our fellowship is one of your own children. This person isn't a dog or a reprobate."

Allow me to explain. You see, at the time that these two "accidents" occurred, the writing project which I had been working on was the original version of the four-part series "The Battle is Not Yours Alone!". As I was writing it, I was specifically thinking to myself that perhaps I should send a copy to a certain person who had been trying to stir up some trouble on the now-defunct EDGE Mailing List. However, by way of these two "accidents", it became apparent that God wanted something else to be done. While I still wanted to show mercy to this person, I believe that the Lord was clearly telling me that it was time for me to commit the situation into His Hands, and to let Him deal with it as He saw fit.

Despite the fact that this person had totally rejected my counsel, and had even gone so far as to send me several very damning messages full of hate and extremely harsh criticism, nevertheless, I continued to pray for him. I was hoping that perhaps the aforementioned article might finally get through to him. But as I said, through these two "accidents", I knew

that this was not what God wanted me to do at all. I came to realize that this person's heart was so full of delusion, and such a strong root of bitterness, that nothing would get through to him, other than direct intervention by the Lord Himself. I am reminded of the following verses:

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Hebrews 12:15-17, KJV

Those are very interesting verses, because for one thing, they reveal to us that sometimes, as a result of our own rebellion, hard-heartedness and procrastination, we can wait too long to take hold of the Grace of God in our lives. That is precisely what that word "fail" means in those verses. It is derived from the Koine Greek word "hustereo"; one of the meanings of which is to come late or too tardily. That is what happened to Isaac's son, Esau. By the time he realized his error, it was already too late for him, because the Lord had passed His blessing on to his deceitful brother, Jacob.

But notice what else we are told in those verses. A root of bitterness can be an extremely dangerous thing for the Body of Christ. Why? The phrase "thereby many be defiled" provides us with a very clear answer. If we as shepherds of the Lord's flocks fail to nip a root of bitterness in the bud, just like a virus, it can very quickly spread, and infect other people in our church or fellowship. If that happens, we'll then have an even greater, more serious problem on our hands to deal with.

This relates directly to the account I was sharing a moment ago. Through a bit of foolishness of my own, I unknowingly created a back door which allowed this same person to attack one of the sheep in the small online fold which the Lord had seen fit to give me at that time. This attack by the enemy was totally unanticipated on my part. However, it bore good fruit in several regards. First of all, it allowed this wayward person to fully show his true colors. While I had hoped that the previous few weeks leading up to that point would give him time to seek the Lord and reconsider his

ways, he did the exact opposite. Instead of reaching a state of repentance, he had only hardened his heart further, and had just been waiting for an opportunity to attack the rest of the fold. I gave him that opportunity through an unwise decision on my part.

If there is one important lesson that I hope you learn from this, it is that we must all be very careful that we do not unknowingly create opportunities which will allow the enemy to enter into our midst, and wreak spiritual havoc on our flocks. We must remain alert at all times. As the Apostle Peter admonishes us, we must remain sober and vigilant, as we see by this verse:

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

Thank the Lord that the dear sheep who was the object of this person's attack, was wise enough to see through the sweet talk, and detected the treachery being planned by this person. Not only did this sheep inform me of the situation -- which was obviously the right thing to do -- but he also went on the offensive and dealt with this situation as was appropriate of a true soldier of Jesus Christ. As both the Apostles Paul and Jude write:

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
1 Timothy 6:12, KJV

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
Jude 1:3, KJV

Of course, by taking this stand for the Lord in order to protect the rest of the flock, this sheep also became the target of this other person's wrath. In other words, the unyielded person further revealed his true colors when he launched a mean assault against this wise sheep as well. Thankfully, this sheep had already been alerted to the potential danger. As a result, he had donned his armor of the Spirit in accordance with the advice of the Apostle Paul, and he was able to endure hardness as a good soldier

of Jesus Christ, as we see by the following set of verses:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Ephesians 6:10-12, KJV

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

2 Timothy 2:3, KJV

Of course, in order to wage successful warfare against the enemy of our soul, we must fully understand exactly how he chooses to operate. Thus, we are now going to take a closer look at some of the Devil's primary tactics.

One thing we all need to realize is that when Satan attacks a certain fellowship, he usually doesn't attack everyone at the same time. To do so would make his devious plans too obvious to those in the group who possess some degree of Spiritual Discernment. Remember; this evil serpent was the most subtle creature in all of the Garden of God. He is not going to announce himself when he arrives. He will creep in quietly, just as the false Jewish brethren of old had done. As we read in the Book of Genesis and the Epistle of Jude:

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Genesis 3:1, KJV

"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude 1:4, KJV

Satan's tactic is "divide and conquer". His strategy is to attack one person at a time. He will seek out the weakest person in the group, and then he will proceed to deceive them with his lies and doubts. Once he has infected them with his poison, as we discussed earlier, he will then use

that person to infect other members of the group. Unless it is detected, the poison will slowly spread throughout the entire body, until it becomes spiritually paralyzed and ineffective as a witness for the Lord.

The foolish members of the church or fellowship will become so divided amongst themselves -- fighting and arguing over doctrinal issues, and any other lies which have been spread by the malicious party -- that they will totally neglect joining together in order to fight against the common enemy who started it all. In fact, as amazing as it may seem, as a result of their spiritual blindness -- and lack of Spiritual Discernment -- the people who swallow the lies of the enemy will sometimes choose Satan's human tool to be their new leader. The Book of Proverbs make it very clear that sowing division amongst the brethren is an abomination to the Lord. Consider the following set of verses:

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Proverbs 6:16-19, KJV

As you will recall, I mentioned earlier that God's Word is likened to spiritual milk in the Scriptures. As the Lord was revealing to me the significance of my two milk accidents, He showed me that there also exists a counterfeit milk. It may look just like the real thing to those people who don't possess Spiritual Discernment, but it is in fact a bitter and poisonous brew!

As a good example of this counterfeit milk, let us consider a plant which is quite common in the northeastern portion of the United States of America. This plant has been assigned the scientific name of "Asclepias Syriaca"; but it is more commonly known as milkweed. From what I recall, this plant is the primary diet of the larvae of the Monarch butterfly. When I was a small boy, I enjoyed pulling apart the large tough seed pods of this plant in order to release the seeds which would then be carried aloft by their buoyant silvery filaments.

Commercially speaking, the milkweed plant has a variety of applications. Not only is it used for medicinal purposes,

but the different parts are also used for making thread or cord, and for stuffing pillows. While playing with the seed pods was fun, there was also a bit of danger involved if one wasn't careful. As some of you will know, the milkweed plant contains a thick, sticky, white sap, which is obviously what gives this plant its common name. In its raw state, this sap is very toxic, or poisonous. In fact, my research indicates that while some parts of the milkweed plant are edible, they must first be boiled three or four times in different pots of water in order to remove the toxins. This is Satan's kind of milk!

To give you another example which is even closer to home, consider the fact that snake venom is sometimes referred to as "snake milk". This is because in order to make antidotes for snake bites, a trained specialist must first extract -- or "milk" -- the venom from the poisonous vipers. This is a job which I most certainly would not like to have! How about you?

These two examples show us precisely what Satan's milk is like. His doubts and lies may appear to be the truth. They may appear to be safe to consume like God's spiritual milk. But the end result is only bitter agony and spiritual death. So watch out! His milk is not the true milk of the Word of God which joins us together in one Spirit. If you would like to learn about additional parallels between the snakebite and our common foe -- Satan -- I invite you to read articles such as "Are You Every Whit Clean?" and "Leviathan: An Ancient Dragon of the Sea?". There are links to them at the end of this same series.

The main point I wish to emphasize is that Satan -- through his foolish human emissaries -- wants to destroy the Work of God in all of its various forms; whether it is the unity of your own Christian family, or your church congregation, or your home fellowship, or your online fellowship, or whatever means you use to fellowship with other Christians. The Devil utterly hates to see Christians united together; and so he will use whatever tools are at his disposal in order to try to divide them the one against the other. Do not doubt this for a moment; for if you do, you may very well be his next tool! You must always remember that we are in a great battle with the enemy; and it is now -- and not some time in the future -- when we must remain vigilant, keep our guard up, and fight the good fight of faith!

As I point out in "The Battle is Not Yours Alone!", when Satan does attack, quite often he will attempt to destroy the leadership first. He knows that if he can successfully destroy the leadership, then the flock will be scattered. This is precisely how he operated almost two thousand years ago; and this is how he has continued to operate since then. The Jewish high priest Caiaphas certainly realized this. It was he, after all, who informed the rest of the Sanhedrin that Jesus' life must be placed on the altar, in the hope of avoiding the wrath of Rome, as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death."

John 11:47-53, KJV

In other words, their hope appeared to be that by eliminating Jesus, His followers would eventually disband, and thus not give Rome a reason to have to forcefully put down a rebellion in Israel. The reason why they apparently believed this, is because they had watched as other rebel leaders had risen and fallen over the years, and their followers soon disappeared after them as well. This becomes evident when we consider the wise counsel that the Pharisee Gamaliel offered to the Council of Seventy, when they were considering how to deal with the Apostles and Disciples following Jesus' Ascension to Heaven. In the Book of Acts we read the following:

"Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred,

joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Acts 5:34-39, KJV

Jesus likewise prophesied that His flock -- the Apostles -- would be scattered once He -- their leader -- was taken out of the way that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. Consider what Jesus told His own Disciples just prior to His arrest, judgment and Crucifixion:

"Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

Matthew 26:31, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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EXPOSING THE TACTICS OF THE ENEMY! : PART 3

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : June 24, 1998

Last Updated : March 12, 2023

Our Victory: Jesus Overcomes The World, Destroy Discredit And Replace God's Anointed Leader, Jew's Blindness And Spiritual Slumber, Lies Deceptions And Compromise In Christian Church, Selfish Shepherds Of Ancient Israel, The Devil's Accusations, Power And Money Hungry, Psychological Intimidation, Isolating

Flock From The World, Illicit Sexual Relations With The Fold, Deception, Controlling Flow Of Information, Sensationalistic Mass Media, Cults No Longer Recognized As Cults, Satan Likes To Generalize To Make All Christians Look Bad, Malcontents On Our Mailing List, Preach The Glad Tidings And Not The Devil's Dirty Deeds, The Yabbutts Who Butt Like Goats, Bible Teachers Lifted Up In Their Pride And Ego, Always Consult God's Word, Avoid Contentious Doctrinal Debate, Safety In The Multitude Of Counsellors, Undermining Leadership, Be Slow To Speak, Do Not Rebuke Elders, What To Do When Private Counseling Fails

Continuing our discussion from part two, while on the surface the unbelieving Jewish religionists seemed to be victorious when they convinced the Romans to crucify Jesus, we can thank God that this was only a temporary setback on the part of the Disciples. Once Jesus had been resurrected from the dead, and the Disciples had been filled with the Holy Ghost, that sad situation changed from one of utter despair, to one of total victory. For as Jesus had also prophesied earlier in the Gospel of John:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

If Satan cannot physically destroy the leadership as in the case with Jesus, then he will attempt to discredit the godly Spirit-led leader through public scandal of one form or another. He will tempt the man of God to sin through some weakness of the mind or flesh, and then he will exploit that error to bring disgrace upon that leader. Once God's man is neutralized and out of the way, Satan will then replace him with his own false, worldly, spiritless leader who does not pose a threat to his Kingdom of Darkness. This is the kind of leadership I described in part one which slowly lulls the congregation into spiritual slumber while they fleece the flocks for all they are worth.

This is precisely what has happened to physical Israel for the past two thousand years. As Jesus plainly informs us in the Gospels, and as the Apostle Paul writes in his Epistle to the Romans, the unbelieving Jews have been afflicted with both spiritual blindness, as well as with spiritual slumber, as we see by the following group of verses:

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

Matthew 13:10-16, KJV

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Matthew 15:14, KJV

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! . . . Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

Matthew 23:16, 24, KJV

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

John 9:39-41, KJV

"(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Romans 11:8, 25, KJV

While the nation of Israel has for the most part been lulled to sleep by the spiritless traditions of the elders -- that is, by modern Judaism, a.k.a. Pharisaism, which is based on the Babylonian Talmud -- it is important to point out that a lot of modern Christians have also fallen asleep spiritually. This becomes rather evident by the many deadly and deceitful doctrines, attitudes and practices which have now invaded so many of the churches. This includes ecumenism -- which is a compromise with some non-Christian religions -- materialism, gay and lesbian blessings, gay and lesbian church leaders, secular humanism, evolution, Jewish legalism, etc. Our faith has become both corrupted and compromised in a very serious way, sad to say.

We can all thank the Lord that one of these days, God is going to take His precious lambs out of the foul mouths of the thieves, hirelings and wolves who attempt to devour them with their lies, false doctrines, and other deceptions, and who steal their money from them in every way that they can. I am reminded of the following sobering verse that describes the false, selfish shepherds of ancient Israel:

"Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

Ezekiel 34:10, KJV

I discuss this subject more at length in articles such as "Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon" and "Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!" At any rate, when the Devil does begin to attack God's leadership, one of the accusations he often uses is to claim that the leader or shepherd wields too much power. As the old saying goes, the Devil tends to accuse others of the very same things of which he himself is guilty. We are clearly told in the Scriptures that Lucifer is power-hungry, and desires to occupy the very Throne of God, as we see by the following verses which are found in the Book of Isaiah:

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the

sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Isaiah 14:13-14, KJV

Despite this truth, Satan still has the audacity to accuse God's anointed leaders and shepherds of being hungry for power and money, of keeping their flocks isolated from the rest of the world by means of psychological intimidation, of practicing varying degrees and forms of deception, of having sexual relations with their followers, of manipulating their flocks through the controlled flow of information, and many other such questionable practices.

Now, I will be the first to admit that with certain churches, organizations and cults, some of these lamentable things do in fact occur -- and they will someday be held accountable for their evil deeds -- but let us not be too quick to forget that the sensationalistic mainstream media has a habit of -- and I dare say, fascination with -- making certain that the public learns of these serious missteps by certain leaders, and may even purposely exaggerate the facts, for the sake of financial gain, and an increased readership.

What I find surprising is the fact that some of these cults have now grown so large, powerful, and respectable, that they are no longer even recognized as cults, even though millions of people worldwide worship their leaders as if they are some kind of gods. Can you possibly imagine who I am talking about?

But my point is that just because some churches and cults are guilty of doing these things, does not mean that all churches and Christian organizations are guilty of the same. However, that does not matter to Satan; because one of his tactics is to generalize and paint with a broad brush, in order to try to make all Christians look bad in the eyes of the public.

In years past, when I was still running the now-defunct EDGE Mailing List, I likewise faced this kind of criticism on some occasions, although to a much smaller degree. I recall how a few disgruntled former members of our fellowship accused me of resorting to Hitlerian-style tactics in order to control the flow of information. This criticism was later upgraded, and these malcontents dubbed me a Hitlerian cult master who brainwashed his followers. It was all kind of silly -- not to mention totally unfounded -- because at that time, absolutely no one knew who I was -- I used a nom de plume -- or where I lived, or what I looked like. None of our members ever met me

in person, or ever met each other in person either. We were just a very loosely-knit, Christian-oriented mailing list and online fellowship.

But you see, none of that mattered; because my critics were so deceived in their own minds, that they conjured up this ridiculous image of me sending out powerful hypnotic waves through my modem. According to them, I was in possession of so much spiritual power, that I could brainwash people, and control what they thought and believed, just by sending out email messages alone. It was as if free will and personal choice never entered the picture. In contrast, if you want to see real brainwashing, just turn on your television set, read the daily news, go watch a movie, or do an assortment of other things where propaganda is constantly thrown in our faces.

Now, let's be honest here. There is probably not a Christian church or fellowship on this planet that does not experience problems of one kind or another. After all, we are all human, and life is not just one big, happy family as is portrayed on popular sitcoms. However, when problems do arise in our church or fellowship, we are not supposed to broadcast them to the entire world. Following the Scriptural precedent that we examined earlier in this series, we are supposed to try to resolve the issue directly -- and privately -- with the parties that are involved, if at all possible. It is only when no degree of repentance is expressed that we are to go to the entire Body of Christ for further deliberation.

These troublemakers on our mailing list apparently did not agree with this approach. They felt that I was keeping back information that should have been shared with everyone, no matter what kind of negative effect it may have had on our little flock. As I recall, they also accused me of holding back information which was critical of my person. Obviously, no one likes to be criticized; not even me. However, there was a higher principle which I took into consideration at the time. Consider the following:

Imagine that one bright sunny weekend, you are sitting in your local church all prepared for an inspiring sermon from your priest, minister or pastor -- provided, of course, that you are a member of a church which still imparts the Word of God. To your shock and utter dismay, instead of reading from his prepared sermon, your spiritual elder just pulls out the Sunday morning newspaper, and begins to read the following

headlines to his congregation:

7,000 Killed From Recent Earthquake In Afghanistan;
AIDS Epidemic Spreading Amongst Heterosexual Couples
Man Kills Entire Family During Jealous Fit Of Rage
Two Tons Of Drugs Seized From Offshore Traffickers
Powerful TORNADOS Kill 100's In Midwestern States
More Gun Violence In Southern High School
Abortion Advocates Gain Another Victory
Twenty-Two Die From Heatwave In Texas
Floodwaters Still On The Rise In Minnesota
President Faces Impeachment Due To Sex Scandal
A Tenth State Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage
Researchers Say Cloned Human Dies From Complications
Unemployment Rate Out Of Control As Millions Suffer
U.S. Administration Declares War On Iran
Severe Drought Afflicts The Middle East
Food Shortages In Africa Kill Millions

Obviously, you would be quite surprised to hear your priest, minister or pastor reading such things during the time when he is normally supposed to be uplifting your spirits, and nourishing your souls with the Word of God. This is exactly how I view my online BBB outreach ministry. As a shepherd, I believe that it is my responsibility to give my readers the glad tidings of God's Kingdom -- that is, the Gospel, the Good News, the Word of God -- and not just the sad tidings, which they can easily find in a lot of other places if that is where their interest lies.

That is in fact why I endeavor to publish KJV Bible Verse Lists, new article announcements, Christian poetry, as well as thousands of topical graphics on the Bill's Bible Basics Blog on a regular basis, which I then syndicate to quite a few social networks. I want to spiritually feed my online friends with the Good News, and not just with the bad news.

While I do sometimes share important news articles which may possibly be related to Bible prophecy, and while I likewise sometimes expose false doctrines, dangerous cults, misguided individuals, and ungodly developments and practices in my articles and in my blog posts when they are brought to my attention, that is not all that I share. I strive to share a lot of good, positive things from God's Word as well. In fact, as I have mentioned to my readers before, I would dare say that a major portion of my published articles and series are comprised of Scriptures.

Furthermore, I do not believe that it is God's Will that I share the occasional hateful, nasty messages that I sometimes receive from people who do not like me, or who may disagree with my views, or who do not even believe in the Lord. Let me also add that Christians who go around on the Internet and do nothing but condemn their brethren who do not happen to agree with their doctrinal views, have a serious problem that they need to deal with. The problem is called having an overly critical spirit. We Christians will never see eye-to-eye on every single issue -- at least not in this life -- but it is not our duty to go around chopping up any brother or sister who does not understand things the same exact way as we do. You know who you are.

The following Scriptures that are found in the New Testament advise us to share the glad tidings. That is, the good things that the Lord is doing, and the truth of His Word, and not the evil works of darkness and Satan's negative, critical propaganda:

"And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings."

Luke 1:19, KJV

"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,"

Luke 8:1, KJV

"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,"

Acts 13:32, KJV

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Romans 10:15, KJV

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8, KJV

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it."

1 Peter 3:10-11, KJV

To reiterate, as the ministers and teachers of God's Word, we are not supposed to advertise the Devil's dirty deeds any more than we have to. Believe me; some of the atheists and antichrists who write to me on occasion, don't spare a word. They tell me exactly what they think. I don't feel that my readers need to waste their time reading such nonsense and garbage. After all, if you are like me, you probably receive a lot of email everyday from a variety of sources which you barely have time to read as it is, right?

Having stated the above, let me advise my fellow shepherds that you are perfectly within your right to do as you feel led of the Lord in regards to weeding out false accusations, complaints, subtle lies and whatever else the Devil and his emissaries may use to try to disrupt and divide your own Christian fellowship. Just don't put up with such nonsense. Be a responsible shepherd who cares for and protects his flock.

As I have mentioned before, one group of people who we all need to watch out for, are those who I personally refer to as the "yabbutts". These kinds of troublemakers have a very peculiar habit. As a result, they are very easy to identify within your fellowship. The reason they are called "yabbutts" is because they usually make such statements as these:

"Yeah, I believe in what you are saying . . . but!"

"Yeah, that may be perfectly true . . . but!"

"Yeah, that makes a lot of sense . . . but!"

No matter what you say, these kinds of people never seem to agree with you fully on one single issue, or at least not with very many of them. They are always butting, just like stubborn old goats. The danger with these kinds of people is that while on the surface they may appear to agree with you at first, either knowingly or unknowingly, they are sowing seeds of doubt and confusion amongst your flock who may not know any better, and who may not possess a mature level of

Spiritual Discernment.

Of course, as I point out in my article called "Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word", no teacher is infallible; although certain preachers and teachers would like for you to think that they are. I find this kind of arrogant people on the Internet all the time. They are so lifted up in their pride, and so buoyed by their own ego and their inflated image of themselves, not to mention their assumed knowledge of God's Word, that they expect their audience to believe them, just because they so say. It does not even matter if they never offer a single verse of Scripture to support their views. If they say that it is so, well then it must be true, and they cannot possibly be wrong; can they? At least that is what they would like for people to think. Shameful!

My point is, if you have any doubts whatsoever about what is being taught, then you should personally consult the Word of God in order to determine the truth of the matter to your own personal satisfaction. This applies to my personal writings as well. No one is obligated to agree with me on every single point. However, please keep in mind that there is a very big difference between disagreeing with me, and disagreeing with what is clearly stated in the Bible. So please make certain that you are not disagreeing with the latter, because that would be a truly grievous error on your part.

If, after performing your study, you still honestly feel that a teacher is in some kind of doctrinal error, then you should approach the teacher in a spirit of humility -- and privately -- and study the Word of God together in order to determine where your differences in understanding lie. This should not occur in front of the flock, or in any public arena, because it is important that we strive to present a spirit of unity for the Believers, and not one of conflict and contention.

Please note, however, that as I explain in the article called "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?", I am very much opposed to engaging in any form of doctrinal debate, and I do not believe that the Scriptures support such a practice. Exchanging views in a spirit of humility is one thing, while engaging in what oft times become vicious and mean-spirited doctrinal arguments is something altogether different. Sadly, I see so much of this occurring online. It is a real tragedy; and as I said, I personally avoid such online discussions. Please consider the following group of verses:

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

1 Corinthians 1:11-13, KJV

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

1 Corinthians 3:3-6, KJV

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

2 Timothy 2:23-26, KJV

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain."

Titus 3:9, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

Now, if you still remain unconvinced of what is being taught, then you should observe to see if there are any other people in your fellowship who likewise detect the doctrinal error. The Lord's Spirit is faithful; and He will normally point out things to at least two or three people in order to confirm a thought. This Spirit-led approach is confirmed by verses such as the following:

"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any

iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

Deuteronomy 19:15, KJV

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Proverbs 11:14, KJV

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."

Proverbs 15:22, KJV

"For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Proverbs 24:6, KJV

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

Matthew 18:16, KJV

"This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

2 Corinthians 13:1, KJV

If no other people detect the perceived error, as hard as it may be for you to accept, it may simply be a lack in your own personal understanding, regardless of how convinced you are of what you believe. If you are patient, and hungry for the truth, the Lord will eventually show you what you have misunderstood; for as He tells us in His Word:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Matthew 7:7-11, KJV

While at times you may be tempted to speak out hastily, it is important for you to realize that to singlehandedly challenge a teacher publicly during a Bible study could make you guilty

of undermining leadership before the flock. Not only that, but let us also remember what God's Word teaches us regarding speaking out in haste, and rebuking a spiritual elder. The following group of verses is rather clear:

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."

Proverbs 10:19, KJV

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

Ecclesiastes 5:2, KJV

"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."

Proverbs 29:11, KJV

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Matthew 12:37, KJV

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"

James 1:19, KJV

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;"

1 Timothy 5:1, KJV

What if after this open challenge, it turns out that you are wrong and the teacher is right? While you may be humbled by the experience, your actions may cause irreparable damage by sowing doubts amongst the flock. In other words, from that point forward, the Bible students may no longer fully trust the words of their teacher, regardless of how closely said person may follow the Holy Scriptures. On the other hand, if there are others who have also questioned the doctrine which is being taught, then this is an entirely different matter. After all, the Apostle Paul also wrote the following in the very same chapter:

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

1 Timothy 5:19-20, KJV

If at least two or three people receive a witness of the Spirit that a certain elder is doing or teaching something that is wrong, then Scripturally-speaking, it is proper for them to make it a public matter if private counseling with the elder fails to yield positive results.

Depending upon the results of what follows, you will have to decide whether or not you wish to continue participating in that fellowship or Bible study, or else move on to another one. What if the situation is not resolved according to your satisfaction, and the church elder or teacher is not removed from their position? What if you are still convinced in your heart that you are right and they are wrong? What will you do?

You must be realistic about such matters. In this day and age in which many of the Lord's flocks have been taken over by false shepherds who have been hired by church administrators who possess little Spiritual Discernment, short of a serious sexual scandal, or perhaps some financial improprieties, most administrators will not allow themselves to be bothered with firing a minister or pastor over doctrinal issues which have been brought up by a few members of the congregation. And as tragic as it may be, you also need to remember that sometimes a particular shepherd or preacher is specifically hired due to the fact that he is very good at bringing in the crowds, and filling up the church's coffers. In short, if anyone will be doing any moving, it may very well be you.

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

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EXPOSING THE TACTICS OF THE ENEMY! : PART 4

Copyright 1994 - 2023 Bill's Bible Basics

Published On : June 24, 1998

Last Updated : March 12, 2023

Unintentional Doctrinal Error, Apollos Aquila And Priscilla, Correcting Doctrinal Error In A Spirit Of Humility, Knowledge Puffeth Up But Charity Edifieth, Beware Of The Praise Of Men Wrestling Or Distorting The Scriptures, Spiritual Discernment, Pride And Hypocrisy Of The Scribes And Pharisees, Impossible To Keep The Entire Mosaic Law, Dangerous Websites Which Mix Christianity New Age Beliefs UFOlogy And Oriental Religions, Test The Spirits, Some Of Satan's Different Titles In God's Word, Devilish Deception Spreads Through The World Wide Web, Don't Desire To Be A Teacher, Teaching God's Word Is A Very Serious Responsibility, Turned From The Truth Through Fables False Doctrines And Traditions Of Men, Deceiving And Being Deceived, Wolves In Sheep's Clothing, Ask God For Wisdom And Spiritual Discernment, Renew Your Mind And Put On The Mind Of Christ, Discerning People's Motivations, Attack And Divide, Divide And Conquer, Devil's Tactics Are Nothing New, We Are Not Ignorant Of Satan's Devices, Stop And Pray, The Lord Will Raise Up A Standard Against The Enemy, Suggested Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part three, one thing we all need to realize is that sometimes particular doctrines are taught incorrectly because the individual who is teaching them simply lacks a more complete and clearer understanding of the Scriptures. In other words, there may not be any real malice or evil intention on their part whatsoever. We find one example of this in the Book of Acts where we discover that this was the case with an enthusiastic Disciple by the name of Apollos. It's clear that Apollos obviously loved the Lord, and that he was also a diligent student of God's Word. However, he still lacked understanding in certain doctrinal matters. Thus as the following verses reveal, Aquila and Priscilla instructed him more fully:

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."

Acts 18:24-26, KJV

Please notice that Aquila and Priscilla "took [Apollos] unto

them". In other words, they didn't blast him publicly before his listeners, and thus destroy their confidence in Apollos. Rather, apparently, they took him aside -- and possibly even invited him to their home -- where they could teach him more fully the Gospel of Christ, in a spirit of humility, so that Apollos could become an even more effective witness for the Lord. In thinking about how this Christian couple took him to the side, and then humbly instructed him regarding the full Gospel of Christ, I am reminded of the following verse that is found in Peter's first Epistle:

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

1 Peter 5:5, KJV

In other words, Aquila and Priscilla were not motivated by a foolish, pretentious desire to demonstrate their superior knowledge of God's Word before a crowd, and thus humiliate Apollos. It is so sad today that there are many teachers and preachers -- both online, and in the real world -- who seem to enjoy doing exactly that. They just love the big crowds, and receiving the praises of men, just like the Scribes and the Pharisees of old. Consider the following verses which reveal the danger of desiring the praises of men, and being spiritually corrupted due to possessing too much knowledge:

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Matthew 23:5-12, KJV

"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these

shall receive greater damnation."

Mark 12:38-40, KJV

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

John 12:42-43, KJV

"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Romans 2:29, KJV

". . . we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:1b-2, KJV

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

1 Corinthians 13:2, KJV

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness . . . Therefore let no man glory in men . . . And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

1 Corinthians 3:18-19, 21, 4:6-7, KJV

While the previous situation regarding Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla was an innocuous incident, at the same time, we also need to recognize that another tactic which is sometimes used by the enemy of our souls is to purposely twist -- or distort -- the meaning of certain Scriptures, so that they will seem to support some dangerous, false doctrine. In other words, it is an intentional act that is committed in order to knowingly

and purposely confuse God's sheep and to lead them astray.

The Apostle Peter warns us of this very danger when he writes the following concerning those people who twisted the meaning of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul; although in this case, it appears that it wasn't done out of malevolence, but rather out of ignorance of the Scriptures:

"As also in all his [Paul's] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2 Peter 3:16, KJV

Notice that Peter states that the reason why these people did this, was because they were "unlearned and unstable". Stated another way, they were not firmly grounded in the Scriptures. They were complete novices insofar as understanding the Word of God was concerned. In short, they did not really know what they were talking about. Perhaps because of their pride, they were trying to present themselves as great teachers, when in fact they were no such thing whatsoever.

In discussing Grace versus Law, the Apostle Paul exposed this same sin in the Law-bound Jews who didn't possess an ounce of the true Spirit of God. As a result, they likewise lacked real Spiritual Discernment. If they had possessed discernment, then they would have recognized Christ for who He is, and accepted Him as their Messiah. Furthermore, they would have also been preaching a true religion of Grace and Faith, and not one of Works and keeping the Law.

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul not only exposes the sin of pride which was so rooted in his Jewish brethren -- such as his fellow Pharisees -- but he also reveals the degree of their hypocrisy by informing them that while they preach to and teach others regarding the mandates of the Mosaic Law, at the same time, they turn around and break those very same laws themselves, as we see by the following set of verses:

"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast

the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

Romans 2:17-23, KJV

Of course, as we learn in the Gospels, years earlier, Jesus likewise exposed the hypocrisy of the self-righteous Scribes and the Pharisees who said, but did not, when He stated the following in Matthew chapter twenty-three:

". . . The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

Matthew 23:2-3, KJV

The Apostle James sums up the situation quite well when he writes the following in his Epistle:

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

James 2:10, KJV

So much for trying to establish our own righteousness through keeping the entire Mosaic Law. We simply cannot do it. It is totally impossible, and an exercise in futility. So thank God that we have Jesus who gives us HIS righteousness!

Returning to our discussion regarding wresting, or twisting, the meaning of the Scriptures, as I briefly mentioned in part three, today we find the very same thing happening. While each one of us must believe according to our personal degree of faith, over the years I have encountered some websites which really leave me wondering about the spiritual condition of the webmasters in question. Some of these individuals take a few verses from the Bible -- if any at all -- and then arrive at some very strange conclusions; which in my view, are quite divorced from Scriptural truth. As I note in other articles, quite often, these websites promote a dangerously deceptive mixture of Christian beliefs, New Age psychobabble, UFOlogy and oriental religions.

For anyone who possesses any degree of Spiritual Discernment,

and who has a basic understanding of Christian doctrines, it becomes evident that some of these webmasters don't know what they are talking about. As we saw earlier, they are babes in Christ, and babes in their understanding of God's Word. In spite of this fact, in their pride, they endeavor to convince us that they are mature, responsible teachers, and they try to project a level of spirituality which they truly do not possess; at least not godly spirituality. While they claim to be enlightened -- and so-called "lightworkers" -- the truth of the matter is that they walk in spiritual darkness.

But what is worse is the fact that some of these webmasters become terribly deceived by lying spirits which impersonate so-called "alien beings". I discuss one such individual in the four-part series "Comet Elenin, Hercolubus, Nibiru, and Planet X". Such people need to learn to try -- that is, to test -- the spirits, in order to determine if they are truly of God, or if they really proceed from Satan the deceiver. The Bible informs us that this deceiver is actually a false angel of light, the father of lies, the false god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the accuser of the Saints and the spirit of antichrist. Furthermore, because he convinces people to not believe in Jesus -- which means that they cannot obtain Salvation and Eternal Life -- he is also a murderer as well. Consider the following verses:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

1 John 4:1, KJV

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, KJV

"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 speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

John 8:44, KJV.

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of

them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

Ephesians 2:2, KJV

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 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."

Revelation 12:10, KJV

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

1 John 4:3, KJV

Regardless of whether or not the deception of such misguided webmasters is intentional, the real danger lies in the fact that due to the global nature of the Internet and the World Wide Web, their delusion spreads to other people who visit their websites. If such people are also babes in Christ who don't know how to discern the truth from the lie, they too can become deceived. These New Age teachers remind me of a few other remarks which were written by the Apostle Paul in regards to those people who tried to teach the Law. Consider the following verses:

"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;"

1 Timothy 1:4-8, KJV

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of

the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Hebrews 5:12, KJV

So here again we see examples of individuals who desire to be teachers of God's Word, who are not the least bit qualified to do so. As we saw earlier, such people wrest -- or distort the meaning of -- the Scriptures to their own destruction. In his Epistle, the Apostle James admonishes us that we should not even desire to be teachers, unless the Lord places us into such a position by His own design. Why does James write this? Quite simply because to the teacher belongs the greater condemnation. Please note that in the following verse, the word "masters" is derived from the ancient Koine Greek word "didaskalos". Pronounced did-as'-kal-os, the word is normally translated as our English word "teachers":

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

James 3:1, KJV

In other words, if we preach the truth, all will be well. However, if we are teaching false doctrine, we will be held accountable for every idle word that we speak. This is not something which should be taken lightly by anyone, myself included. This is in fact one of the reasons why I have made it a regular habit to update my articles whenever the Lord reveals something new to me from His Word. I want to strive to always preach the truth to the best of my ability. In the following verses, my understanding is that the word "idle" means a lazy word, because it is spoken without first making a careful examination of the Scriptures, as the Apostle Paul admonishes us to do. Thus we see that teaching the Word of God is indeed a very serious responsibility:

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Matthew 12:36, KJV

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

Romans 14:12-13, KJV

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that

needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

Please notice Paul's warning concerning placing a stumbling block in our brother's way. As I explained earlier in this series, this is precisely what some of these false shepherds and misguided teachers are doing. They are in fact placing a doctrinal stumbling block in the way of their followers and website visitors, which is resulting in some of them falling away from the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is precisely what the crafty Jewish elders of old did when they crept into the Early Church. If you doubt that this is so, then consider carefully the words of the Apostle Paul in the following verse:

"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

Titus 1:14, KJV

While that is a rather short verse, it is nevertheless very powerful; because it fully exposes the intention of the false brethren who infiltrated the First Century Church. Their goal was to "turn from the truth"! Through a variety of tactics, which included Jewish fables, commandments and traditions of men and false doctrines, they insulated people from the truth and freedom that is found in Jesus Christ alone. And what of our current time? Has Satan really changed his tactics? No, not really. Consider the following verses:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

2 Peter 2:1, KJV

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

If there are any Scriptures in the Bible which describe our current time, surely it is the above. As I point out in an

article of the same name, surely we are living in an age of deception, and an age of delusion. Any Christian who cannot see this happening in the world today needs a very serious wake-up call! Perhaps this series will serve as a wake-up call for you personally.

Concerning this subtle infiltration of our modern Christian fellowships, let me again remind you that the enemy does not always creep in through a false minister, priest, pastor or teacher. He can also secretly slip into your midst through one or more "sheep" who are found within your own flock; so beware! Jesus and other writers of the New Testament warned us that these treacherous souls would indeed appear as sheep in our midst; even though they are in fact ravening wolves who just want to spiritually devour the flock of the Lord, as we see by the following verses:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Matthew 7:15, KJV

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

Matthew 10:16, KJV

"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves."

Luke 10:3, KJV

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Acts 20:29, KJV

In order for you to be a faithful shepherd of the Lord's flock -- whether it is in a church, in a home fellowship, on a mailing list, on a message forum, on Facebook or on some other social network, on a blog, or anywhere else -- it is vital that you ask the Lord to give you genuine Spiritual Insight, Spiritual Discernment and Wisdom so that you can detect these wolves. This is one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which is freely available to those who ask for it. Please consider the following verses:

"To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:"

1 Corinthians 12:10, KJV

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:5, KJV

You must learn to see and judge situations with the eyes of the Spirit, according to His Word, and not with your natural reasoning. Otherwise, you are bound to make some serious mistakes which may affect your flock in a negative way. You must learn to put on the mind of Christ through the spiritual transformation and renewing of your own mind, as we see by the following two verses:

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:2, KJV

If you are in tune to God's Spirit, you will be able to tell in a very short amount of time whether a person is asking a question because they are motivated by a sincere desire to learn, or whether they are simply seeking to draw you into a useless debate in order to waste your time. If it is actually the latter, then I encourage you again to consider reading my article entitled "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?".

Some people will also ask questions, not because they really desire an answer, but simply because they are trying to find a reason to judge and criticize you; and in so doing, justify their position in their own eyes. Then there are those wolves and troublemakers who will craft their questions in such a way so as to cast doubt and cause division amongst the Lord's flock. In short, Satan's emissaries may say something one way, while they really mean something entirely different. They may use different tactics to attack you and your flock, but their primary motivation is basically the same: Attack and divide,

divide and conquer, and destroy the Work of the Lord.

The Devil's tactics are nothing new. The Jews of old used these very same tactics against Jesus throughout His earthly ministry. They thought that they were so crafty, but Jesus outsmarted them every time. The Apostle John in particular seemed to have had the Gift of Discernment. He knew how to see behind the words and into the hearts of men. Notice how he phrases the following verses.

"This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."

John 8:6, KJV

"This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

John 12:6, KJV

In conclusion then, if we are in tune with God's Spirit, and knowledgeable of His Word, we will be able to recognize when the enemy attempts to invade our fellowship, wherever it may happen to be. With the Lord's help, rather than being caught off guard, we will easily identify Satan's evil tactics; and we will be able to put a stop to them before they harm the Lord's precious sheep. For as the Apostle Paul wrote in his second Epistle to the Corinthians:

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

2 Corinthians 2:11, KJV

As I point out in "The Battle is Not Yours Alone!", if you do happen to find yourself in the midst of battle, and if you are feeling a bit overwhelmed by the situation, all you have to do is stop and pray, and call upon the Lord for His assistance. If you do, He will gladly send you all of the spiritual help that you could possibly need; for as we are told in His Word:

". . . When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."

Isaiah 59:19, KJV

With that inspiring verse, I am going to bring another series to its conclusion. As a final note, please remember that our

battle is a war of thoughts and words, and it is fought every single day in our very minds and hearts. It is my prayer that this series has opened your eyes to the true nature of our spiritual warfare, and that you will now be able to identify some of our enemy's tactics. May God bless you as you continue to fight the good fight of faith everyday!

It is my hope that you have found this series to be both informative, as well as enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would appreciate if you would take the time to click or tap on the appropriate share link that is found on this page. Thank you so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which contain topics which are related to this series, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server.

Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!
Age of Deception, Age of Delusion
Are Personal Tragedies Due to Sin?
Are You Clean Every Whit?
Beholding the Evil and the Good
Comet Elenin, Hercolubus, Nibiru, and Planet X
Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts
Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?
Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace
Have You Read the New Scriptures Yet?
Heaven's Gate, Suicide and Other Death Cults
Hell, the Lake of Fire and Universalism
Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word
Leviathan: An Ancient Dragon of the Sea?
Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement
Modern False Prophets and Worldly Ecumenism
Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon
Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?
The Battle is Not Yours Alone!
The Fruits of Disobedience
What It Means to Repent

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