

SPIRITUAL WARFARE and THE god OF THIS WORLD 2 Corinthians 4:6

A. His names.

There are several names of Satan given in Scripture. Each one has to do with the his nature and being. He is the Adversary, that old Serpent, the Devil and Satan, Beelzebub the prince of devils, the dragon, and a prince. As "the prince of this world," it refers to the political realm (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). As "the god of this world," it refers to the religious world (2 Corinthians 4:6). He is also called "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). It is with his activity as "the god of this world," that this study is centered.

B. His character.

Satan is spoken of as being more wise than any other living creature Jehovah had made. ". . . Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty" (Ezekiel 28:12). But then we read, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, **thou hast corrupted thy wisdom** by reason of thy brightness: . . ." (Ezekiel 28:17). Satan possessed a superior and supernatural knowledge. The word "serpent" means "to whisper, hiss, fascinate." In the garden being transformed into an angel of light he must have fascinated Eve with his subtility. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtility, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, i.e. by faith, . . . And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:3,14). In his corrupted wisdom he deceives, seduces, uses his craftiness and wiles, to deal subtility with men.

C. The realm of his activity.

As the name "the god of this world" suggests, it is the realm of religion, and deals with the Truth of God against his Lie. From the time of the prophetic pronouncement in Genesis 3:15, "He (Christ) shall bruise his (the serpent's) head," i.e. the head stands as a symbol for all his plans and plots, his policy, and his purposes, Satan has bitterly opposed and sought to hinder the purposes of God. That will come to an end in God's ordained time (Revelation 20). Satan uses opposition and imitation in his work to blind the minds of the unbeliever. There are two kinds of light, one that blinds and ceases to give light, i.e as an arc welder. This light is a flash of light which gives sight for a moment, but also blinds when seen. The true light is the light which gives sight, and continues, and enables the believer to see the truth.

We must first rid our minds that the evening news, the newspapers, and the police records, are not Satan's realm of activity, for he has much greater things to do than that. Satan's activity is not in the realm of crime and immorality, and this is not our warfare. These arise from the heart of human depravity (Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1: Ephesians 2:2). While none of us like to hear of murders, abortions, shootings, rapes, mothers killing their infant children, etc., that is still the result of human depravity. Even this is restrained by God for we have never seen the depths of the entire depravity of man. Man could still be much worse than he is without this restraining hand of God. Preaching against abortion is not the cure, but the cure lies in preaching the gospel. It is the gospel which changes the heart of man and then all that other will cease.

The realm of Satan's activity lies in his opposition to the truth of God against his lie. It is especially in the realm of doctrine that the wiles of the devil are discerned. He changes the doctrine of Christ into the doctrines of devils. Wherever the word "doctrine" in the Bible occurs, and it is changed into the plural "doctrines," it has an evil conotation (Matthew 15:9; 1 Timothy 4:1). Always remember that Biblical perfection is based on

doctrinal accuracy, and there are no wrong doctrines in the KJV. It is the standard by which all other Bibles must be compared. "Any book can have "Holy Bible" printed on the cover, but only one can say "God's Word." (Dusty Rhoades)

"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 6:12). This is supported by the complete armour that believers are to put on. Each piece of the armour has to do with the truth of God. Loins girt about with truth; breastplate of righteousness; feet shod with the gospel of peace; shield of faith; helmet of salvation; sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; and prayer. The primary conflict of Ephesians 6 is largely the working out of the blessed position and truth of the mystery of Ephesians 1. We are not to attempt to gain victory, but to stand in a victory already ours. Ephesians 1:19,20, must proceed Ephesians 6. The believer who understands his position in the body of Christ, or the complete man (Colossians 2:10), must stand against the temptations of the enemy who would have us deny it. The temptation is to revert back to the ordinances of a past dispensation (Colossians 2:16,17), or to the ordinances of man (Colossians 2:20). We have an indissoluble union with Christ in the one Body, and we must believe it.

The first example in the Scripture of the god of this world and his activity on earth is found in Genesis 3:1-6, that we may learn that Satan's activity is in the religious realm and the unbelief of the human heart. This is also the law of first mention, and will be found consistent throughout Scripture. Satan brings into question the Word of God. His first question was to cast doubt on the Word of God. "He said, "Yea, hath God said, . . ." Three things to be noted in Eve's reply. (1) She omits the word "freely" (Genesis 3:2 compared with 2:16) (2) She adds the words "neither shall ye touch it (3:3 with 2:17). (3) Then she makes a certainty into a condition by changing "thou shalt surely die" (2:17), into "lest ye die" (3:3). This first temptation succeeded because the Word of God was misquoted and misrepresented. The fall of man had solely to do with the Word of God, and man's sin was believing Satan's lie instead of Jehovah's truth.

The temptation of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, also began with a similar question. "If thou be the Son of God" (Matthew 4:3). This question came right after God the Father's benediction, ". . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). All here turned on the truth of what Jehovah had said. This temptation was successfully defeated because the Word of God was faithfully repeated by the Lord. **"It is written"** must also be our sure defence. We should know that it is usually immediately after we have heard some truth from God's Word that we are likely going to be tempted to disbelieve it. This is the warfare.

Satan can quote Scripture and garble it by omitting or adding to it. In the temptation of the Lord by Satan, he mis-quotes the Word of God, and adds to it. It was written in God's Word, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:11,12). But when Satan quoted this, he said, ". . . If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:6). In quoting the written Word of God, Satan omits the words "to keep thee in all thy ways," and adds, "at any time." Psalm 91:13 is also omitted because it refers to Satan's own head being crushed (Genesis 3:15). His activity has not changed to this day, for we have all his versions on the market which omit, add to, or change God's Word.

Satan's activity is in this realm because he is a deceiver, a seducer, a liar, and he deals with subtilty and craft, and in so doing casts doubt on the Word of God in the minds of men. Today the true interests of the Word of God and its absolute truth is

treated in the news of the world as nothing more than general literature, and really has no more authority than the newspaper in the minds of men. This is the reason why anything in favor of Divine inspiration and origin of the Word of God, and its spiritual truth, is usually called "controversial." Traditions, craftiness, and deceit all minister to Satan's lie, hide God's truth, and promote his plans. Every believer should thank God for the Holy Spirit of light and truth (Psalm 43:3), and that it is not possible to deceive the elect (Matthew 24:24). True spiritual warfare is standing for the truth of God against the lie of Satan.

The KJV controversy has not to do with what Bible, but with authority. Man does not want an authoritative Bible, and so he will use any Bible except God's Word.

D. Where do we find Satan's primary great activity, and who does he use? (2 Corinthians 11:13,15).

Is not his greatest activity in the pulpits, Bible colleges, the seminaries, and with the so-called higher critics? How many of the colleges and seminaries today are teaching their students the Word of God from God's Word? How many of the pulpits of our land are being used to teach the truth of God's Word? Wherever we see the Word of God called in question, we see the trail of that old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, the deceiver and liar (John 8:44).

These are the men who are being trained to be pastors and teachers, and for the most part are being taught and trained out of a perverted Bible. All these so-called "Bibles" have the mark of Satan on them, i.e. doctrinal corruption, changes, omissions, deceit, etc. "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). These men are preaching another Jesus, not the one Paul preached, another spirit, which they did not receive from Paul, and another gospel, which was not the gospel Paul preached (2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6-9).

In the last epistle Paul wrote he warned Timothy of many things which would occur in the last days. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1). What can be more perilous than men who teach from Satan's Bibles of corrupted wisdom? What can be more perilous than to have the truth hidden from men's hearts? Another warning concerns sound doctrine. "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; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables" (2 Timothy 4:3,4). This is what most want to hear today, and there are many pastors and teachers obliging them. I was told by a brother in our fellowship that he had spoken with a lady from a nearby church and she said her pastor did not want to preach anything which would upset the congregation. This is in opposition to the Word of God, and what Paul exhorted Timothy. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 2:4).

Compare a few passages of Scripture on this same thought; Isaiah 30:10; Jeremiah 5:13; 7:8; 14:13,14; 23:16,21,26,30,36. (These Scriptures also should be noted, Jeremiah 2:11-13; 6:13,14; 9:3-6; 10:21; 23:16-36).

E. The result of Satan's activity through these false teachers.

". . . for **truth is fallen** in the street, . . . Yea, **truth faileth**, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: . . ." (Isaiah 59:14,15). He is saying that the truth has no one to support it, i.e. to uphold it, or stand for it. It is cast upon the ground as

unimportant.

"But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: **truth is perished**, and is cut off from their mouth" (Jeremiah 7:28). This has come to pass in our day and time. Where can one hear the truth anymore? It is not on radio, TV, or in the books being written. Humanistic philosophy, entertainment, morality, church attendance, and feel good religion has supplanted the teaching of the Word of God.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11,12).

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, **if ye can find a man**, if there be any that executeth judgment, **that seeketh the truth**; and I will pardon it" (Jeremiah 5:1).

Concerning those who teach false doctrine Paul states, ". . . men of corrupt minds, and **destitute of the truth**, . . ." (1 Timothy 6:5). "Ever learning, and **never able to come to the knowledge of the truth**" (2 Timothy 3:7). "And they shall **turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be turned into fables" (2 Timothy 4:4).

F. Practical remarks.

First, let me say that I do not believe that a professing believer who uses one of the perverted Bibles can have spiritual warfare. They are already believing Satan's lies (2 Timothy 2:25,26). They may be moral and not do certain things, but in the spiritual realm they cannot have any warfare. "And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand" (Matthew 12:26). All the perverted Bibles are preaching another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4), or the living Word and the written Word are one.

The true spiritual warfare of the believer is in the mind. Are we going to believe what God says, or believe the devil's lie? The life of a believer is one of faith. We believe true doctrine as found in God's Word, or we believe a lie. In practice all acts of the flesh begin in the mind, so if we believe the truth of God, and obey that truth, the act will never occur. We must do exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ did when He was tempted by the devil, i.e. quote the Scriptures, "It is written," or "Thus saith the Lord," because we believe the truth, and it is the truth which keeps us from sinning against God.

"**Yea, hath God said,**" is the temptation which the devil presents to every believer both in doctrine and practice.

(1) Doctrinally, the devil will distort and deny the person of Christ, i.e. rob Him of His Deity in His incarnation, deny the efficacy of His blood redemption, deny salvation by grace alone, justification by faith, sanctification by the Spirit through the Word, and the need for the believer to walk in holiness before God.

(2) Practically, when the Scriptures exhort us to obey a written principle, such as, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). Then temptation arises to speak any form of evil, or speak evil of a fellow believer, the warfare is begun in our mind. Will we go ahead and speak evil (which is what the tempter would have us do because God does not really mean that), or will we obey the Word of God and put the temptation away saying "It is written?" Will we question God's Word, or will we believe it and walk in it? The real warfare is between believing the truth of God, or the devil's lie.

This warfare can be especially true concerning God's promises to us. The lie of Satan is that God is not faithful and will not perform what He has promised.

God's Word exhorts us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but the devil tells us it really doesn't matter who we associate with. God's Word tells us to come out from among them and be ye separate, but the devil tells us it is alright to join ourselves with other religions for they are all the same. The list can go on, but I believe this is what constitutes real spiritual warfare and tells us why we must wear the whole armour of God at all times. Why we must walk in the Spirit and be obedient to God's Word. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and God always causes us to triumph in Christ, yet it is always through the power of the Spirit in faith and obedience to the truth of God.