

THE DEVIL – THE UNHOLY GOD – Part 5

II Corinthians 4:4

“The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

In our previous four studies we covered the following: **The Devil’s Origin, Original State, Downfall, Nature, Names, Domain, The Devil’s Demons and The Devil’s Dangers.** We continue with:

THE DEVIL’S STRATEGIES.

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:10-11 KJV, NKJV) Other translations are:

“so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” (NASB, NIV)

“so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.” (NLT)

“so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way.” (*The Message*)

Which translation is right? They all are. The Greek word “methodeia” (*meth-od-i'-ah*) means: craftiness, cunning devices, arts, trickeries, wiles, stratagems.” The Greek “methodeia” is the word from which we get the English word “method.”

This word “methodeia” occurs in one other place in the N.T. which is Eph. 4:14 – *“we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...”* The word “methodeia” is translated “cunning craftiness” and “deceitful plotting” in this verse.

The devil is not only opposed to God, but he is opposed to everything God is, everything that God has done and is doing. Satan is God's enemy and he is our enemy. We need to be aware of his intentions and inventions.

Victor Hugo said that “A good general must penetrate the brain of his enemy.” Unless we know our enemy and what he intends to do, we will not be successful in thwarting his program. Nothing pleases the Devil more than our ignorance of his person and his purposes. His overall purpose is to overthrow every thing that God has established.

His strategy is one of destruction and control. He wants control. His intention is revealed in Isaiah 14:13-14 as follows: *“For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’”*

God has established 4 institutions upon this earth: The Family, Society, Human Government and the Church. The Devil’s strategy, purpose, scheme, and plans for each can be summed up in 4 statements. His strategy is:

A. To destroy the family through disharmony and infidelity.

1. Disharmony.

We see his strategy at work in the very first family in Genesis chapter 4 – *“Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”* (v.8)

2. Infidelity.

Infidelity is another tool the Devil uses to destroy families. Jesus said, *“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* (Matt. 9:4-6)

What God wants united, the Devil wants divided; what God wants divided, the Devil wants united.

B. To destroy society through envy and debauchery.

God created humankind to be social beings, to live together in harmony. The Devil wants to disrupt the social community of mankind and uses many methods to do so. Among his most successful are envy and debauchery.

1. Envy.

James writes: *“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”* (James 3:14-16)

2. Debauchery.

In Romans chapter 1 Paul writes a description of a previous society that also describes well the society in which we presently live. He writes:

“.....they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters,

inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:21-32)

Satan has, throughout history, tried to cause man to act like an animal. In our own day, we have seen the world flooded with moral filth to a degree inconceivable even 25 years ago. The Devil does not have to do very much to destroy society. He just encourages the sinful tendencies fallen man already possesses in his Adamic nature and society destroys itself!

C. To destroy government through anarchy and the antichrist.

Ever since his downfall, which resulted in his eviction from heaven as his dwelling place, the Devil has been an anti-authoritarian – he rebelled against the ultimate Authority, God, and he hates God’s authority and the authorities that God has established.

1. The Devil’s strategy of anarchy.

God established human government for the benefit of the race of mankind. Romans 13 says, *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”* (Rom. 13:1-7)

God raises up whom He will and deposes whom He will when it comes to kings and kingdoms, rulers and empires, governments and leaders. etc., and the Devil opposes this arrangement with God at the Head of it. He wants the control.

2. The Devil’s strategy of an antichrist.

The Devil’s greatest and ultimate strategy is the Antichrist. The word “antichrist” really captures the wicked, sinister and final goal of the Devil. I John 2:18 says, *“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.”*

He intends to set up his own one-world government with himself at the head of it. Rev. 13:2 says:

“The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” And verses 7 & 8 read: *“And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* That has always been the strategy of the Devil.

No scripture makes the Antichrist’s goal plainer than 2 Thess. 2:1-3. Mark this:

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

The events of the world are swiftly moving toward the day of the fulfillment of that prophecy. The Devil does not thwart God’s will but he disrupts and corrupts wherever and whenever he can. He is the master-mind behind the lust for power, political and economic intrigue, war, etc. Where he is given a foothold he works his devilish schemes. He uses the principle that we have heard many times, “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” (Lord Acton) Therefore, he is involved in overthrowing every God approved and God appointed government by aiding and abetting anarchy, uprisings, unrest and crazed tyrants, etc.

As we study history we can see many tyrants in positions of leadership who oppose God and every thing that God represents. Roman governors, Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, etc. His strategy is to rule the governments of the world and he has his antichrist who will set up his seat of power at the end of the age.

D. To destroy Christianity through apathy and apostasy.

We must be ever vigilant. An apathetic church is fertile ground for the Devil to sow his seeds of doubt and error.

1. Apathy is destructive.

The Devil is happy when a church, like the 3 monkeys, have their hands over their eyes, ears and mouth. They embody the proverbial principle of "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." Such a church is feigning ignorance, out of touch with reality and comfortably apathetic. God’s purpose for the church is to speak truth when it sees and hears evil!

Several times, Paul wrote to Christians to arouse them to vigilance for an apathetic church presents no threat to the Devil’s schemes. That is why he wrote to the Ephesians: *“Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* (Eph. 5:14-16)

And, he wrote to Christians in Rome, *“.....knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”* (Romans 13:11-14)

2. Apostasy is destructive.

Jude writes: *“I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed,*

who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude vs.3-4)

Any student of theology and church history can trace the reoccurring heresies and apostasy down through the centuries. In our day there has been a widespread reoccurrence of many of the old heresies. They appear in the cults, in religions and even in the mainstream of Christianity.

Some of the truths that the devil is always seeking to destroy are:

- The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ;
- The efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ;
- The resurrection of the Lord Jesus;
- The inspiration and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures, etc.

What is our best defense?

Martin Luther’s hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”, contains the answer:

**“A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.**

**And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.”**

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