

## Satan's Strategy - Favor and Respect

November 11, 2018

### Strategies of Satan:

- **Wear Down the Saints** - *the pace of society combined with the never-ending attacks of the enemy, make devotional meditation all but impossible*

*Daniel 7:25 ESV "He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High..."*

*Daniel 12:4 ESV "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."*

*Ephesians 6:12 ESV*

*12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

*Galatians 6:9 ESV*

*9 And let us not grow weary (egkakeō - lose courage, be discouraged, faint, lose heart, to be weary) of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up (eklyō - dissolve, weaken, exhaust, tired out, grow weary).*

*Hebrews 3:14-18 ESV*

*14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.*

*15 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

*16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses?*

*17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?*

*18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient?*

- **Vicious Attacks** - *as with Job, Peter and Judas, Satan attacks at our weakest and most vulnerable places in our heart - he is vicious and without mercy*

*1 Peter 5:8 ESV*

*8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

*Genesis 4:7 NASB*

*7 "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."*

- **Worry and Fear** - *worry and fear cause us to doubt and question God's love and care, resulting in resentment and a hard heart towards God*

*Mark 4:37-38 ESV*

*37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.*

*38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"*

*Philippians 4:6-7 ESV*

*6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

*7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- **Condemnation** - *Satan is a most convincing accuser, that we can never be loved nor our sins ever forgiven*

*Revelation 12:10 ESV*

*10 "...for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."*

*Job 1:9-11 ESV*

*9 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason?"*

*10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.*

*11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."*

*Luke 22:31-34 ESV*

*31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,*

*32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*

*33 Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."*

*34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."*

- **The Acceptance of Sin in the Church** - *when the standard of holiness is lowered, and willful sin is overlooked and accepted among us, Satan has all the access and ground he needs to destroy us from within*

*Jude 1:3-4 NASB*

*3 "I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.*

*4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

*John 16:8 ESV*

*8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:*

*Ephesians 5:3 KJV*

*3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.*

*2 Timothy 2:19-22 ESV*

*19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."*

## Satan's Strategy - Favor and Respect

- One of the most dangerous times in the life of the Christian and the Church is when they are receiving acceptance, favor, respect and praise from the world.
- The seduction of status and approval from the world, especially in contrast to persecution, has proven time and time again in history to be irresistible and destructive.
- The seduction of status and approval obscures the danger and disguises the eternal divide between light and darkness, good and evil.

*Proverbs 7:13-15 ESV*

*13 She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him,*

*14 I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows;*

*15 so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.*

**Luke 6:22-26 ESV**

22 **Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!**

23 **Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.**

24 **But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.**

25 **Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.**

26 **Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.**

**John 2:23-25 ESV**

23 **Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.**

24 **But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people**

25 **and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.**

## Church History

### The "Great Persecution" of Diocletian (*Christians had been persecuted from A.D. 64 under Nero*)

*"Diocletian became Roman emperor in 284. Under him, the empire experienced its cruelest and most systematic persecution of Christians."*

—Christian History Institute

### Constantine, born 280, Roman Emperor 306 - 337, "First Christian Emperor"

*"Historians now debate whether 'the first Christian emperor' was a Christian at all. Some think him an unprincipled power-seeker. What religion he had, many argue, was at best a blend of paganism and Christianity for purely political purposes...He knew nothing of religion without politics or politics without religion."*

—Christianity Today, Christian History, Constantine

*"He gave his sons an orthodox Christian education, and his relationship with his mother was generally happy, but he continued to act as a typical Roman emperor. He ordered the execution of his eldest son, his second wife, and his favorite sister's husband. No one seems to be able to explain fully his reasons."*

—Christianity Today, Christian History, Constantine

*"...Constantine was not aware of any mutual exclusiveness between Christianity and his faith in the Unconquered Sun. The transition from solar monotheism (the most popular form of contemporary paganism) to Christianity was not difficult. In Old Testament prophecy Christ was entitled 'the sun of righteousness.' Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200) speaks of Christ driving his chariot across the sky like the Sun-god. A tomb mosaic recently found at Rome, probably made early in the fourth century, depicts Christ as the Sun-god mounting the heavens with his chariot. Tertullian says that many pagans imagined the Christians worshipped the sun because they met on Sundays and prayed towards the east. Moreover, early in the fourth century there begins in the West the celebration of 25 December, the birthday of the Sun-god at the winter solstice, as the date for the nativity of Christ."*

—The Early Church, Henry Chadwick, Constantine and the Council of Nicaea, p. 126

*"The conversion of Constantine marks a turning point in the history of the Church and in Europe. It meant much more than the end of persecution. The sovereign autocrat was inevitably and immediately involved in the development of the Church, and conversely the Church became more and more implicated in high political decisions."*

—The Early Church, Henry Chadwick, Constantine and the Council of Nicaea, p. 125

*"In 325 the Arian controversy threatened to split the newly united empire. To settle the matter, Constantine called together a council of the bishops at Nicea, a city near the capitol. He ran the meeting himself."*

*"'You are bishops whose jurisdiction is within the church,' he told them. 'But I also am a bishop, ordained by God to oversee those outside the church.'"*

*"Presiding at the council, Constantine was magnificent: arranging elaborate ceremony, dramatic entrances and processions, and splendid services. He was also a gifted mediator, now bringing his skill in public relations to the management of church affairs."*

—Christianity Today, Christian History, Constantine

*"In addition to this apostolic argument for Roman primacy...was the argument that Rome should be honoured because of its position as the capital of the Roman Empire: the church in the prime city ought to be prime among the churches...Curiously, after the newly converted emperor Constantine (died 337) transferred the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330, Rome's civil authority was weakened, but its spiritual authority was strengthened: the title "supreme priest" (pontifex maximus), which had been the prerogative of the emperor, now devolved upon the pope."*

—Britannica Online Encyclopedia

## **The Separation of Church and State**

The phrase "separation of Church and State" is believed to be taken from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson to Danbury Baptist Association in which he wrote, *"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship...I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.'"*

Roger Williams, founder of the first Baptist Church in America, wrote in 1644, *"When they [the Church] have opened a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world, God hath ever broke down the wall itself, removed the Candlestick, etc., and made His Garden a wilderness as it is this day."*

#### **Hebrews 11:13-16 ESV**

13 **These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

14 **For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.**

15 **If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.**

16 **But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.**

#### **Hebrews 11:24-27 ESV**

24 **By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,**

25 **choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.**

26 **He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.**

27 **By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.**

#### **Hebrews 11:36-38 ESV**

36 **Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.**

37 **They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated--**

38 **of whom the world was not worthy--wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.**

#### **Luke 9:57-62 ESV**

57 **As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."**

58 **And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."**

59 **To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."**

60 **And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."**

61 **Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."**

62 **Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."**