

## ] The Wiles of the Devil [

Ephesians 6:10 – 12

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~ Christians have a very real enemy. We have an enemy who seeks to destroy our testimony, our life, our health — and everything else connected to our existential being. This enemy is clever, intelligent, subtly deceptive, overbearingly effective, and spiritually and physically competent. He is a liar, to be sure; but if one does not understand the truth of the Word of God, they will yield to his illusory subtleness and fall every time; because his deception always appears as illumination and enlightenment. And no marvel, even Satan appears as an angel of light, according to Dr. Luke. This is a shopworn section of shamefully abused Scripture that always produces botched doctrine, untenable theology, and myriad meaningless memes when mishandled; and has tragically been reduced to the point of a Christian cliché or a pious profession of pretentiousness. May God have mercy on those who recklessly pervert sound doctrine; and fail to support the furtherance of the Gospel properly, correctly and completely.

Our Spiritual Safari reports through Ephesians thus far have mined extremely difficult truths — and I want to present this report as kindly as possible; however, this will be the most troubling lesson we have had thus far in this epistle. This might be the harshest lesson you have ever read. I suggest you pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment, and then read carefully. We have a literal overload of theological discussion, arguments, and resulting hard feelings; and they permeate the church today. Most of it is due to a disoriented discourse, and confused conversations between believers who do not feel the next person is quite as close to the Lord as they are – or should be. The topics of disagreement range from the doctrine of the Sabbath Day to the rapture to separation to election to tithing; and every possible theological hair-splitting subject in between.

To be clear, our so-called safari is a pre-millennial, pre-tribulation, rapture-professing, dispensationalist teaching. I am utterly closed-minded; and I will go as far as to add that I am bigoted in my understanding of Holy Writ — as

the Holy Spirit has revealed it to me. Simply stated: I believe the whole ball of wax concerning Scripture. Anyone accusing me of “*cherry-picking*” the Bible is an insincere, whole-heartedly ignorant, intentionally lying, hyper-hypocritical — and typically profane-mouthed, person; one who is as confused as a circus clown applying for the job of chief surgeon. They have no chance. They’re audacious; not worthy of thoughtful consideration or respect. I get just a little tired and bored with the person who professes to also be a pre-millennial, pre-tribulation, rapture believing dispensationalist — but whose life is lived in such a careless manner; not commensurate and completely inconsistent with such a high and exalted position. I have no patience whatsoever with them.

We are wonderfully seated in the Heavenlies, but we have to realize we walk down here on earth; and our profession of faith has to walk in shoe-leather on the sidewalks of life. If the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God do not actually mean something in, and change the thinking that dictates our paths, then I don’t care how often you go to church, how many Bible classes you attend, how many conferences you orchestrate, how many missionaries your support, how many orphans you feed, or how many verses you copy and paste — your so called “*Christian life*” is devoid of purpose; mired in meaninglessness. That means Satan has defeated you, my beloved. Now, I have been accused of bitterness, anger, and hatred — because I simply state my position on all of this. Well, I fully understand the errors of contradiction those people struggle with in their minds.

I am, perhaps, somewhat discouraged — as Jeremiah and Elijah certainly were — and, unfortunately, the world has drifted so far from the Word of God that, frankly, I am not sure anyone really cares to learn sound doctrine or embrace absolute truth anymore. It is entirely possible in this contemporary society of chaos that learning in spiritual terms is no longer even possible. Attention spans are literally five seconds and two sentences long, and preconceived notions are now nearly impossible to break and reshape amidst the myriad onslaughts of intentional misinformation and subterfuge in Bible teaching. Satan is not stupid, friends; and his institution of false prophets and otherwise harmful minions of destruction are working tirelessly against the cause of Christ. They are much more formidable than

any evil king, such as Manasseh or Ahab and Jezebel. There's no question about that.

We have more Bible teaching today than at any other time in the history of the world; but we also have a lower plane of living than at any other time in the record of mankind. Some people claim to be Christian in their heads, but they're liberal in their feet. Their lives are a contradiction to their walk. Our entire world-civilization is in grave danger today because we have a head-knowledge of some Bible facts and a pious vocabulary that permits some to eloquently iterate what they believe is a reasonable position; and the resulting misconception is that a self-perceived intelligence is all that is needed to mask a careless and condemnable Christian existence. They will literally *INSIST* on their ignorance. All of what I have said so far is indicative of a misunderstanding of who the enemy really is, what the enemy is all about, where the battle is being fought, and what the end-game of our fight is.

The devil does not work in the strip clubs, brothels, bars, or drug houses today. Satan is not interested in organized crime, or government corruption, because all of those people are *already* doing his bidding. The devil isn't out partying late on Saturday night, friends; no, he goes to bed early; so he can be fresh and alert in Sunday school and in the worship service. The sleepy Christian who is late for church, and yawning all the way through the sermon, is wholly unaware that the devil is poisoning their body — polluting their minds by dimming the lights — lulling them back to sleep — and even snuffing their life out completely in some cases.

Too many Christians are much too concerned with straightening out the world; and they involve themselves in some holy crusade — when what they need to do is shut their mouths and study to be quiet. The same goes for the other extreme who claim to be “*anointed*” and who are incessantly “*prophesying*” sickening sweet sayings over every person they come in contact with. Those same people are *ALWAYS* the lying, gossiping crowd who invariably talk too much. Make no mistake, the devil works in the areas where he is totally unsuspected of being; wherever you least expect Satan to show up — there he will be — you can just write that down. Wherever there is a church or a man who honestly loves God, obeys Christ,

loves the Word of God, and truly loves the Lord Jesus, and is teaching the Bible – Satan will be working overtime to destroy that place.

In the beginning of our safari through Ephesians, I said this epistle is the Book of Joshua of the New Testament; just as Joshua is the Ephesians of the Old Testament. Well, I didn't forget about that statement; and this is where the application comes into play. The Promised Land is never a picture of Heaven in the Bible, and the Jordan River does not speak of our death, either. If you want to sing about standing on Jordan's stormy banks, casting a wistful eye, then you better make sure you have actually seen that disappointing, muddy little stream. When the children of Israel carried the Ark of the Lord across the Jordan River, it spoke of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. For you and me, it represents our crossing over, and out of, the wilderness of this world and into living for Christ in the *here and now*. The child of God should be living in a spiritual Canaan — and that's not Heaven — because when Joshua led the nation Israel over Jordan, there were enemies in the land, battles to be fought, and victories to be won. As Christian soldier's, we now see those same battles arrayed before us.

When Joshua entered the land of Canaan, there were three distinct enemies to be conquered. One, Jericho was directly in the way; and that represents what the world is to the Christian. Joshua was told to march around the city and blow the trumpets, but never to fight. We will *NEVER* overcome the world by fighting it. If we even attempt fighting the world, we are making a huge mistake and setting ourselves up for defeat. Only our faith can overcome the world in victory. The child of God is told to love neither the world nor the things that are in the world; because those things are passing away. That is the only possible way to get the victory over the world. That victory was very easy for Joshua.

But the second enemy Joshua encountered was the little town of Ai. Ai represents the flesh – and Joshua thought this was going to be an easy battle to win; well, the small delegation Joshua sent to fight received a disastrous defeat. Remember, when they returned, vanquished, Joshua fell on his face before the Lord, whimpering and crying; and the Lord said to Joshua, “*get up and stop your whining.*” Israel had sinned, said the Lord to

Joshua. Almost all of us have gotten the victory over the Jericho's of the world by tooting our own horn and bringing down walls, but we have long lost the battle of the flesh. Tempers, gossip, lying, and resentment towards others all result in a bitter defeat of the flesh at Ai!

The third enemy of Joshua was the Gibeonites. They were extremely clever, sly liars and deceivers. They lived on the other side of the hill from where the children of Israel were at this time; but they took moldy bread and wore worn out shoes, and acted as if they had come from the other side of the world just to be Joshua's friend. They flattered Joshua by telling him they had heard all about him, and how God had given him victories, and how they wanted to be a peaceful ally and make a treaty with Israel. Well, that's the deception Satan uses if you get into the Promised Land. The devil appears as an angel of light. The cult leaders and false teachers are always very attractive, extremely personable, and wildly charismatic. They will make you feel as if you are the only person on earth who matters. Most people are looking for the devil to lie to them and fool them – and he does that – but they never even have a clue as to what's really happening – until it's too late.

See, God had told Joshua to kill them all, but Joshua didn't obey God; and if the devil can trick Joshua, my friend, may I say this kindly? – you don't have a snowballs chance in the Sahara desert of understanding the devil's lies. Satan will simply smile and knock on your door one day and say, *".... I have some literature for you to consider."* The devil may say something such as, *".... I know your church has gone liberal but, remember, grandpa had his own pew in that church and grandma's name is engraved on the offering plates. You can't abandon this church."* God says, *"come ye out from among them and be ye separate from them."* The devil counters, *".... come on, you know we need you here."* Joshua made a treaty with the Gibeonites, and they were the ones who brought deep trouble. At Ai, all Joshua had to do was confess his sins and deal with them by putting them away; but by lining up with the Gibeonites, Joshua found a life-long enemy of Israel. They fought with Israel and defeated them many, many times throughout history.

So, with the enemy marked-out and clearly defined, we can focus on them, and we can decide what to do about them. The first thing to understand is that we can never win any battles by ourselves. Joshua's biggest problem regarding the Gibeonites was disobeying the Lord. You and I are no match for the wiles of the devil, friends. We're never told to fight Satan in Scripture. God carries on the warfare. He fights for us. We're told to stand.

There is a demonic world surrounding us today, manifesting itself as I type this report and you read it. Satan has his own church and, trust me, strange things happen in that place. People are being ensnared, and led unwittingly by the devil, and the number one way is by professing to be a believer while denying the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture. That leads to the heartaches, heartbreaks, and tragedies of life that render salvation next to impossible; after a lengthy — sometimes lifelong — denial of Christ by that individual....

***10 Finally, in conclusion, my brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the power of HIS might – not your own power.***

***11 Put on the whole armour of God, so that ye may be able to stand against the stratagems and ruse of the devil.***

***12 For our struggling is not against flesh and blood, but against satanic principalities and demons who have oversight of mankind, against the powers of death by the lower ranks of Satan's army, against the world rulers of the darkness in the nations on this earth, against the spiritual host of evil and wickedness who prevail over religion in Heavenly places! ~***

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**Daniel 10: 11** *And the angel said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13 But the demon prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days:*

*but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days ~*

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