



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

SATAN'S SUBTLE STRATEGIES

Part 2

June 14, 2020

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

We learned last week that there are actual strategies which Satan uses to get people to become aware of his existence. His best strategy is to blind the eyes of the unsaved, so that they can't see the truth. All of his other strategies descend from this one. Satan will do this, not only with people who are aware of him, but also with those who are ignorant of him.

It's mind-boggling to think that there are people who don't believe Satan is real. Who the Devil is, fully unfolds in the **New Testament**, in which the term Satan occurs thirty-six times! Satan is mentioned without the article "the" two times in the **New Testament**. In these instances, Our Lord is not referring to Satan but rather someone under his influence. Wouldn't that make you believe he exists and that he can potentially influence us?

One time is when Our Lord and Savior foretells His death in **MATT 16:23**: *From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."*

The other time is in **JOH 6:66-71**: *As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.*

The **New Testament** reveals that Satan is the ruler over a powerful kingdom of evil which he rules with intelligent consistency. In disproving the charge that he was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul (another of Satan's names), Jesus pointed out its absurdity in **MATT 12:22-27 (The Message Bible)**: *Next a poor demon-afflicted wretch, both blind and deaf, was set down before him. Jesus healed him, gave him his sight and hearing. The people who saw it were impressed—"This has to be the Son of David!" But the Pharisees, when they heard the report, were cynical. "Black magic," they said. "Some devil trick he's pulled from his sleeve." Jesus confronted their slander. "A judge who gives opposite verdicts on the same person cancels himself out; a family that's in a constant squabble disintegrates; if Satan banishes Satan, is there any Satan left? If you're slinging devil mud at me, calling me a devil kicking out devils, doesn't the same mud stick to your own exorcists?*

Satan doesn't operate in isolation but is the head of a well-organized kingdom in which his subjects exercise delegated responsibility under his direction. He is the leader of a vast, compact organization of spirit-beings – "**his angels**." This is taught in **MATT 25:41 (New International Reader's Version)**: *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'You are cursed! Go away from me into the fire that burns forever. It has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Satan skillfully directs an organized host of wicked spirits in the heavenlies who do his bidding: **And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.** (EPH 2:1-2)*

As we learned in last week's Tree, Satan's subtle strategies can be divided into two broad categories: strategies against the unsaved and strategies against the saved. We're continuing to look at the strategies against the unsaved. The first scheme we studied is called Direct Awareness. This strategy involves Satan mixing truth and lies for those people who are likely to follow him and then come to believe that he is more powerful than he actually is. These individuals are actually blind (do not realize) as to who he fully is, or the limits of his power.

The second scheme that Satan uses is Indirect Awareness. Some people, who practice rituals which are associated with the occult or the supernatural, may not even recognize a supreme evil being. They don't really believe Satan exists. The strategy here is to lead people astray into thinking they are tapping into some sort of natural power source. These people then think they can use this power to accomplish what they want. An example of this is those involved in New Age practices. These people are blinded to the true origin of what they are doing and its source of power - Satan. Sadly, they are also blinded to the ultimate destiny of those practicing such things. This is why

such things as the New Age Movement, occult-related materials, and practices like using a Ouija Board, Tarot cards, seances, fortune telling, palm reading, etc. are so dangerous. Look at what Paul says about them: **For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (ROM 1: 25)** The creature in this verse refers to created things like the sun, moon, animals, etc. What is even more horrific is that these people are also ignoring the fact that God The Father created the very things they are so foolishly worshipping!

Fantasy games such as Dungeons and Dragons (and all the games like it) are dangerous, too. At a minimum, playing these games waste time and can distort your thinking so that you accept these ideas from the occult, as just a game. At worst, they open the door to practices of the occult because those who play these games end up seeking the power glorified in the game. This is a very serious thing to think about for teenagers.

Satan's third scheme – which he uses against the unsaved – is False Religions. The greatest device by which Satan blinds people to the truth is to get them involved in false religions and false religious practices. His strategy is to exchange Our True God for a false god or gods. Islam, Hinduism and all its various practices, the New Age Movement and the so called “ancient religions” of paganism – to name a few – all end up worshipping the devil and demons, thinking them to be gods. The cults, including Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Christian Science, and those mixing pop psychology and spirituality with the Bible, etc., all exchange The True Heavenly God for something somewhat resembling Him, but still completely false.

Satan also makes use of mixing various religious ideas and philosophies. He also uses famous people to do his handiwork. An example of this is the various spiritists pushed by television's Oprah Winfrey. One such spiritist is Wayne Dyer, an American self-help author and a motivational speaker. To give you an idea of what Satan is using to keep people away from Christianity, here is a quote by Wayne Dyer: “Remember, we are not our country, our race, or religion. We are eternal spirits. Seeing ourselves as spiritual beings without label is a way to transform the world and reach a sacred place for all of humanity.” Can you see how hard Satan is working and how important it is to remain strong in your faith???

Another Satanic push Oprah made on her tv show was touting “The Secret.” This best-selling 2006 self-help book by Rhonda Byrne is based on the earlier film of the same name. It's based on the belief of the law of attraction, which claims that thoughts can change a person's life directly. To give you an idea of how much influence Oprah has – the book has sold 30 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 50 languages.

The apostle Paul writes about people like these self-help gurus who are, in actuality, peddling Satan's philosophies in **ROM 1:18-23 (New International Reader's Version): God shows his anger from heaven. It is against all the godless and evil things people do. They are so evil that they say no to the truth. The truth about God is plain to them. God has made it plain. Ever since the world was created it has been possible to see the qualities of God that are not seen. I'm talking about his eternal power and**

about the fact that he is God. Those things can be seen in what he has made. So people have no excuse for what they do. They knew God. But they didn't honor him as God. They didn't thank him. Their thinking became worthless. Their foolish hearts became dark. They claimed to be wise. But they made fools of themselves. They would rather have statues of gods than the glorious God who lives forever. Their statues of gods are made to look like people, birds, animals and reptiles.

The Bible is a self-help book given to us by God! Why would we need a mere mortal to give us advice?

{to be continued}