

Withstanding the Devil's Wiles

Written by David Wise

Wednesday, 10 June 2020 06:47 -

Beloved, during this uncertain and chaotic time, it is vitally important for you to “put on the whole armor of God” and especially the “helmet of salvation” to withstand against the “wiles of the devil” (see Eph. 6:10-18). Satan is a deceiver, the father of lies, subtil, and wily. Satan cannot pluck any of God’s children out of the eternal hand of the Father, but he is out to corrupt the minds of God’s children. That is why we must put on the whole armor of God and our helmet of salvation to protect our minds. Our helmet of salvation protects our brain, or figuratively, our mind. Our mind should be filled with the salvation of Jesus Christ and our eternal security by his sovereign grace and that will protect our mind from the wiles of the devil. It is vitally for us to be properly adorned with the armor of God to withstand the onslaught of the devil against the Lord’s people.

Our adversary, Satan, is a deceiver; he is the father of lies; going back to the garden of Eden, he is very subtil and crafty and deceptive in his tactics. We do not need to be *“ignorant of his devices”* (2 Cor.

2:11) but to be aware of his deceit and

“be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”

(1 Pet. 5:8). Satan is “as a roaring lion”; he is not a lion; just as in all things, the devil is just a great counterfeiter. Jesus is a true Lion, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”. Satan tries to pretend to be the counterfeit God, the counterfeit lion. It’s always important to remember that while Satan does have authority in this world, and we need to respect and be aware of him, his authority is not stronger than God and even Satan is still subject to the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It’s still very important for us to not overlook or dismiss the danger that Satan poses to God’s children in this world.

A lion will conceal himself in the brush to sneak up on their prey to where their target does not see him coming. Then, he pounces and devours his prey because he snuck up on them unawares, and they never saw him coming. We need to understand the reality that Satan is attempting to sneak up and devour God’s people in this world, and he uses very deceptive tactics to entrap his prey. That’s why we need to “be sober, be vigilant”, be aware, looking around, and not be naïve, deceived, or unaware but to see Satan coming and to resist him. Satan is “wily”. As a young child, you might have laughed at Wile E. Coyote’s futile attempts to

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catch the Roadrunner. Wile E. Coyote was always lying in wait to deceive, he was trying to be “wily”, but his attempts were always foiled by the vigilance and smarts of the Roadrunner. It’s good to know that just like Wile E. Coyote, Satan is always a defeated foe. Jesus Christ has crushed the head of the serpent, and the devil knows he has but a short time. We still need to be very aware of the danger Satan can pose to God’s people.

It’s a reality that Satan is trying to attack God’s children. As elect children of God, we have a target placed on our back solely because the Lord loves us. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

(Eph. 6:12) The word “wiles” here can also be translated as “schemes”; it means “cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery”. This word is used only twice in scripture, along with the other occurrence in Eph. 4:14 where it is translated “lie in wait” to deceive. This corresponding verse shows one way how Satan deceives and sneaks up on his prey in this world, by false doctrine –

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

There are many false teachers, truly wolves in sheep’s clothing sent from Satan, who lie in wait to deceive God’s little sheep. That is why we have to be sober, be vigilant, and always be aware and watching to test doctrine by the word of God and not be deceived.

Satan cannot pluck any of God’s children out of the eternal hand of the Father, but he is out to corrupt the minds of the Lord’s little children. Satan cannot fully corrupt the heart of God’s children or take away the efficacy of the new birth. He cannot change the Spirit-quickened heart, but he can blind, deceive, and corrupt the mind of God’s children if we are not careful. *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

(2 Cor. 4:4-5) The lost in this verse are not hell-bound sinners. They are “lost sheep” (see Luke 15:3-7 for the Shepherd’s seeking and restoration of just one lost sheep). These are God’s sheep that were not vigilant and have been deceived and their minds have been blinded by Satan. What is the remedy for the blindness of these lost sheep? The glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. We preach the gospel to God’s lost and blinded little sheep to give them light to cure their blindness by trusting in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation.

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It's an unfortunate reality that God's little sheep can be deceived by Satan in this world, especially blinded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. To be honest, sheep are kind of dumb; naïve, easily led astray; that's why they need the close protection of the Shepherd. Sheep are very susceptible to lions and other predators, especially when they are lost, alone, by themselves. There is safety for sheep in the midst of a flock, in the fellowship and safety of the church. However, when the sheep gets lost alone by itself, not in the safety of the flock, away from the protection of the Shepherd, that lost sheep is in great peril to predators like lions. That is why it's so important for us to seek out those lost sheep. Again, go read Luke 15 for God's seeking of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son to bring God's wayward children back to repentance. Satan is out to blind our minds, and that is why we must put on our helmet of salvation to protect our minds.

It's very important to be reminded who our real enemy is in this world... it's Satan, the devil, and his influence of wickedness in positions of power in this world. *"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."*

(Eph. 6:12) It's very possible there is some individual man or collective group of rich and powerful people who are influencing the wickedness and chaos of this world around us. There is no shortage of theories on the influence of Bill Gates, George Soros, the Obama's, the Clinton's or multitudes of other rich and powerful people in this world; that there is some global Illuminati or Kabal that is behind the curtain pulling the strings for all this disease, rioting, wars, economics, etc, etc. That is not totally unfounded, and I personally think there probably is some of that going on; how much? ... I don't have any real way of knowing (and you don't either). It's been clearly documented in every time of human history that wicked men have always tried to gain influence and power and riches to control and oftentimes oppress other people.

Therefore, is the solution to discover this sinister shadow plot and expose them and take them down? Now understand, if there are people out there that are breaking the law, their crimes should come to light, and they should be charged and hopefully convicted accordingly. If we actually do "take down Gates and Soros" or "take down the Illuminati", is that going to solve this world's problems and create a peaceful environment where everyone acts right? No, of course not. As the old saying goes, nature abhors a vacuum. You know what would happen if you

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removed the current influencers and shadow government from power and threw them all in jail? ... there would be more people just like them who would try to do the same thing. More wicked people with evil, sinister motives will fill the vacuum and try to do the same things again. History has proven this to be true. There is no new thing under the sun. The names, faces, and places change but wicked men's desire to gain power, influence, fame, and riches has never been quenched... and it never will be.

Therefore, we have to rightly identify our enemy. Satan has created "institutions of wickedness" in this world – *"principalities, powers, the rulers of darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places"* . The people who occupy these institutions of wickedness might change over the years and centuries, but the wicked structure of Satan to deceive and persecute God's people has never changed. Our struggle is not ultimately against Bill Gates or George Soros who are supposed to fund much of this anarchy and rebellion; our struggle is against the power behind the rulers of the darkness of this world... which is ultimately Satan. Our struggle, our "wrestling" (literally a reference to "wrestling" in the Olympic games; hand to hand combat) is not ultimately with the men doing wickedness; our struggle is not against "flesh and blood" men; ultimately, our struggle is against Satan who is behind the wicked devices of these men.

To combat against Satan and his institutional wickedness, we have to take up and put on the whole armor of God. This armor from God fully equips us to withstand the onslaught of Satan, not from our own might but because our strength and power is in the Lord (Eph. 6:10). *"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"* (2 Cor. 10:4) The weapons of our warfare are mighty, but they are only mighty "through God". Our God-given weapons and armor give us might to pull down strong holds in our lives and in this world.

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In Ephesians 6, we are given the 7 pieces of the Christian's armor of God: 1) the girdle of truth, 2) the breastplate of righteousness, 3) boots of the gospel of peace, 4) the shield of faith, 5) the helmet of salvation, 6) the sword of the Spirit, and 7) the mind of prayer. We need to gird up our loins by putting on the belt of truth. The truth of God's word will protect us from those who lie in wait to deceive us by false doctrine. We need to cover our hearts with the breastplate of righteousness, trusting solely in the imputed righteousness of Christ for our justification before God. We need to have our feet prepared with the gospel of peace, with the path our feet take, our walk, reflecting the gospel of unconditional sovereign grace. Above all, we take up the shield of faith because without faith it is impossible to please God. It's by wielding this shield of faith that we can quench (or extinguish) all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Let's focus specifically on the helmet of salvation for a moment. In Isaiah 59:16-17, we see Jesus taking up both the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation. Those are both his pieces of armor, but they have now both been freely imparted unto us by his grace. Our helmet of salvation protects our brain, or figuratively our mind. Our mind should be filled with the salvation of Jesus Christ and our eternal security by his sovereign grace and that will protect our mind from the wiles of the devil. During this unprecedented time, it is vitally important that we protect our minds from the corruption and deceit of Satan. Don't let your mind be influenced by every article, post, or brief interaction you have with others during this sensitive time. Kindred, your enemy is not the person who presented an opposing opinion of yours on social media or in person. Our true enemy is Satan who is attempting to corrupt our minds by creating division and strife, even among the body of Christ. We must protect our minds with the helmet of salvation and make a commitment to mediate continually upon the word of God (Ps. 1:2). We need to think upon things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise-worthy (Phil. 4:8). We have to make a concentrated effort to *"bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:5). It's so easy to let our minds wander and the next thing we know we are thinking about something vain, or worse, something sinful. We must put on this helmet of salvation and control our mind to think on things that are honoring to our Lord.

Don't allow your mind to be corrupted and blinded by the devil. Protect your mind with the helmet of Jesus' successful salvation; test everything by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The sword of the Spirit is given to us as an offensive weapon against Satan. Following Jesus' example when he was tempted in Matt. 4:1-11, we attack the devil offensively

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with the word of God. We resist the devil by attacking him offensively with the word of God, and he will flee from us – *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7b) We undergird all our armor with the mind of prayer, displaying our dependence upon the captain of our salvation for success against the devil in our fight of faith. Cover your head and mind with the helmet of salvation, test everything by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, be diligent in prayer, resist the devil’s temptation for strife and division, and promote unity and love among the Lord’s people.