

Christian Conflict

Ephesians 6:10-12 [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

This involves every Christian.

Satan is a master strategist, he varies his attacks on all human beings as skilfully as an experienced general.

By two major radically opposite things Satan seeks to destroy us, by our sins but also by our virtues.

Satan tempts us to sin –

This may be called his conventional device.

James 1:13-15 [NIV] *“When tempted, no-one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”*

Satan uses this built-in proclivity to rebel that is based on human pride, every human being likes to feel independent.

Genesis 3:1-4 [NIV] *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden”?’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’ ‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman.”*

Satan used this tactic against Eve and Adam and it worked.

The same strategy has been used ever since and has continued to be successful.

1 Timothy 6:9 [NIV] *“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.”*

The pride of many possessions and pleasures has been the downfall of many people, their quest for riches has led to immoral actions.

The very disbelief of even the existence of Satan in recent generations has not helped the resistance of his attacks on humanity.

Without really being aware of Satan’s tactics people are, in ignorance, on the side of Satan.

However, Satan’s most cunning stratagem is to use our virtues against us, and this he does with astonishing success.

A parallel to Satan’s technique may be seen in the activities of certain subversive political groups who use government constitutions as a shield while they work to destroy the same constitutions.

By pleading for the right of free speech they use it to seek to destroy all freedom of speech.

By talking piously of government by law they push their country towards a position where the laws will come to mean what the ruling clique want them to mean and we then slide into a dictatorship.

Lying to the public is a major part of this strategy so we can conclude that the spirit behind this is Satan who is the *“father of lies.”* [John 8:42-44]

To overcome a city or an organisation the enemy must first destroy its resistance.

The same applies to a Christian fellowship at any given time or place.

The Christian Church will never fall as long as she resists Satan who seeks to destroy her.

James 4:7 [NIV] *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

Submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in His strength we can resist the devil.

1 Peter 5:8-9 [NIV] *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”*

As long as faithful watchmen rouse the members of the church to action against Satan he knows he is in a losing situation.

Revelation 3:14-20 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

Here is described a church fellowship who is wide open to Satan’s attack because a lukewarm attitude to their weak spiritual situation.

Worldliness, sinful pleasures and personal ungodliness have been the cause of a church fellowship surrender to Satan our enemy.

Revelation 2:18-20 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.”*

Being tolerant of false teaching is also a weakness that lays a church fellowship open to Satan’s attack.

A successful attack to paralyse the resistance of a church fellowship is to misuse the virtue of love.

First, Satan created a maudlin and wholly inaccurate concept of Jesus Christ as soft, smiling and tolerant.

The scripture used is found in Isaiah, a true description of Jesus Christ but applied in a wrong context.

Isaiah 53:7 [NIV] *“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”*

This is used to suggest we go and do the same, **not** resist all who wish to afflict us and destroy us as a Christian fellowship.

Satan is very well versed with the scriptures in the Christian Bible and will misuse them against us as he did in his conflict with Jesus Christ. [**Luke 4:1-13**]

Other examples of misuse of scriptures are listed below, each telling us that we “must not practice negative thinking.”

“He that is not against me is for me.” [**Matthew 12:30**] **Please read correct wording.**

“Judge not.” [**Matthew 7:1**] How can you be a Christian and pass adverse judgement on any religious talk or activity, for controversy divides the Church?

“God is love.” [**1 John 4:8, 16**] So love everyone, however evil they may be and however they may be showing contempt for the sovereignty of God and blaspheming His Holy Name!

It seems that too often the shepherd becomes afraid to use his sword or club and the wolf gets the sheep. [**John 10:11-13**] The sword we have is correct use of God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

When a person declares the unique Lordship of Jesus Christ and the absolute necessity of obedience to Him, such a person is branded as a hate monger and divider of people.

Satan has brainwashed large numbers of religious leaders so successfully that they are now too timid to resist him and his ministry. [**2 Corinthians 11:14-15**]

The Christian Bible is a book of controversy.

The Old Testament prophets were men of contention.

Jesus Christ, while on earth as the Son of Man, was in deadly conflict with Satan and the religious leaders he had influenced.

The apostles and reformers down through previous generations were men of controversy.

They all fought the devil to the death and kept the torch of truth burning for all succeeding generations.

Revelation 12:9-11 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.’”*

This is how we can counter the influence of Satan, preach the Good News of what God has done through Jesus Christ and be a living example of what a disciple of Jesus Christ can become.