

God of This World

by Steve Magill

God owns the earth, but the Devil is given authority over the earth to exert his will.

No one should be surprised by this statement. Jesus admitted that His kingdom was some place not on this earth and that this earth is under the authority of someone else when He answered Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”¹ The Apostle Paul also confirms the Devil’s authority when he wrote to the Corinthians: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world has 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

The Devil’s purpose on earth is to deceive³ everyone he can to depart from trusting in God and to instead trust in everything that is in the world. He is continually prowling to and fro in the earth looking for those he can destroy.⁴ He is our true enemy,⁵ not the people and situations that rise up against us.⁶

How does the Devil tempt us, seeking to move us from God’s eternal inheritance?

The Devil uses the whole world against us: “The whole world lies in wickedness.”⁷ Because we live in righteousness and not wickedness, the world hates us and comes against us. John 15:18 and 19 confirms this sentiment: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

The world and everything in it is identified to be everything that appeals to our body, everything that can be seen with our eyes, and everything that gives us a sense of pride, self-importance, conceit, or arrogance about our life.⁸ It is all that is within the world that we are to separate our affections from. If we don’t, then the love of God is not in us since we cannot love

¹ John 18:36

² 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4

³ 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4; Revelation 12:9

⁴ 1 Peter 5:8

⁵ 1 Peter 5:8

⁶ Ephesians 6:11,12

⁷ 1 John 5:19

⁸ 1 John 2:16

both the things of the world and the things of God.⁹ This is a great battle we are in, especially since “the whole world lies in wickedness.”¹⁰ Yet it is a battle we must fight.

It is a battle between the things of this world and the things of God. To not be overcome by the world, we must keep our focus on the things above where Christ and our real home are: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”¹¹ We are to live as pilgrims and strangers who live temperately with the world until we reach our home.¹² Truly, this world is not our home. We are to relate to the things of this world in a disciplined, temperate way, using what is in the world to maintain our existence without abusing what the world offers.¹³

As our enemy, the Devil is a sly old fox who uses every ploy he can throw at us. He will use the dark and dastardly, the good and pleasant, as well as the Christian and non Christian things to snag us into his web. It was not the dark, evil, or distasteful that caused the entire world to be corrupted with sin. Eve was deceived with what was “good for food,” “pleasant to the eyes,” and with what would “make her wise.”¹⁴ This is all that is in the world as described by the Apostle John: the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Whether it is the dark and dastardly or the good and pleasant, the Devil doesn’t tempt us with what does not appeal to us, but with what does appeal. For someone who claims the name of Christ, this might be the works and practices that a Christian is involved in. Jesus and the Apostle Paul warned that apostasy would become so great that the majority claiming the name of Christ will not belong to Christ.¹⁵ They will be Christians without the Holy Spirit, which means they are not Christian at all. As we read in Revelation chapters two and three, good Christian works, correct doctrine, martyrdom, and so on does not make us Christian. What makes us Christian is the Holy Spirit within us.¹⁶ Apostasy is a departure from the Holy Spirit, not always a departure from good works or correct doctrine.

⁹ 1 John 2:15; Matthew 6:24

¹⁰ 1 John 5:19

¹¹ Colossians 3:1-3

¹² 1 Peter 2:11-17

¹³ 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

¹⁴ Genesis 3:6

¹⁵ Matthew 25:1-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:5; Revelation 2 & 3

¹⁶ Romans 8:9

All that is within the world is the nature of the Devil. After he was given authority over the earth, he began creating a world after his own nature. This nature is outlined for us in Ezekiel 28:12-19 (underline added)¹⁷:

“Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you was created. You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so: you was upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You was perfect in your ways from the day that you was created, till iniquity was found in you. By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you. You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of you, it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold you. All they that know you among the people shall be astonished at you: you shall be a terror, and never shall you be any more.”

To outline the Devil’s focus when he was in heaven and which he is now creating on earth, we find he was *full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, loved possessions, and loved to do business deceptively*. This nature and focus of the Devil is without question the world’s focus. Knowledge, wisdom, beauty, and possessions are placed on high pedestals in this life.

As the god of this world, the Devil has authority to use knowledge, wisdom, beauty, possessions, and our business activity to tempt us to move from security in God to find security in what can be seen and accomplished by man. Because of this battle, God refers to the business people and bankers as *sorcerers*.¹⁸ When I first realized that sorcerers and business people were placed in the same boat, paddling the same oars, I was puzzled since my concept

¹⁷ We know this king Tyrus is referring to the Devil because of its description which refers to “the anointed cherub” and not an actual king on earth.

¹⁸ Revelation 18:23

of a sorcerer was of a man with a long beard standing in the center of a circle in a dimly lit room invoking demons with arcane incantations. But when I realized the Devil's nature was broader than what we've been conditioned to believe, and had to do with taking our focus off God and placing it upon those things belonging to the world, it all made sense. The goal of the business world is to entice us to buy their products with claims that our health, wealth, and happiness can be found in their product. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, they are redirecting our faith from God to trust in the world and ourselves. In this way, the entire world is being conditioned to align with the Devil's agenda.

The focus the Devil establishes on earth was the cause of his fall in heaven. Ezekiel tells us his fall came 1) because his many possessions filled him with violence and sin.¹⁹ 2) His heart was filled with great pride because of his beauty.²⁰ 3) His wisdom was corrupted because he took great pride in his intellect,²¹ and 4) his dwelling places were ruined because of his deceptive business practices.²² The Devil's goal is to tempt you to follow his path.

The Devil has created a world system that makes it easy for you to depart God's plan for health, wealth, and happiness for his own plan. Lucifer loved the things he possessed in heaven, had great greed, and would sin to gain more until his pride grew so great that he thought he could actually take God's place and have it all.²³ This is the kind of world the Devil seeks to create on earth. This is the great battle of the ages: to trust in God or to trust the things that are in the world. What do you trust? Is it paychecks, people, and pleasure? The ultimate test of our faith will come when the Antichrist mandates the entire world to accept his cashless, economic system or face losing it all, going to prison, or facing death.

Matthew 6:19-34 is a good passage to read until it sinks in deep and becomes an engrafted part of your life. It speaks of this great battle and encourages us not to worry about even the essentials for living: food in the cupboard, drink on the table, clothes on our back. If there were any earthly thing that should worry us, it would be these, right? Wrong! This passage helps us to understand that there is absolutely nothing in this life—not even the essentials—that should keep us from God's peace, no matter how uncertain our situation becomes.

The Devil's world, the one we live in now, works hard to deceive and tell us that we should focus on and depend on the things of earth, but God speaks differently. As the world encourages us to focus on working to eliminate poverty, to end all war, to achieve global peace, to eliminate every disease, to stop ethnic injustices, and to find harmony among religions, Jesus

¹⁹ Ezekiel 28:16

²⁰ Ezekiel 28:17a

²¹ Ezekiel 28:17b

²² Ezekiel 28:18

²³ Isaiah 14:12-14

is clear in Matthew 24 that these will never be done away with and will continually increase until His return. We live at a time when there are more organizations and people seeking to overcome these ills than at any other time in history, yet the result has not been their decrease, but continual increase.

This is just another ploy of the Devil to divert you from trusting in God by getting you to focus on great and noble humanitarian causes. Don't take me wrong; we are to take care of one another and are encouraged to do so, but to put forth great amounts of energy to eradicate or stop any of these is absolutely fruitless, just another diversion from the things belonging to God. My goal is to take care of those I see eyeball to eyeball and hang out elbow to elbow with. Who do you trust? When the paychecks stop coming in, where is your peace, your faith? When the day comes when you are asked to turn from Christ to feed yourself and children, who will you trust?

Soon the age of the Antichrist will be here. These days will be filled with great pressure so that even the strongest of Christians will be tempted to depart their faith by trusting what the world offers.²⁴ These days will be so without faith that Jesus asks the question in Luke 18:8: "Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?" Reread Luke 18:1-8 to discover for yourself what Jesus considers to be the key element of faith. Then ask yourself, based upon Jesus' definition of faith, "Do I truly have faith?" If you do not easily find this key, go to Appendix D and read, "The Key to Faith."

Distribution Centers

In order to spread his message about possessions, beauty, and wisdom, the Devil needs distribution centers to pour out his nature upon the earth. This is one of the purposes of nations. The main empires raised up for this purpose are found in the prophetic timeline. This system the Devil has created for our world is called "Mystery Babylon."²⁵

In Revelation 17, Mystery Babylon is described as a woman sitting "upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."²⁶ The beast with seven heads and ten horns are the nations and kings of the earth through whom she distributes her "abominations and fornications."²⁷ These originate from within her and is why she is called "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."²⁸

²⁴ Matthew 24:24

²⁵ Revelation 17:3-5

²⁶ Revelation 17:3

²⁷ Revelation 17:4

²⁸ Revelation 17:5

To understand the nature of the Devil is to understand why we are called to “love not the world,” to “fast,” to “deny ourselves,” to “focus on the things above,” and to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” These are not nice sentiments...but are weapons of warfare to fight the battle between the things of this world and the things of God. God has given specific disciplines to overcome the world’s attacks on our body, mind, and spirit. He gives fasting and temperance for our body,²⁹ single mindedness and thinking on the things above for the mind,³⁰ and prayer, walking in God’s Spirit, and seeking righteousness for our spirit.³¹ Also, Ephesians 6:11-18 gives the following armor to put on. It cannot be emphasized enough that this world is getting tougher to be a Christian in and if we don’t do it God’s way, there just may not be any hope for you or me. Here’s the armor listed in Ephesians:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

The Devil may have authority over this world, but God owns it. The day is coming soon when the Devil will be evicted, and you and I will take possession over all that the Devil claims. In the meantime, hold on just a little while longer...it won’t be long.

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²⁹ Matthew 6:16; 1 Corinthians 9:25

³⁰ Luke 18:1-8; Matthew 6:22; Colossians 3:2; Philippians 4:6-9

³¹ Galatians 5:19-25; Matthew 6:33