

False Religion's Tactics

- I. This study investigates the methods of Satan to draw men into false worship where God's truth takes a back seat to something else.
 - A. Make no mistake about it: Satan wants to be worshipped. **ISA 14:12-14; MAT 4:8-9; 2TH 2:3-4.**
 - B. The obvious “circus acts” like the Church of Satan and Anton Lavey are only a small part of the problem.
 - C. Ignorant superstition thinks it worships God but is actually worshipping devils. **1CO 10:20.**
 - D. The more subtle “white collar” tactics of Satan are where the battle lines are most commonly drawn for believers. **2CO 11:1-3; COL 2:4.**
 - 1. Remember the principle of deception that the best counterfeit is the one that most looks like the real thing.
 - 2. Satan and his agents appear as *light* and *ministers of righteousness*. **2CO 11:13-15.**
 - 3. We should not be ignorant of his *devices*. **2CO 2:11.**
 - E. We are warned about being led away by the *error* of the wicked (**2PE 3:17**). It is not simply a matter of being aware of the wicked, but by being led by the error which has the wicked captivated.
- II. Per **2CO 11:3**, a concise review of **GEN 3:1-6** is in order.
 - A. God's word was simple and straightforward. **GEN 2:15-17.**
 - B. Satan isolated Eve for “talks.” Beware those “talks” where the adversary wants to get you alone. **GEN 4:8; 2JO 1:1, 10; 2TI 3:6.**
 - C. Satan cast doubt on God's words: “...Yea, hath God said...?” (**v. 1**).
 - D. Satan amended God's words: “Ye shall not surely die...” (**v. 4**).
 - E. Rather than sticking to God's words, Eve added to them: “...neither shall ye touch it...” (**v. 3**) and buffered them: “...lest ye die” (**v. 3**).
 - F. Satan completely reversed God's words by implying God's agenda was deceitful: “That's not what God really meant; he selfishly withheld information that would have been for your promotion.” **v. 5.**
 - G. The error appealed to the natural senses. **v. 6.**
 - H. A perceived dissatisfaction with God's provision was developed. c/w **HEB 13:5.**
 - I. A basic human need was met by an improper means. c/w **MAT 4:2-4.**
 - J. Oratory, unheavenly wisdom (**JAM 3:15**) and human nature are dangerous combinations.
- III. As saints are presented as *chaste virgins* to Christ (**2CO 11:1-3**), Biblical instruction concerning chastity is relevant.
- IV. **Proverbs 5-7** provide an excellent instruction manual for avoiding evil associations with the opposite sex.
 - A. These chapters are written in the form of parental instruction.
 - B. The father warns his son against involvement with a strange or whorish woman.
 - C. False religion is described as whoredom. **EXO 34:10-17; ISA 57:3-8; REV 17:1-5.**
 - 1. Religion and sex are two dynamic passions of mankind.
 - 2. As sexual union is only right within marriage to one's spouse, so also is religion only right by devotion to the true God. **HEB 13:4; ROM 7:4; 2CO 11:2-4.**
 - 3. Therefore, these chapters may also be applied to identifying false religion.

4. Compare this strange woman with the heretics of **ROM 16:17-18**.
 - a. Both seduce the simple. **PRO 7:6-7**.
 - b. Both use fair speeches to seduce. **PRO 7:21**.
 - c. Both are to be avoided.
- D. The believer must beware of entanglements with strangers---those who do not share his faith. **PRO 2:16-17; 2CO 6:14-18**.
- E. Special attention to THE WORDS of God will keep one from being seduced by the strange woman. **PRO 7:1-5, 24**.

V. False religion (the strange woman) will reflect the nature and attributes of Satan.

- A. Since Satan is characterized by musical instruments, merchandizing, beauty and corrupted wisdom, these elements appear in his religion.
EZE 28:12-18; REV 17:4; 18:21-22.
 1. Nebuchadnezzar's idol-worship had much that appealed to the senses. **DAN 3:5-6**.
 2. "This mirth and gaiety in the worship would be very agreeable to carnal sensual minds, that are strangers to that spiritual worship which is due to God who is a spirit....That way that sense directs the most will go; there is nothing so bad which the careless world will not be drawn to by a concert of music, or driven to by a fiery furnace. And by such methods as these false worship has been set up and maintained." (Matthew Henry)
 3. NOTE: Musical instruments are "...without life..." (**1CO 14:7**) and Biblical N.T. worship is rather characterized by *living* things:
 - a. We have been begotten again "...unto a lively hope..." (**1PE 1:3**).
 - b. By faith and the Spirit, out of us flows "...living water..." (**JOH 7:38**).
 - c. We in public worship enter into the holiest by "...a new and living way..." (**HEB 10:20**).
 - d. We in duty present our bodies "...a living sacrifice..." (**ROM 12:1**).
 - e. As God's temple, we are "...lively stones..." (**1PE 2:5**).
- B. By contrast, a woman's true adornment is not outward beauty but character (**PRO 11:22; 31:30**), so also is the adornment of God's religion. **1TI 2:9-10; TIT 2:10**.
- C. Satan fell by pride (**1TI 3:6**). Beware the religion that boasts of its accomplishments, success, numbers, etc.
- D. Satan obviously knows how to use speech effectively.
 1. History is replete with individuals whose oratorical skills were so powerful that they mesmerized the masses. c/w **ACT 12:21-22**.
 2. Whenever you are powerfully affected by a speaker's prowess and charisma to where you are left with a feeling of awe more about the delivery than the substance of the message, beware! You are under a virtual spell.
 3. False teachers *bewitched* the Galatians. **GAL 3:1**.

VI. Beware of being flattered or "sweet-talked" by a loose woman or a false teacher.

PRO 5:3; 6:24; 7:5, 21.

- A. flatter: 1. *intr.* Of an animal, bird, etc.: To show delight or fondness (by wagging the tail, making a caressing sound, etc.). Const. *upon, with*. *Obs.* 2. To try to please or win the favour of (a person) by **obsequious** speech or conduct; to court, fawn upon. 3. To praise or compliment unduly or insincerely. 4. To gratify the vanity or self-esteem of; to make self-complacent; to make (one) feel honoured or distinguished.
 1. When warning about false teachers, Paul said, "Beware of dogs..." (**PHIL 3:2**),

- which may allude to the dog's attractive traits as well as its negative traits of greed, biting and devouring.
2. The charms of a wagging tail can make one overlook the fact that a dog is known for uncleanness. **DEU 23:17-18; 2PE 2:22.**
 3. **(PSA 22:20)** Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.
 4. obsequious: Compliant with the will or wishes of another, esp. of a superior; prompt to serve, please, or follow directions; obedient; dutiful.
 - a. We are warned against the self-server who "...speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" **(JUDE 1:16).**
 - b. Tertullus feigned admiration for someone whom both Jewish and Roman writers condemned as a debased, cruel, oppressive ruler. **ACT 24:2-4.**
 - c. This is one of the express methods of false teachers to lead saints into doctrinal and moral corruption to exploit them. **2PE 2:1-3, 18.**
 - d. Learn to distinguish between genuine praise of good character **(2CO 8:18)** and false praise which butters you up to take advantage of you. **PSA 55:21.**
- B. Flattery is a means of trapping another. **PRO 29:5.**
1. True ministers do not use flattery. **1TH 2:5.**
 2. **(PRO 26:28)** A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.
 3. **(PRO 20:19)** He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.
- C. The strange woman tries to make her victim feel like he is personally special and important to her. **PRO 7:15.**
1. Compare this with Absalom's method of winning followers. **2SAM 15:1-6.**
 2. Once you are "under the ether" of such a flatterer, you are easy prey to be manipulated for the flatterer's benefit. **GAL 6:12; 2PE 2:18.**
 3. This power is strong enough to turn you against the righteous. **GAL 4:16.**
 - a. Communication which implants negative attitudes in the believer's heart towards brethren should be avoided. **PRO 6:19; 16:28 c/w GAL 2:11-12.**
 - b. Any relationship which leads a believer away from sound Biblical hermeneutics and standards should be guarded against or cut off. When you start redefining Christianity, you are already deep in trouble. **1CO 15:33.**
 4. Beware of the praise of men (especially that which gratifies ego) and seek it not! **PRO 25:27; JOH 5:44; ROM 2:29.**
 5. "But honour is like the shadow, which, as it flees from those that follow it, so it follows those that flee from it." (Matthew Henry)
 6. God rewards them who diligently seek Him and His truth **(JOH 7:17; HEB 11:6)** but if something other than the truth is most important to you, God has something else in store. **2TH 2:10-12.**

VII. Beware the deceptions of *lightness* and also of apparent *depth*. Satan plays both fields.

- A. False religion may be characterized by superficiality, ease and smoothness. **ISA 30:10; JER 23:32.**
1. A counterpart of the strange woman is the foolish woman. **PRO 9:13-18.**
 2. She is simple and attracts the simple.
 3. What she lacks in knowledge, she makes up for with advertising.
 4. Her bait is the same as the strange woman: the lusts of the flesh.

5. The church that is little more than a social club where you can wallow in comfortable ignorance is a decorated morgue. **v. 18.**
 6. What the simple need is not what facilitates their ignorance, but the wisdom of God's words. **PRO 9:4; PSA 19:7; 119:130.**
- B. False religion may also be characterized by depth. The masters of false religion are not all mental flakes.
1. The strange woman is characterized by depth. **PRO 2:18; 5:5; 7:27.**
 2. We read of "...the depths of Satan" (**REV 2:24**).
 3. The wicked may have *deep thoughts*. **PSA 64:6.**
 4. There is counterfeit wisdom which rivals God's wisdom. **ROM 1:22-23.**
 5. We are warned against being spoiled *through philosophy* and the *vain puffing up of the fleshly mind*. **COL 2:8, 18.**
 6. It was through *subtilty* that Eve was beguiled from the simplicity of God's words. **2CO 11:3.**
 - a. subtilty: Acuteness, penetration, perspicacity; = subtlety 1.
 - b. False religion, like the strange woman is "...subtil of heart" (**PRO 7:10**).
 - c. It should not take reams of paper and sophistry to explain what God really meant when He forbade graven images. **EXO 20:4.**
 - d. The multiplying of words is no proof of correctness. **JOB 34:37; 35:16; PRO 10:19; ECC 5:3.**
 - e. Measure the validity of the complex by the simple: What does the verse SAY? "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?..." (**GAL 4:30**).
 - f. If, when all is said and done, you become convinced that understanding of Scripture is impossible for the average saint and that an initiate of some kind of enlightened order decides truth for you, you have been hoodwinked.
 - (1) Satan played the role of the enlightened initiate in Eden.
 - aa. Angels are indeed of a higher order. **PSA 8:5; LUK 1:19.**
 - bb. God later even gave His law by angels. **ACT 7:53.**
 - cc. But God communicated His will directly to man in plain terms that depend not upon an angel's interpretation, nor anyone masquerading as such.
 - dd. The saints are rather to measure, instruct and judge angels from the truth God has given men. **1CO 6:3; EPH 3:10; GAL 1:8.**
 - ee. Consider the insidious folly of those who presume to receive special revelation and to speak in angels' tongues.
 - ff. (**COL 2:18**) Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
 - (2) Some things are hard to understand (**2PE 3:16**), not ALL things, nor IMPOSSIBLE.
 - (3) False religion specializes in self-contradiction and enigmas that are relegated to the realm of "inscrutable mysteries" in order to evade their obvious inconsistencies and implications.
 - aa. Example: an *eternally generated son*: How can someone be eternally coming into existence?
 - bb. Remember that the ways of the strange woman "...are

- cc. moveable, that thou canst not know them” (PRO 5:6).
- dd. False religion's leadership may even declare concerning its enigmas and inconsistencies, “Thou canst not know them.”
- ee. “Error loves ambiguity, either because it has no explicit position to state, or if stated, would stand condemned in the eyes of all God-fearing men.” (Martin L. Wagner, *paraph.*)
- (4) God's truth should be plainly declared. **2CO 3:12; 4:2.**
 - aa. plainness: Openness, honesty, or straightforwardness of conduct; frankness or directness of language.
 - bb. “We speak not only with all confidence, but with all imaginable plainness; keeping back nothing; disguising nothing; concealing nothing: and here we differ greatly from the Jewish doctors, and from the Gentile philosophers, who affect obscurity, and endeavor, by figures, metaphors, and allegories, to hide every thing from the vulgar. But we wish that all may hear; and we speak so that all may understand.” (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible)
- (5) Scripture has nothing froward or perverse in it, and God's promise is to bless sincere inquirers. **PRO 8:8; ISA 45:19; HEB 11:6.**
- g. If, when all is said and done, you end up concluding that definitions of words and grammar are just slavish literalism which must take a back seat to a superior method of interpretation, you have been hoodwinked.
 - (1) God chose to communicate to man in language, not signs, symbols or feelings. The Second Person of the Godhead is the WORD.
 - (2) All languages have signification/meaning. **1CO 14:10.**
 - (3) It follows, therefore, that the successful communication of ideas depends upon an understanding of words and grammar common to both the transmitter and the receiver.
 - (4) Be wary of anyone who trivializes the importance of a reliable glossary of terms (dictionary), primary definitions and recognized conventions of the arrangements of words (syntax). **2TI 1:13.**
 - (5) You cannot know the context of a passage without first knowing the meaning of the words in that passage.
- h. If, when all is said and done, “depth” ends up concluding that you should not do what Jesus or the apostles plainly said to do, or that what they left us in Scripture is inadequate (as Satan implied in **GEN 3:5**), then you have been hoodwinked.
- i. Jesus died to take away your sins, not your Bible or your mind. **2TI 1:7.**
- j. **(2CO 11:3)** But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

VIII. Here is a review of some earmarks of false religion that poses as Christian.

- A. It will offer personal gain, liberty, power, security, peace, happiness, ease, entertainment, activities, etc. as necessary adjuncts of, or substitutes for, God, His provision, protection

and promises.

- B. It will appeal to the natural man, and even be relatively popular in a corrupt society.
- C. Scripture may be used in it but whimsically or corruptly to support its own agenda.
- D. Tradition will be emphasized over God's word.
- E. It will erect barriers God has removed and/or take down barriers which God requires.
- F. It will forbid liberty in Christ and/or promote as liberty that which God forbids.
- G. It will be virtually burdenless or heap burdens on men that God never gave.
- H. It will assume that spiritual power is equated with political power or needs the support of political power.
- I. It will advance false proofs of its validity: numbers, success, prosperity, harmony, zeal, beauty, popularity, cooperation, etc.
- J. It will always somehow be in conflict with God's words.

IX. Satan knows your heart very well and will play to your genuine needs, perceived needs and emotional pressure points. His agents will do likewise. **2PE 2:18.**

- A. "Are you lonely? Our church has many potential friends and mates who love the Lord."
- B. "Is your church dry and routine? Our church has lively services, many activities, meetings and help-groups. There is always something going on."
- C. "Is your church not growing in number? That's embarrassing. Maybe it's dysfunctional. Our church is growing steadily."
- D. "Too much emphasis on the strictness of Scripture in your church? Our church has seen the wisdom of honoring the spirit of the law rather than the letter. We won't beat you over the head with the Book."
- E. "Not getting ahead in life? Maybe God is withholding blessings from you whereas He is blessing us with good jobs and a robust economy around us."
- F. Mind that issues like these are all false standards of right and wrong but they appeal to our basic desires for companionship, acceptance, power, comfort, success, happiness, pleasure, etc. These things may be attained after a godly sort:
 - 1. Seek companionship of true believers. **PSA 119:63.**
 - 2. Seek acceptance with God and you will find approval of men. **2CO 5:9; ROM 14:18-19.**
 - 3. We are well empowered through Christ and His word. **PHIL 4:13; 2TI 1:7.**
 - 4. Truth gives us the comfort of bearable burdens and hope. **MAT 11:28-30; 1TH 4:18.**
 - 5. Happiness (joy) is a matter of faith, not circumstances. **ROM 15:13; JAM 1:2-3.**
 - 6. Pleasure is best at God's right hand (**PSA 16:11**), from whence came His law which should be our delight. **DEU 33:2 c/w PSA 1:1-2.**