

KEYS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Lesson #9)

Spiritual Warfare: Overcoming Satan's Attacks Against the Church

1. SATAN'S ORIGIN

a. The Original Perfection of Satan (Ezekiel 28: 12-15)

- *"the anointed cherub who covers"* (v. 14) - Created by God as head over entire angelic realm. Original name was "Lucifer" (Isaiah 14:12), which means "shining one."
- *"the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty"* (v. 12) - Only God possessed a greater wisdom or beauty than Lucifer possessed.
- *"every precious stone was your covering"* (v. 13) - Lucifer was created with a greater capacity to reflect the glory of God than any other created being.
- *"the workmanship of your settings and sockets"* (v. 13) Lucifer was created like a built in pipe organ to be a doxology of praise to lead heaven's worship of God.
- *"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you."* (v. 15)

b. The Perversion of Satan (Ezekiel 28: 16-19)

- *"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor."* (v. 17, compare with Revelation 12: 4) - Pride was the original sin.

c. The Plan of Satan (Isaiah 14: 12-17 contains the five "I will" statements of Satan, his declaration of war against God.)

- "I will ascend to heaven..." (I will sit on heaven's throne.)
- "I will raise my throne above the stars of heaven..." (I will rule the angelic realm.)
- "I will sit on the mount of the assembly..." (I will rule the earth.)
- "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds..." (I will achieve a greater glory than God.)
- "I will make myself like the most High." (I will gain absolute authority over all.)

2. SATAN DISGUISES HIMSELF AS A SHEPHERD OF GOD'S FLOCK TO DECEIVE & DIVIDE THE CHURCH AND RENDER HER INEFFECTIVE IN ADVANCING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST (Matthew 7: 15; Acts 20: 28-30; 2 Cor. 11: 2-4; 13-15; 2 Peter 2: 1-2)

a. False Shepherds Exploit the Church with PERSUASIVE WORDS

...and in their greed they will exploit you with false words... 2 Peter 2: 3 (Jude 1: 16b)

Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

Romans 16: 17-18 (NLT)

b. False Shepherds Excite the Church with a Show of SPIRITUAL POWER

And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many...false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24: 11 & 24

Daring, self willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might & power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

2 Peter 2: 10b-11

c. False Shepherds Entice the Church with the Promise of Freedom from PAIN & personal GRATIFICATION.

...they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity. **2 Peter 2: 18-19 (NIV)**

For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths. **2 Timothy 4: 3-4 (NLT)**

These men are as useless as dried-up springs of water, promising much and delivering nothing; they are as unstable as clouds driven by the storm winds. They are doomed to the eternal pits of darkness. **2 Peter 2: 17 (LB)**

d. The Armor God Provided the Church to Gain the Victory Over Satan (Ephesians 6: 10-17)

- Belt of TRUTH
- Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS
- Shoes of PEACE of the Gospel
- Shield of FAITH
- Helmet of SALVATION
- Sword of SPIRIT

e. Five Questions to Answer before Exposing Yourself to any Minister

1. Is he under strong ACCOUNTABILITY? Of the 21 N.T. qualifications for a Christian leader, 20 of the 21 deal with a man's character & home life.
2. Is he preoccupied with acquiring WEALTH? The Bible says a minister is to be "free from the love of money...not fond of sordid gain."
3. Is he SKILLED in accurately handling God's Word? Most heresies are truth out of balance taught by men not trained in Biblical interpretation.
4. Does he teach the WHOLE COUNSEL of God's Word? The issue for a false teacher is not truth but seduction, therefore, he gives people what they want to hear, not what they ought to hear.
5. Is he committed to his HOME? The home is where the heart is revealed and a false teacher does not want his heart exposed.