

#226 "How the Devil Attacks the Word of God"

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The devil is ruthless, living only for the sole purpose of defying God and stealing His glory. He longs to make the pinnacle of God's creation, mankind, remain alienated from God. He desires to take God's children, those who have turned from sin unto righteousness by the blood of Christ, and make them doubt or give into the flesh. He is a preying lion seeking to devour and destroy (1 Peter 5:8). He has a variety of methods to employ to this end, but the constant in his strategy will be to attack the Word of God. He must do this because the Word of God is sharp and powerful and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). It is both a sword (Ephesians 6:17) and a mirror (James 1:23), revealing the truth and exposing the darkness, something Satan cannot afford to have happen. He must go after the Word of God, and it must be central to his diabolical, deceiving strategies.

What is certain is that Satan is fully aware of the Scripture, and he knows it inside and out. He has no doubt that God's Word is infallible and true, unlike the people he enjoys keeping from the truth. Thus, even from the first time the serpent is introduced in the Scripture in Genesis 3, he is seen attacking the spoken and revealed words of God to Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:1 tells us that he was the craftiest creature of all, and he said to Eve, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" "Has God said" is a strategy as old as the beginning of creation, and it continues working for Satan to this day. The original instructions from God to Adam and Eve concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were given in Genesis 2:17 which says, "But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." Eve remembered what God said concerning not eating from the tree, and she explained that to the devil. She did well in going to God's Word as a sword against the devil, but she kept listening to him. That allowed the trap to be set. Satan began by taking away from God's Word by saying that they wouldn't die from eating the fruit. Furthermore, he added to what God had said by saying that they would become like God if they ate the fruit (Genesis 3:5). This was a subtle attack on the character of God. Yes, in a sense, they would be like God in that they would know good and evil, something God knew wasn't in their best interest. But, Satan's implication was that God was holding something good back from them, some power that He must have wanted to keep selfishly for Himself. Of course this wasn't true, but, by taking away from God's Word and then adding to it, Satan had effectively attacked God by attacking His Word. Eve either doubted or forgot what God had said or some combination of both. Either way, the result was disobedience and the fall of man into sin. We need to learn from this very real and true event so that we, too, do not buy in to Satan's trickery when he attacks the Word of God.

God pronounces a railing judgment in Revelation 22:18-19 concerning those who add or take away from God's Word. Yet, it is not uncommon in evangelical circles to hear people say that they will just overlook a certain passage or book of the Bible because it doesn't square with "science" or their preferences. Others openly question the infallibility of the Bible as a whole,

thus, in effect, taking the whole thing away. Still others are unsure about whether we can know anything with absolute confidence at all, including the Bible. They determine that it is arrogant to think that we have a "monopoly" on the truth. But the reality is Jesus is the truth (John 14:6), and His Word is truth (John 17:17). To question all of it is to attack Jesus' character and very words. It is simply another ploy of the devil to get us to reject God's Word.

Satan always challenges God's Word. He doesn't want people to have access to it, to read it, or to understand it. But when they are confronted with it, he will always challenge it. From the moment the church was established, there have been those who misuse Scripture or take passages out of context (Acts 20:29-30). For example, Jude 3-4 says, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." This attack by false teachers is only promised of God to intensify as the end draws near (2 Timothy 3:13). We are blessed that God's Word endures forever (1 Peter 1:25), that He has preserved it for us to study and learn. In it, we see the body of truth that was once for all handed down to the true church. That body of truth must be held to, guarded, defended, and preached. We must watch out for those who claim extrabiblical revelation as Jude is clear that our doctrine was "once for all" handed down. We don't need to look to find new truth, new revelation, or something missed. We don't need to seek after the latest fad, methodology, or philosophy. Rather, we need to look intensely into the Bible and evaluate everything we do and see in light of the truth given to us and preserved over thousands of years. The Bible is our roadmap for everything because it is sufficient.

When Jesus was tempted, He wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Matthew 4:1-11). When Eve was tempted, she put her spiritual sword in its sheath, doubting and questioning what God had said. Jesus was victorious, while Adam and Eve fell into sin. One believed God and didn't question His Word, while the others doubted. The original sin is a sin ongoing today as many challenge what God has said, even in the church. Many are afraid to call out false teachers and stand for truth, failing to heed Jude's exhortation to contend earnestly for Scripture. This failure to hold tightly to God's Word is nothing short of cooperating with the devil, and God's people need to wake up, stand up, sober up, and listen up to what God has said.

Doubt is the toxin of the devil and disbelief in God's revealed Word the real opiate of the masses. Let us be counted among the faithful as those who by faith obeyed, believed, and stood for the truth no matter the cost and regardless of the price. In the end, it will bring a great reward (Hebrews 11:6).