

“Satan's Last Campaign Against The Church Of Christ” Pt 2

All right, this morning I'd like to do a short review of the subject I presented last time regarding Satan's last campaign against the church of Christ. When you think of the word campaign, especially during a time like this when both men and women are vying for a seat in congress, it brings to mind the idea that the one campaigning would do just about anything to get elected, or reelected. We hear in the news about dishonest practices, about lies, about digging up dirt, about character assassination, about speeches that make promises they never intend to keep, and all kinds of subtle and not so subtle deceit, but we rarely think of a campaign as a military operation, but that's the root meaning of the word, and if you have a military background, no doubt that's what you think of when you hear the word campaign, and a military operation is exactly what Satan's up to as he goes about in an attempt to destroy Christ's church.

We are now in the last phase of the war between good and evil; it's the last of the last days; the last moments, as it were, of the struggle between Christ and Satan. Satan's last campaign is to bring about a particular result, and that result is to destroy God's people without them even knowing what hit them; to cause them to be eternally lost by making the Commandments of God of none effect; by getting them all caught up with things that are supposed to be really important to understand in these last day, but they're not important at all, at least when compared with the three angels' messages and character development. And as we see this last campaign developing, we can see more and more that “We have far more to fear from within than from without”, as it says in *Selected Messages, Book 1, page 122*, and I'll elaborate on that in a few minutes, but before we do, let's pray.

In *Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 341* it says, **(and we read this last time)** “He (Satan) is not off his watch for a single moment, through fear of losing an opportunity to destroy souls. It is important that God's people understand this, that they may escape his snares. Satan is preparing his deceptions, that in his last campaign against the people of God that they may not understand that it is he.”

Satan “is not off his watch for a single moment”; what about us? Lately you may have heard about something that seems to be taking the SDA church captive, and it's called spiritual formation, which is nothing more than an outgrowth of the spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order. Many SDAs are caught up with this deception and they think it's wonderful, and that God is working to bring about a revival to a dead church, but it's the devil that's working behind the scenes and the people don't “understand that it is he.”

I could cite many other things that the devil is behind and many don't realize it; such as, so called contemporary “Christian” music, celebration worship services, the teaching of salvation in sin, female church members that dress like the harlot of Revelation 17 instead of the pure woman of Revelation 12, the crucifixion of the three angels' messages, and on and on. And in the independent movement there's arguing and debating about the 2520 time prophecy that's not a time prophecy at all, whether or not we should keep the feast days, whether or not the Holy Spirit is the third person

of the Godhead, that radical Islam is the focus of Daniel 11 instead of the papacy, and on and on it goes. You see, the devil doesn't care what debate you get caught up in as long as you get caught up in at least one. As long as you're spinning your wheels in the direction of any one of his snares, he's quite happy with your decision not to be about the business of proclaiming the three angels' messages and preparing your character for Jesus' soon return.

Many people in and out of the denomination don't know that these are some of the snares the devil has laid for their destruction; and why is it that they don't know? It's because they're not studying, or that the things we used to believe are old fashioned, and that times have changed and we should change with them, or that they're not obeying the truth they know and therefore have no spiritual discernment. **Acts 5:32** says, The Holy Spirit is given to those that obey God, and so, if they're not obeying they don't have the Spirit to guide them into all truth as it says in **John 16:13**. And so you see how this works. The bottom line is that those who can't see what's going on is because they're not converted, the Holy Spirit has been ignored and their spiritual eye-sight has become so dim that they can't see what's behind all these things.

Last time I mentioned what the president of the SDA denomination said when questioned about what the mark of the beast was, and he said, at the ASI convention in August of this year, "The mark of the beast is the worship of God on any other day than the Bible sabbath." Now friends, is that a true statement? Is the mark of the beast the worship of God on Wednesday or Friday or any other day of the week but the seventh day? It pains me to think that an SDA would not understand something so basic to Bible prophecy. Most of the references to the beast in **Revelation 13-20** is the papacy, is it not? And what day has it substituted for the true Sabbath? Sunday! That is the mark of her authority. This has been taught for almost 170 years in Adventism. But if we would believe what is now being taught by church leaders, we would have to believe that the worship of God on Monday through Friday is the mark of the beast as well as Sunday.

By the way, the president also failed to mention that no one has yet received the mark of the beast, but if you take what he said at face value, you wouldn't know that. Because of what he said, you would think that if one worshipped God on any other day than the Bible Sabbath, they would have the mark of the beast today. Am I just trying to splitting hairs here, or is this one of the snares of the devil that is now developing within the professed church? Am I just looking for something to complain about because I have some ax to grind? or is this a significant divergence from one of the major teachings of the Advent faith?

Is there anything at all in the Spirit of Prophecy that would suggest what president Wilson said is correct, and what the other ministers on the platform with him assented to by their silence? Let me read you a few inspired statements and then you can make up your own mind.

Last Day Events, page 224 "When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday." Period!

Testimonies, volume 8, page 117 “The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord’s memorial of creation. . . . The mark of the beast is the opposite of this – the observance of the first day of the week.”

Letter 11, 1890 “This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who proved their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast.”

The Great Controversy, page 448 “As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite ‘the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday.’ . . . What then is the change of the Sabbath, but the sign, or mark, of the authority of the Roman Church, ‘the mark of the beast.’”

Last Day Events, pages 224, 225 “Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath.”

Testimonies, volume 6, page 17 “The light we have received upon the third angel’s message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. **(What has it been proclaimed to be, any day other than the Bible Sabbath? No! It’s enforced Sunday worship.)** . . . There is to be no change in the general features of our work. It is to stand as clear and distinct as prophecy has made it. We are to enter into no confederacy with the world, supposing that by so doing we could accomplish more. . . . No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world.”

Besides, when the death decree becomes the law of the land for those that honor any other day than Sunday, any other day of worship will be out of the question, because all will be obliged to honor the Sunday or be killed. Even those that now believe that Friday or Wednesday or some other day of worship is God’s special day, will be forced to switch to Sunday or else, because the beast power will not tolerate some other day of worship to be observed once they regain their lost power and it’s time for them to strike.

Listen to what it says in *Selected Messages, Book 1, page 428*; it’s titled *A Vivid View of Coming Events*; you might want to read the whole thing this afternoon. (Reference repeated) It says there that “The whole world was (will be) converted and in harmony with the Sunday law.” And so, some other day of worship, like Friday or Wednesday, will have gone by the wayside by then, so how can any other day than the Bible Sabbath be the mark of the beast?

Will the whole world really be forced to observe Sunday or else? Listen to what it says in *Last Day Events, page 257*, “As Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon issued a decree that all who would not bow down and worship this image should be killed, so a proclamation will be made that all who will not reverence the Sunday institution will be punished with imprisonment and death. . . . Let all read carefully the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, for it concerns every human agent, great and small.”

Oh friends, does stating that the mark of the beast is “the worship of God on any other day than the Bible Sabbath” weaken the line of truth? Does stating such a thing make our message clear and distinct, or does it make it a little fuzzy? Before I get off this point I’d like to share one other quote with you from Amazing Facts. The brother that sent me the email regarding Ted Wilson’s comment in last month’s CD, wrote to Amazing Facts to ask their opinion about the president’s statement, and here’s their response:

Dear _____,

“When we look closely at the three angels’ messages, we recognize that God wanted to warn us and have us warn others that worshipping anyone other than Him, the Creator, is worshipping a false god. **(That’s true)** Yes, the world mainly follows the tradition of worshipping on Sunday, however, there are some that incorrectly worship on Friday, or Wednesday. **(That’s true also)** So, it is not incorrect to state that worshipping God on ANY other day than the seventh-day Sabbath will constitute the mark of the beast, **(that’s false)** for true worship is only on His holy day. Only when we worship Him on His holy day, can we truly be said to worship Him as our Creator and Redeemer. Hope you find this helpful. God be with you!

Blessings in Christ,

Arlene

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Now, some of what I just quoted to you is correct; in fact, most of it is correct, that’s the way error sneaks in unawares, but worshipping God on Friday or Wednesday is absolutely not the mark of the beast no matter how you try to spin it to make the president look good. There’s no way you can reconcile Wilson’s and Arlene’s statements with the inspired ones I read to you just a few moments ago. Absolutely no way! And so, I would suggest to you that if you’re a supporter of Amazing Facts, you might want to rethink your commitment to that ministry, because the quote I just read to you definitely blurs the line and weakens the third angel’s message, the very thing we’re warned not to do.

You see, Satan works in such a way that Christians will not discern or blame him for all the havoc and division he creates. And isn’t that the way he worked before he was cast out of heaven? He worked behind the scenes at first to make it look like God was at fault instead of himself for the war that developed in heaven, but eventually he was exposed to the heavenly host for who he really was and was cast out of heaven with all those he was successful in deceiving, and there’s a lesson in this for us today.

You may think you’re fooling someone when you’re living a lie, but God always knows what you’re thinking, He always knows what your motives are, and one day you will be exposed if you don’t

make an about face; if not in this life, it will be during the thousand years in heaven when the saints are made privy as to why you're not there. And when you come up in the second resurrection you will also know that everyone else knows what you tried so hard to hide.

In **Luke 12:2** Jesus said, "*there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*" Knowing that this is the case, wouldn't it be much better now, while there's still opportunity, to confess your sins and ask for forgiveness and receive a new heart? God will never turn down a request like that, and you will be forever glad that you came clean of all your sinful ways. And please don't think I'm picking on you this morning, because I've had to go through this salvation process myself, and through the power of the Holy Spirit I have purposed in my heart that I'm going to serve the Lord from now on and not allow the devil back into my life. And if you haven't done so already, I hope you will make the same commitment before the end of this day; in fact, I hope you'll make it right now, because none of us know when our heart will stop beating.

The purpose of a campaign is to defeat your opponent, and there are certain rules of engagement that are supposed to be followed in war time. One way to win, and unfortunately this is the way it happens most of the time, is to make it look like you're following campaign rules while secretly violating them. This happens all the time between various governments, and it's happening right now between Israel and Palestine; in fact, this has been happening for thousands of years with these two, and it will continue to happen regardless of how many peace talks and cease fires they have, and this same violation of campaign rules is why politics is so rotten to the core, and that's why the rotten get elected nine times out of ten! And sadly, it's usually no different in the church. Some people will do almost anything to be elected to church office, or to get reelected, because they want to have control. And again, this was Satan's downfall. He wanted to control heaven, and if he would have been given the opportunity to do so, he would have messed it up just like he has messed up this planet.

Years ago I had to leave a church I was a member of because of control freaks, and if the church body allows people to control, rather than the Holy Spirit to control, there will always be problems, and I dare say that this is the main reason why so many churches go into apostasy. When there are those that have a desire to control the work, it's because self is on the throne where God should be, and whenever that's the case, that church has gotten caught in one of the snares of Satan. We need leaders in the church, but rather than the leader being in control, the Holy Spirit needs to be in control of the leader. Amen?

The downfall of a nation lay at the feet of its leaders, first and foremost, and the apostasy of a church is the result of the same. And this is the way the devil would have it. Human beings that are possessed by demons running things. And people don't realize it because they are not acquainted with the devices of Satan, as we read last time in ***The Great Controversy*, page 517**. Let me read it to you again, it's very short, "There is nothing that the great deceiver fear so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices."

Turn with me please to **2 Corinthians 2:11** and let's notice what it says there. Paul had previously told the Corinthians in his first letter that they were to reprove a certain brother and withhold fellowship from him because of his sin. But now he says forgive him and take him back into fellowship. And *Verse 11* tells us why, "*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us (or outwit us): for we are not ignorant of his devices.*"

The apostle Paul made sure that the Corinthians were not uninformed about Satan's designs for their downfall. One of the devices of Satan is for the church to discipline its members but not take them back into fellowship and truly love them once they repent. Can you imagine how the professed church probably treated Mary Magdalene? "Better watch your husbands around Mary, we know what kind of girl she is. She may seem like a Christian now, but it won't last. She repented several times before, but she went right back to her old profession."

You know, I've often wondered if she may have fallen back into sin time after time because the brethren wouldn't accept that her conversion was real. I don't mean to excuse her for what she did, but it's something to think about as we have to deal with people that may have a questionable past. It was only because of Jesus' love for her soul that she finally gained the victory, and don't you think Jesus wants to love people like this through us?

There are many devices of Satan, and we don't have time to cover them all, but another one is to cause misguided zeal, which often turns into fanaticism, or a harsh critical spirit, or cold indifference while ignoring mercy, faith, and love. Another one of the devices the devil uses is to convince people that our spiritual warfare is all imaginary. *Testimonies, volume 7, page 213* says, "We do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make believe conflict. It is not mimic battles in which we are engaged. We have to meet most powerful adversaries, and it rests with us to determine which shall win."

Also in *Testimonies, volume 5, page 533* it says, "There are evil angels at work all around us, but because we do not discerned their presence with our natural vision we do not consider as we should the reality of their existence as set forth in the word of God."

I remember some years ago when a guest speaker came to the church I was a member of at the time, that talked about the devil (not as much as he talked about Jesus and the fact that he and his holy angels were mightier than they): but because he mentioned Satan and his evil angels, and the spiritual battle we're all engaged in, several people decided they wouldn't come to a meeting like that, and they missed a great blessing because they refused to consider the reality of the spiritual warfare going on all around us!

I'll tell you something friends, if we refused to acknowledge *The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels And Satan and His Angels*, (by the way, that used to be the full title to the book we now simply call *The Great Controversy*) then we'd have to throw out a large portion of the Bible wouldn't we? God wants us to be aware of our great adversary and we should never be afraid

of him and his cohorts, you know why? because they're conquered foes! Jesus made sure of that when He died upon the cross, and if we will take up our cross and follow Him, we will be as victorious as He was.

Now I'm not saying we shouldn't have a healthy respect for the devil's power, but as long as we claim Jesus as our Savior and live in obedience to His law, "*perfect love will cast out fear.*" Just as a person who's not acquainted with electricity will get in a heap of trouble messing with the high-voltage lines coming into the circuit breaker box in their home, so we, as professing Christians, will get into a heap of trouble if we're not acquainted with the devil's devices.

Would you like to take a guess at the number of references in the Spirit of Prophecy regarding Satan and evil spirits, or demons, or fallen angels, or whatever you want to call them? Over 17,000; way too many to read in just one sitting. How about references in the Bible? Truthfully I don't know how many there are, but there are plenty. Let's put it this way; if there were no devil, there would be no need for the Bible! The Bible was given that we might be able to detect Satan's deceptions and find the true way of salvation through a crucified and risen Savior. And so, it's important for us to understand that the devil is alive and well and wants all of us to be lost.

Let's take a look at just a few texts that would prove this point. **1 Peter 5:8**, "*Be sober, (in other words, this is no time to be drunk with the wine of Babylon) be vigilant; (keep spiritually wide awake, why?) because your adversary the devil, (your opponent during this last campaign) as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*"

Those that know something about lions know that they're the most dangerous and roar the loudest when they're really hungry. A lion will not only go out and search for a victim, but he will also wait in his lair for the unfortunate one to come to him; and when we go places and do things we know we shouldn't, that's what he prefers, because it makes it easy for him. He's always actively looking for fresh victims to fill his belly, because remember, the devil never sleeps. He's "not off his watch for a single moment through fear of losing an opportunity to destroy souls." And so, you better become acquainted with his devices if you don't want to be a meal for the devil's banqueting table.

Job 1:6-12, "*Now there was a day when the sons of God (here the angels are also called sons of God) came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. (no doubt looking for fresh meat to devour) And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, (and Satan probably thought, "you bet I have, and I'd like free access to him.) that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and escheweth evil? (the word escheweth is an interesting word, it means "to turn off." Job turned the devil off when he came with his evil suggestions, he tuned him out when he came with his temptations; that's how Job became a perfect and an upright man.) Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the*

land. (You see, the Lord put a hedge around Job and all his possessions because he did what God said, and we should not expect God to do the same for us if we are not following the council we've been given) But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, (alright) all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD” to do just that, and you know the rest of the story.

When God told Satan he could go after Job's possessions, he probably began licking his chops, don't you think? Satan was so sure that Job would fall and be a voluptuous meal, but he was mistaken, wasn't he? He didn't realize Job's resolve to serve the Lord no matter what! Remember what Job said later on as Satan was attacking him? *“Even though he (the Lord) slays me, (or allows me to be killed) yet will I trust in Him.”* And we need to ask ourselves this morning, will that be my determination when the Sunday law is enforced? Friends, we need to be people that are willing to die rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, and be so settled into the truth that we can't be moved. That was Job, a perfect and an upright man that turned the devil off.

Ephesians 6:11, 12 *“Put on the whole armour of God, (don't leave one piece off) that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (The word “wiles” means “to lie in wait.” In other words, the devil is real, and wants to ambush us and take us by surprise) 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.”*

You see, it does no good to try to use physical weapons against spiritual beings. The devil and his evil angels are real, but we can't see them. They're all around us trying to gain access to our minds, and the only weapon we have to defeat such a wily foe is the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, and that would include the Spirit of Prophecy. So we better become well acquainted with this weapon if we would stay alive during the attacks of the enemy.

Matthew 4:10, 11. Chapter 4 is dealing with the wilderness temptations of Christ, and in *verses 10 and 11* the climax of Jesus' encounter with the devil is reached. *“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil (did what) leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”*

The devil didn't leave Him permanently, but went to his corner of the ring to plan a new strategy to knock Him out, and the same is true with us. When we gain a victory over temptation, the devil doesn't give up, but tries new things to take us out and to give up the good fight of faith.

Let's look at one more text in *Revelation 12:7-9* *“And there was war in heaven: Michael (that's Jesus before He was born into this world) and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. (That's the good part for heaven, now for the bad part for us) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”* *Verses 12, 13* *“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens,*

*and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman (**the church of Christ**) which brought forth the man child.” (That’s Jesus)*

As a hungry lion gets more desperate and louder the hungrier he gets – So Satan, driven by hatred for Christ, is more determined than ever before to corner and devour his prey. And if we are going to escape his claws and fangs in these last days, we must be just as determined to cling to Jesus and His word and become better acquainted with the devices of the great deceiver.

I’d like to leave you with a bit of encouragement by reading something from *Manuscript 47, 1908* “In times of discouragement, there are evil angels by our side. But angels of heaven are also with us, and as soon as we strike a note of praise to God, His angels shed their light about us, and the evil angels are driven back. Then we find our discouragement giving way to a feeling of hope and courage in the Lord. Shall we not, instead of fretting and complaining, use our voice to praise God? Then we shall see more of His salvation, and He will let His rich blessing rest upon us.”

We don’t praise God enough, do we? If we would express our gratitude to God for all His personal favors more than we do, we would experience victory over temptation more than we do, and we would be made more aware of Satan’s devices more than we are, because the more light the holy angels shed about us, the more clearly will that light expose the devils agenda to maim and destroy. Satan’s last campaign against the church of Christ is now in effect and we must study like we’ve never studied before, and get closer to Jesus than we’ve ever been before, that we might be armed with the torpedoes of truth to knock down the devil’s wall of lies. May this be our experience as we contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.