

Sunday, June 2, 2013—The Battlefield of the Mind—Phases Two: Attack the Messenger

Introduction/Review

- II Corinthians 10:4—a few weeks ago we began studying about the weapons of our warfare not being carnal. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal because “we do not war after the flesh” (II Cor. 10:3) and because “we wrestle with flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12). You cannot fight a spiritual enemy with a fleshly weapon.
- Ephesians 6:11—we need to put on the whole armor of God so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. A wile is a cleverly designed trick or device by which someone deceives another. It is cunningly produced with the goal of fooling someone in accepting something as true, when in reality it is false. It is important to understand that the nature of Satan’s warfare against us is designed to deceive, beguile, trick, or fool us into accepting for the truth something that is false.
- Strategically, Satan’s battleplan calls for three major lines of attack designed to dislodge the believer from his/her fixed position and cause them not to withstand and hold the line.
 - Phase One (first line of attack): Attack the Message.
 - Phase Two (second line of attack): Attack the Messenger.
 - Phase Three (third line of attack): Discredit or Discourage the Messenger.
- Ephesians 4:14—Satan’s attacks upon the message of God’s grace and the believer’s proper edification come in the form of contrary doctrines. Through the winds of doctrines believers are tossed about on the open sea and beguiled into believing something else from the Bible to be God’s program and order for today.
- Colossians 2:4, 8, 18-19—there are four primary ways that Satan seeks to beguile and spoil believers.
 - Philosophy and vain deceit
 - The traditions of men
 - The rudiments of the world
 - Extra-Biblical Revelations

Paul’s Warnings Against False Doctrines and Teachers

- Acts 20:28-32
- Romans 16:17-20—Paul knew what was going to happen people were going to arise teaching contrary doctrines.
- II Corinthians 11:1-4

- Galatians 1:6-9, 3:1, 5:7-10
- I Timothy 1:19, 4:1-3, 6:20-21
- II Timothy 2:15-18
- Titus 1:9-14

Phase Two: Attack the Messenger

- Ephesians 6:11, 13—Satan’s first line of attack is to attack the message thereby making it impossible for you to stand in the truth. If phase one works and the truth is obscured in the mind of the individual believer phase two and three are not necessary.
- If phase one is unsuccessful and the believer comes to understand and rejoice in what God is now doing phases two and three will be deployed in successive order.
- To put it simply and briefly, if phase one attacks can’t corrupt the truth in a Christian’s mind, then it will move to silence that Christian so that he or she won’t be involved in making it known. If “Deceive” is the battle-cry of Phase One, then “Intimidate” is the battle-cry of Phase Two. Intimidating into silence those Christians who know the truth and have stood for it, is the goal of Phase Two.
- When one is intimidated he is made to back down from boldly asserting something or pursuing something because of fear of the consequences. He or she has convictions about something and knows that it is right and ought to be defended, but because of what such a stand may cost him in terms of unpopularity, backlash, physical well-being, social standing, financial security, or friendships he or she is afraid to take a stand for their conviction. He or she faints in their mind at the prospect and occasion of standing for the truth in the face of error. Timidity grips the believer and they become silent about those things they know they ought to be bold about.
- Intimidation is a powerful negative motivating factor, and it is just what Satan and his principalities and powers want to see produced and operating within believers who know the truth for this dispensation. But intimidating Christians whom Satan has not been able to doctrinally corrupt, he effectively silences them and out of fear they do not make known “the fellowship of the mystery” to the glory of God.
- Philippians 1:5-8—the Philippians were not ones that Paul had to address about being removed from the truth of the gospel. They had not become “bewitched” into not obeying the truth. Rather, the Philippian saints were one who had not only readily received the gospel, but had become properly established. They were maturing saints who were doctrinally “with Paul” in the things he taught them and laboring with Paul in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

- Philippians 1:27-30—the “same conflict” that they had seen with Paul they themselves were now experiencing. Their adversaries could not, but their opposition to the truth, corrupt the minds of the Philippians. However, they might be able to terrify them, and intimidate them into silence, if they made them suffer some unpleasant consequences i.e., jail.
- Ephesians 6:19-20—Paul knew firsthand how bonds were designed to instill in him a fearful outlook that would make him shut his mouth in cowardice.
- Ephesians 3:13—Paul did not want the Ephesians to be intimidated by seeing the consequences of his stand for the truth of the mystery.
- II Timothy 1:6-8—Phase Two was never largely successful with Paul but it was, however, with Timothy for a time. Timothy had developed within him a “spirit of fear.” He was occupied in his mind with the unpleasant consequences of standing for and proclaiming the increasingly unpopular message of the mystery of Christ. In view of the unpopularity of the message committed to Paul, and the on-going departure from him that was taking place, Timothy had become “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” and of Paul “his prisoner.” He had, as a result withdrawn from his former boldness in his ministry.