

**GOSPEL TEACHING SUMMARY EIGHT:
SATANIC OPPOSITION TO THE GOSPEL**

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Ephesians 6:12

“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.”

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Aims

By the end of this study the reader should be able to: -

- 1) Know who the devil is.
- 2) Draw comfort from the fact that he is a defeated foe.
- 3) See some of the motives behind Satan's opposition to the Gospel.
- 4) Discern his strategies and tactics.
- 5) Combat his strategies and tactics.
- 6) See the need to go back to the Jewish origin of Christianity.
- 7) Avoid complacency concerning the Gospel.

Definitions

1) HERESY: any wilfully held false teaching, which detracts from the person and work of Jesus Christ. A heresy may either be beguilingly subtle and/or militantly violent. Often driven by demonic opposition as well human sinfulness a heresy is to be distinguished from well-meaning error, which may arise out of genuine ignorance.

2) HERETIC, someone advocating or adhering to a heresy. Unlike a person in error who is open to correction, a heretic is entrenched in views that they have chosen as a matter of self-willed choice. Impervious to reason, a heretic has usually rejected a portion of biblical teaching that they once understood. This is not always the case with someone who is in error.

3) SATAN, a title for that fallen archangel Lucifer, who rebelled against God because he wanted to BE God. Now totally evil, his chief passion is to destroy as much of God's work as he possibly can. His opposition to purposes is totally unremitting and can assume a wide variety of forms. The word '*Satan*' means *adversary*.'

4) SPIRITUAL WARFARE, the unremitting warfare between true Christian believers and Satan.

Section One: Source

Satan is the source of all spiritual warfare – he can work through both demonic and human agencies.

Section Two: Assumptions

Assumptions behind this study are that: -

2.1 Satan is a created being, far less powerful than God, (Ezekiel 28.13-14).

2.2 Pride motivated Satan's rebellion against God and resulted in his subsequent downfall, (Isaiah 14.13-14).

2.3 As a being, Satan is irredeemably evil and utterly merciless. His great intelligence is used for completely destructive ends, (Job 2.1-8).

2.4 Jesus Christ's death at Calvary represented a total and unqualified defeat for Satan, (John 12.31). Following the crucifixion, any claim he may have had over creation was nullified and his doom was sealed.

2.5 Both Christians and Jews are special objects of satanic hatred because they remind him of his rout at Calvary, (1 Peter 5.8-9). He is therefore constantly seeking to destroy both groups of people.

2.6 Satan's eventual fate is eternal judgement in *'the lake of fire,'* (Revelations 20.10).

2.7 As a defeated foe Satan will be forced to bow his knee in homage to a triumphant Jesus, (Philippians 2.10). This fact makes him very, very angry.

Unlike human beings, Satan can't be redeemed because he committed the ultimate sin of blaspheming⁽¹⁾ against the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 12.32). He also turned against a far greater spiritual light than any man or woman ever had – even before they fell into sin.

Section Three: Motivations behind Satan's Opposition

Motives behind Satan's opposition to the Gospel are: -

3.1 To spite God by keeping people away from Jesus and still in his clutches. He wants to damn as much of the human race as possible, (Job 1.6-19).

3.2 The fact that the Gospel reminds him of his defeat at Calvary and his inevitable condemnation in *'the lake of fire,'* (Revelations 20.10). To Satan, sharing the Good News is like rubbing an awful lot of salt into a very deep wound. It is the worst possible news for him.

3.3 Hurt pride – forcing him to adopt an "If I can't own creation, then I will destroy creation" attitude, (Ezekiel 38.17).

However, to some degree, Satan's opposition to the Gospel is motiveless in that it can't hurt God or make Him any less divine. Here one must take into account his raw irrational hatred that simply seeks to do evil for the sake of evil.

⁽¹⁾ The word has strong connotations with *'strong'* and *'deliberate resistance to.'*

⁽²⁾ Often, the members of such groups maybe genuinely unaware that this is happening; they fail to see anything amiss and get lured into deception without knowing it

Section Four: Satanic Strategies

In order to disrupt Gospel preaching Satan employs three main strategies. These are: -

4.1 Gradual distortion – bit by bit over a long period of time he lures a group of Christians away from Biblical truth, (Genesis 3.15).

4.2 Sudden subversion – he seduces a group of Christians into error, often through some dramatic, but counterfeit revelation, ⁽²⁾ (2 Corinthians 11.12-15).

4.3 Violent opposition – usually from the *'world'* or the more corrupt parts of the Church, (Revelation 2.10-11).

As appendix one shows, Satan is quite capable of combining those strategies in order to destroy a particular work of God. For instance, a strategy of gradual distortion will open up a group to sudden subversion from an attractive, if disastrously false revelation, (Galatians 5.9). This in turn will destroy any ability to resist the violent opposition, which Satan will then incite, (appendix two).

Section Five: Satanic Tactics

In order to disrupt Gospel preaching Satan combines the following tactics: -

5.1 Additionism – this is where he *'adds'* something to the Gospel, so that it becomes hard, complicated and legalistic, i.e. receiving justification is through the Gospel AND circumcision, or the Gospel AND good works or even the Gospel AND *'faith in faith,'* (Deuteronomy 4.2). Always it is wise when listening to any Gospel message to watch out for that fatal *'AND'!*

5.2 Reductionism – this is where *he 'takes something away'* from the Gospel so that it becomes bland, childish and ineffectual, i.e. receiving justification is through making a casual decision to invite Jesus into ones heart MINUS any notion of dependence upon divine grace or is a matter of accepting Jesus as Saviour MINUS any commitment to him as Lord or even being a case of receiving a powerful religious experience MINUS any use of the mind or bible-based content (Revelations 22.19). At best justification becomes a matter of *'making a decision,' 'going forward'* in response to an appeal or being *'zapped'* by some mysterious spiritual force. Always it is wise to watch out for that fatal *'MINUS!'*

5.3 Vaguerisation – here the devil makes out the Gospel as being something very vague, woolly or difficult to grasp. Great emphasis is laid upon its mystery and the need for scholarly expertise, (1 Corinthians 14.33). Inevitably, the effect of this is to deter many ordinary people from wanting to hear the Gospel at all. Sometimes the word *"Gospel"* may be bandied around without being given any clear-cut definition.

5.4 Linguistic Abuse – here the devil may twist words like *'Gospel,' 'faith'* or *'justification'* to have meanings that differ completely from the Biblical ones (Genesis 3.15), i.e. the word *'Gospel'* comes to mean *"you can do anything you like and God will still bless you,"* or it may take the form of *"God will allow man to establish a perfect new 'world order.'"*

5.5 Intellectual extremism – this means that Satan causes people to over emphasise certain parts of the Gospel at the expense of others (James 2.18-26), i.e. people may go to extremes concerning justification and faith. He often does this through a form of linguistic abuse where justification means nothing more than *"accepting that you are accepted"* while faith becomes *"faith in MY OWN faith in Christ,"* (appendix three).

5.6 Stylistic extremism – this means that Satan incites Gospel preachers to fall into one of four traps, (appendix four). These are: -

5.6-1 The trap of boring respectability – the Gospel is preached in such a stuffy, undemonstrative manner that it fails to either excite or to challenge people, (Matthew 23.2-7). It is therefore dismissed as being irrelevant.

5.6-2 The trap of casual flippancy – in this case the speaker “chats” the Gospel in such a light-hearted “*laugh-a-minute*” manner that people find it difficult to take seriously, (Acts 20.19).

5.6-3 The trap of manic frenzy – here the speaker gabbles the Gospel in such a loud hysterical manner that people find it easy to dismiss it as “*sheer lunacy*,” (1 Corinthians 14.40). In addition, there may also be “*show- biz*” type exhibitionism.

5.6-4 The trap of scholarly technicality – here the speaker makes the Gospel seem so theologically technical that it “*goes over the heads*” of the audience, (Matthew 23.13). It is made out to be something that’s far too hard to understand. At worst, preachers may fall into this trap out of a desire to ‘*show off*’ their academic credentials, (1 Corinthians 8.1).

5.7 Behavioural extremism – in order to discredit the Gospel, Satan often drives Christians to two dangerous extremes, (2 Timothy 1.7). These are: -

5.7-1 Laxity – the Gospel becomes a matter of “*Get saved and do what you like.*” Known as ‘*Antinomianism*,’ this error obliterates any distinction between the church and the world, (Romans 6.15-19). It also ignores the rather obvious fact that Christ has given believers a radically new nature, which is utterly opposed to sin in all its many forms. (Galatians 6.15). Furthermore, such a nature manifests those character traits (such as love), which motivates believers to follow Godly standards of conduct, (Romans 13.8). These standards are observed because the believer wants to express their heartfelt gratitude for God’s wonderful salvation. Keeping these standards is no longer seen as a means of earning that salvation. At times, both the believer and unbeliever may follow similar codes of conduct, but their reasons for doing so will differ. The former will follow them in the power of the Holy Spirit to express their relationship with God, but the latter will follow them in a futile bid to try and merit that relationship. However, should professing Christians continue to happily live a life dominated by sinful behaviour it is legitimate to question whether they really do indeed know the Lord Jesus Christ, (James 2.14f).

5.7-2 Legalism – the Gospel becomes a matter of following a lot of petty rules and regulations, i.e. “*thou shalt live in community to be a better, super spiritual Christian*”, “*thou shalt obey the leaders without question*” or “*thou shalt not think for thyself or ask awkward questions.*” As a result of this the church becomes unnecessarily restrictive and exclusive, (1 Thessalonians 5.21). Harsh authoritarianism by the leaders may also be a problem.

5.8 Counterfeiting – here, the devil erects a myriad of counterfeit (or false) Gospels in order to obscure the real one, (1 Corinthians 11.13-15; Galatians 1.6-8). The same counterfeit Gospel can go under many different names. It may even claim to represent a restoration of the true Gospel or the recovery of a secret one, which had been kept hidden for long centuries by a wicked Church hierarchy. Frequently originating in strange spiritual experiences, (sometimes given by angelic beings) these counterfeit Gospels prove especially dangerous when they gain credence within the Church. Particular examples include: -

5.8-1 The ‘super spiritual’ Gospel – which presupposes that salvation involves running away from the world, joining an enclosed monastery and then mortifying one’s way to heaven via a series of ‘*meritous*’ works or ‘*spiritual exercises*,’ (John 17.15). Hence, the emphasis is on escapism, (Psalms 55.6). It might also claim that salvation consists of abolishing ignorance in order to gain a new, ‘*enlightened*’ understanding, which could help the recipient to ‘*realise*’ their divine nature and become part of that ultimate, impersonal, ‘*cosmic*’ reality who is called God. (If this sounds like vague mumbo-jumbo it is!)

5.8-2 The ‘social’ Gospel, which presupposes that salvation involves being “*nice*” to people, giving to charity and campaigning to improve society or create a new, just world order, (Romans 3.20; Matthew 7.21-22). Great emphasis is laid upon meeting physical, psychological and social welfare needs. It often leads to a high degree of political involvement.

5.8-3 The ‘structural’ Gospel, which presupposes that salvation is a matter building new local, national and global organizational structures in order to create a New World Order that will reflect the Christian values of ‘*peace and justice.*’ Great emphasis is laid upon ‘*transforming the nations for Christ.*’

5.8-4 The ‘worldly’ Gospel, which presupposes that salvation is a matter of being positive, having fun and enjoying material prosperity (Psalms 30.7-9; 2 Corinthians 11.21-29). Great emphasis is laid upon personal success and fulfilment. Gospel preaching is often reduced to a form of entertainment.

5.8-5 The *'inter-faith'* Gospel, which presupposes that salvation is a matter of being religiously sincere (John 14.6), true to one's (often non Christian) traditions (Acts 4.12) and avoiding (like the plague) and trace of *'fundamentalism'*⁽³⁾. In this Gospel the emphasis is very much upon *'man's religious search'* or *'spiritual journey'* – which oddly enough never seems able to arrive at a particular destination!⁽⁴⁾.

5.8-6 The *'formal'* Gospel, which presupposes that salvation is a matter of going to church, reciting a Creed and paying lip service to Bible teaching, (Isaiah 29.13).

5.9 Distraction – in this area the devil uses many ploys in order to divert a church from preaching the Gospel, (Psalms 88.15). Such ploys include: -

5.9-1 *"Busyness"* – a Christian group becomes lost in too many activities along with the administrative chores stemming from them, (Revelations 2.19-23).

5.9-2 *"Fellowshipitis"* – a Christian group becomes an inward-looking *"holy huddle"* that's solely concerned with personal blessing and meeting individual needs (3 John 9-10). It may also be under an authoritarian leader.

5.9-3 *'Deceptive heresies'* – and the ensuing division it often causes, (2 John 6-8). Satan might actively *'bewitch'* a congregation into following an impressive but false teaching or revelation, (Galatians 3.1)

5.9-4 *'Diversions'* – a Christian group is diverted into pursuing some secondary aim such as *'guarding a certain lifestyle'* or the need to fill a job may panic them into appointing the wrong person for it. Alternatively, a Church may just become a social club, cultural centre or welfare agency.

5.9-5 Over-preoccupation with something less valuable than the Gospel,⁽⁵⁾ *i.e.* a political controversy over an environmental issue, (Galatians 3.2-4).

5.9-6 The incitement of personality clashes and internal dissension – often-petty minor matters, (1 Corinthians 1.10-15).

5.9-7 Various disasters, mishaps and persecutions (Job 1.12-19). These serve to weigh down the group concerned under an endless series of problems.

5.10 Subtle or even violent persecution – assuming various forms from verbal mockery and slander to overt attempts at mass murder (Acts 8.1-3), this particular tactic is usually employed when: -

5.10-1 The church is moving so strongly in the Spirit that Satan is worried – thereby adopting a drastic course of action, (Revelations 2.9-11).

5.10-2 The church is so weak and backslidden that Satan simply *"homes in"* for the kill, (2 Kings 17.1-20). Represented here is a *"final mopping up"* operation.

If the devil can't add his own poison to the Gospel, he will try and dilute it so that it becomes weak and *"wishy-washy,"* (Proverbs 30.6). Yet perhaps his favourite tactic is to encourage a *"couldn't care less"* attitude – so effective in demotivating people from sharing the good news of Jesus. In other words, when it comes to the Gospel, Satan's chief aim is to get Christians to simply do nothing about it. APATHY is perhaps the best weapon in his armoury, (Revelations 3.14-22).

Alternately, he's willing to keep Christians busy with anything so long as it doesn't contribute anything to propagating the Gospel.

⁽³⁾ In other words, *'Bible-believing'* Christianity.

⁽⁴⁾ It should be noted that a mixture of counterfeits might well be found among a particular group of people, *i.e.* Liberal Theologians – who often combine elements of the *'social,' 'structural'* and the *'inter-faith'* Gospels.

⁽⁵⁾ They may well be good in themselves and important for the church to tackle to some degree, but not at the expense of the Gospel.

Section Six: Counter-Strategies

In order to offset the devil's wiles it is necessary for believers to follow three strategies. These include: -

6.1 Prayerfully taking stock of all activities at least two or three times a year, (Ephesians 6.18). Those activities or teaching found not to be profitable should then be quickly abandoned.

6.2 Not preferring to accept any '*prophetic*' revelation or '*new teaching*' emphasis without prior careful and prolonged testing, (1 John 4.1).

6.3 Learning how to cope with different forms of opposition, (Philippians 4.11).

Such strategies can only be implemented successfully if use is made of "*the external means of Grace,*" (Psalms 119.9). These include Bible study, participation in the sacraments and fellowship with other believers, (Hebrews 10.25).

Section Seven: Counter-Tactics

To help thwart the devil's wiles, it is necessary for believers to apply the following tactics. These include: -

7.1 The study of the word of God. This is so that the Christian is thoroughly familiar with what the Gospel is, as distinct from what people may say it is, (Ephesians 6.17).

7.2 Keeping the Gospel simple and as free from non-biblical jargon as possible, (Isaiah 61.1-2; 1 Corinthians 2.1-5).

7.3 Perseverance in sharing the Gospel regardless of whether there is a popular demand for it, (Hebrews 12.12-13).

7.4 Holding tenaciously to the contents of the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2.15), whilst realising that it must be handed down from one generation of believers to another.

7.5 Being flexible in regard to the manner in which the Gospel is shared, (1 Corinthians 9.19-23).

7.6 Knowing how to handle temptation, (James 1.2). This may well require using the weapons of spiritual warfare found in Ephesians 6.10-18.

7.7 Learning how to cope with rejection, (Luke 10.10-11).

At this point, it is important to remember that if the devil can't stop a church from preaching the Gospel he will tempt it to preach the Gospel in such a dour, joyless fashion that it becomes bad news, not good news (John 15.11). The Gospel is then brought into disrepute. Indeed, there is nothing more painfully dreary than the Gospel not being preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, (Zechariah 4.6).

Section Eight: Other Remedies

In order to counter the satanic strategies and tactics described in the appendices, it is necessary for believers (at both the individual and corporate levels) to: -

- 8.1** Employ all Biblically ordained means of spiritual warfare, (Ephesians 6.10-12).
- 8.2** Avoid busyness for the sake of it – taking time out to review current activities, (Exodus 20.8-10). During such interludes it would be wise to actively seek objective advice and criticism.
- 8.3** Humbly confess and renounce any proud “*we’ve got it all*” attitude, (1 Peter 5.6).
- 8.4** Deal with error at an early stage before it seizes hold of a group, (Galatians 2.11-17).
- 8.5** Retain a humble openness to correction, even when it comes from an unlikely or unexpected quarter, (Proverbs 27.5-6).
- 8.6** Avoid childish gimmicks in spiritual warfare including such themes as ‘*name it and claim it*,’ ‘*positive confession*’ and ‘*visualisation*.’ Indeed, such techniques are often themselves an outcome of some form of deception, (1 Corinthians 13.11).
- 8.7** Grow in holiness and all the other personality traits associated with Christian maturity, (2 Peter 1.3-11).
- 8.8** Accept that the Gospel is about helping people to relate to God as forgiven sinners who have become His adopted children. It is NOT a means through which people can become divine beings or ‘*mini Christ’s*’ in their own right. Those who do believe this have succumbed to the devilish temptation mentioned in Genesis 3.5.
- 8.9** Distinguish between those blessings, which salvation can: -
 - 8.9-1** Produce instantaneously, e.g. forgiveness of sins.
 - 8.9-2** Produce gradually over a lifetime, e.g. growth in Holiness.
 - 8.9-3** Only produce after death, e.g. a perfect new resurrection body.
 - 8.9-4** Only produce after Christ’s personal return e.g. a perfectly just society
 - 8.9-5** Never produce at all e.g. a right to become divine beings that are equal to God⁽⁶⁾.

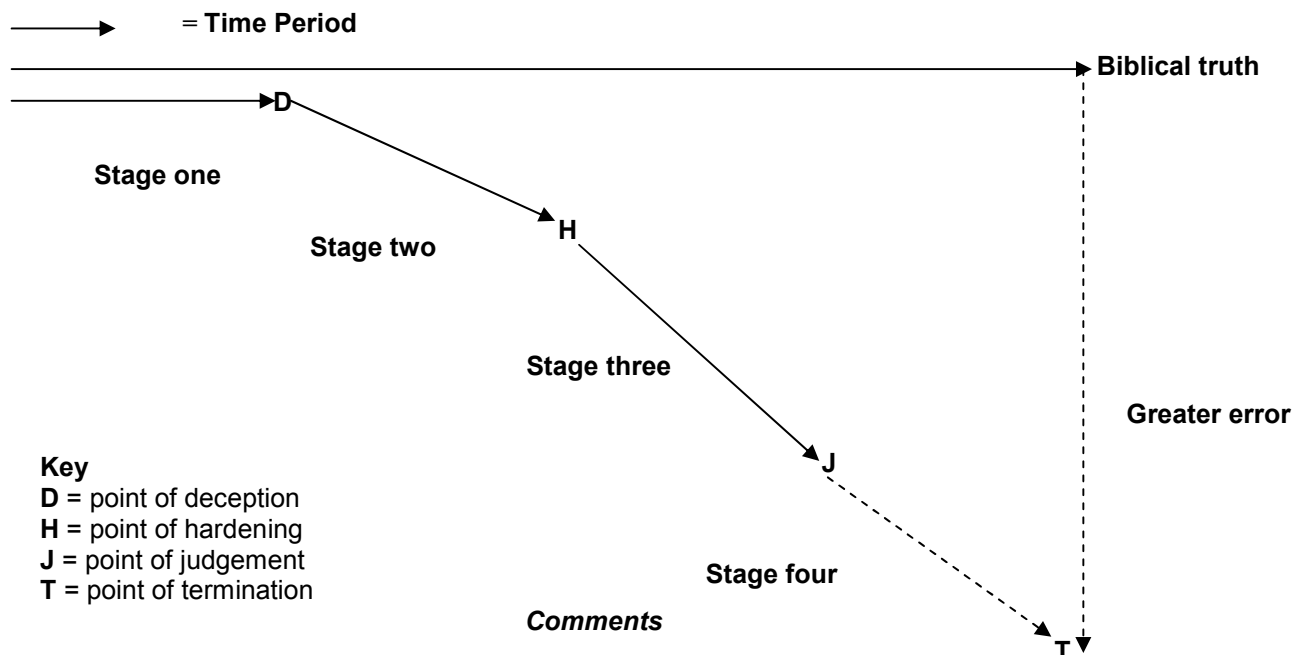
Any confusion between the instantaneous, gradual, post-death and non-obtainable blessings of salvation can create many difficulties for believers. These might make them receptive to any false Gospel promising to relieve or cure those difficulties. False Gospels are often very popular because they promise to solve some problem, which may have been created or exacerbated by a previous spiritual counterfeit. They also have an appeal because they usually play upon the human desire to ‘*feel good*’ or upon some selfish craving, such as the craving for money. In addition, counterfeit Gospels often appeal to human pride and the boastful attitude, which assumes, ‘*I can make it to God in MY own way*’ A study of Church History suggests that even within supposedly Bible-based Assemblies, a false gospel usually enjoys far greater popularity than the true one, which does not pander to selfish human wants. Appendix five shows, that the heresies propagating these false Gospels nearly always deny some important aspect of the person and work of Jesus Christ. They result from a mixture of human sinfulness and demonic seduction, (Appendix Six.)

Section Nine: Concluding Comments

The church at large urgently needs to recover the Gospel. However, this can only be achieved more fully by exploring the Jewish origins of Christianity (John 4.22). Today, more than ever, people need to ask (as well as answer) the question, “*What is the REAL Gospel?*”

⁽⁶⁾ The belief that we can become a divine being is known as ‘*deification*,’ which literally means ‘*to make into a God*.’

Appendix One
The Insidious Way In Which Satan To Deception Gradually Lures
Christian Groups Into Deception



Stage one: Gradual subversion, this is the situation where over a long time period Satan lures a lively Christian group ever further away from Bible-based truth. However, he does this so imperceptibly that nothing much appears to be amiss. God's blessings are still evident, largely because people are moving into error through ignorance and not through wilful perversity. Nevertheless, and largely unbeknown to them, they are now open to the next stage of overt deception, (Genesis 3.15).

Stage two: Overt deception, having been weakened over a long time period, the group concerned is now ready for some dramatic deception from the evil one. Often well presented, in an attractive manner, this deception may well be mistaken as a great blessing from God. Tremendous excitement may ensue, but the truth of the matter is that the group is now descending more rapidly into error. As possible queries and problems begin to appear, the group leaders face a choice of either renouncing the deception in question, or of hardening themselves in it, (2 Corinthians 11.12-15).

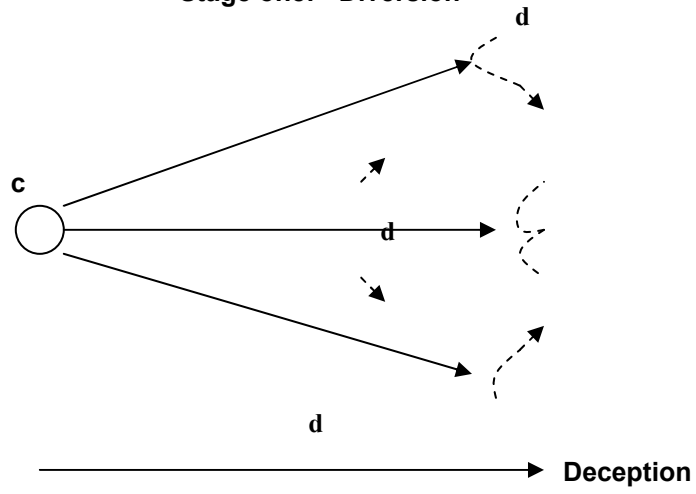
Stage three: Wilful heresy, At this point of hardening, a group becomes wilfully and persistently committed to those errors which stemmed from the overt deception of stage two. At this juncture, the group is not only found to be in error, but also in heresy. Consequently, the rapid slide continues into deception and serious problems start to emerge. The group is now becoming ripe for some form of judgement. Indeed, the point of judgement also marks the point of no return, (2 Peter 2.1). Repentance itself has become impossible.

Stage four: Devastation, by this stage, God has decided to give a group over to its errors. It thus takes the natural consequences for them – reaping what it has sown. Moreover, the Spirit's blessings are withdrawn so that the group is left wide open to satanic devastation. In such a situation it is usually the weak, vulnerable folk who are hurt. As the group reaches termination point 'T' it may either cease to exist or linger on for years being yet another embarrassment littering the Christian scene, (Revelations 2.10-11).

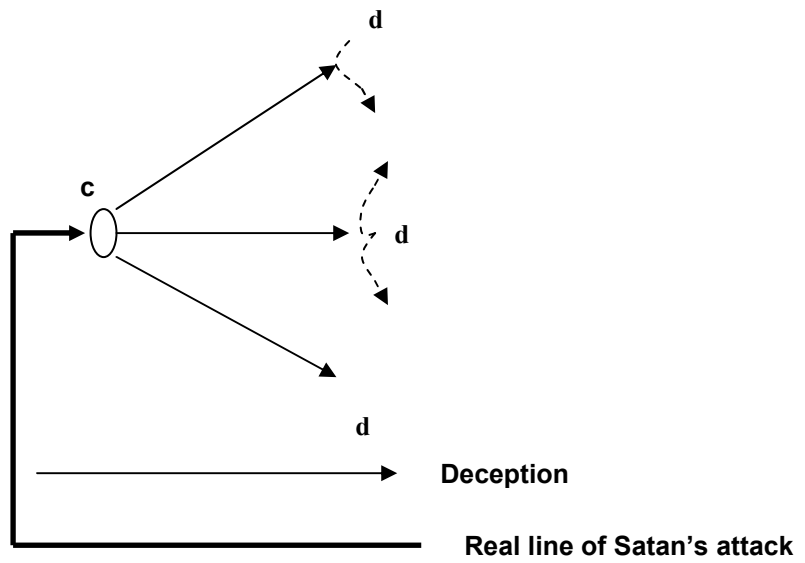
Our final point is that the further a group drifts into error, the harder it becomes to get back into the line of Bible-based truth. After "J" is reached recovery is virtually impossible, the group is past the point of no return.

Appendix Two
The Diversionary Tactics Of Satan

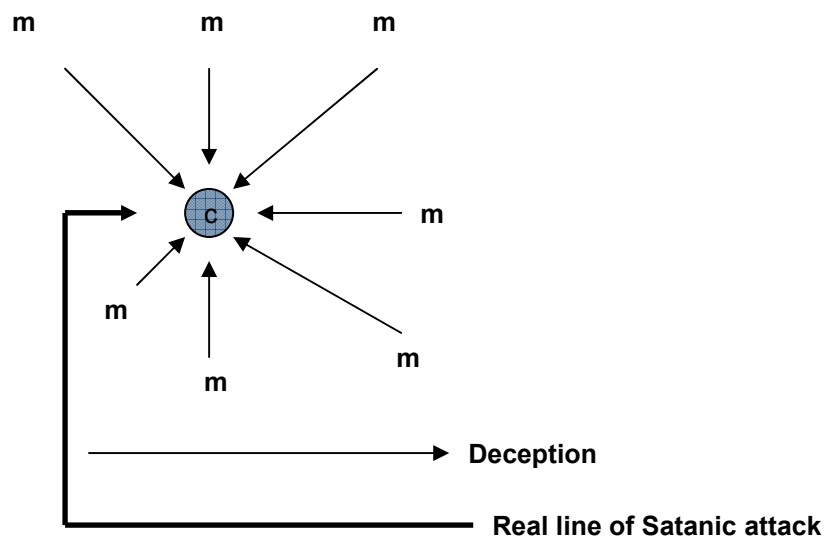
Stage one: - Diversion




Stage two: - Outflanking





Stage three: Destruction



Key

c
 = A Christian group

 = Repulsed satanic diversion

 = Dying Christian group

m = A satanic mopping-up operation



Comments

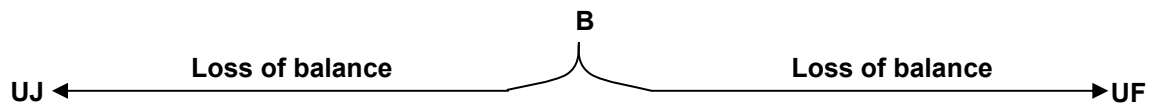
Stage One: Diversion, In order to lure a Christian group away from Bible-based truth, the devil could well employ spectacular diversionary tactics. These may include noisy, demonic manifestations from various disturbed people, (Acts 16.16-24). With great cunning, he then allows these to be repelled to lull the said group onto a false sense of security and self-confidence. However, the group is steered ever deeper into deception, (I Corinthians 10.12)

Stage Two: Outflanking, once a group has been lured into deception, Satan can then launch his real line of attack which silently outflanks the group in question. Frequently, these outflanking techniques could take the form of some subtle false teaching (*i.e.* 'we're the new Zion') or a beguiling spiritual practice like visualisation, (Romans 11.18-21). These may infiltrate the given group slowly and imperceptibly without anyone realising that anything is amiss. An arrogant complacency may exist. This will discourage members from expressing any concerns

Stage Three: Destruction, having trapped the said group in deception, the devil can now move in for the kill, (Revelations 2.10-11). He may either rip the group apart with division and/or crush it through persecution (Judges 9.22-56). It's at this point some of those within the group will *'fall away'* from whatever Christian faith they may have professed. There is no sense of divine blessing (Hebrews 2.7-9). Another alternative to actually destroying the group may be to keep it lingering on for year after year in its weakened, powerless form. This is achieved with the aim of trapping believers into wasting their time in perpetuating a dead work. On occasion, Satan may cause such a group to enjoy a large degree of outward prosperity and success. He does this in order to entice more people into spiritual deception. The group has become a recruiting agent for the devil. It is no longer a true Assembly of God

When thinking upon this strategy, we are reminded of the Manstein Plan of 1940, which the Germans applied in order to defeat the allies, (Revelations 12.9). They launched diversionary attacks on the Low-countries to lure the allied forces away from supply depots. However, their real line of advance was through the Ardennes. From there they could break up the whole allied front and quickly advance onto the French capital of Paris.

Appendix Three
The Linguistic Abuse, Which Can Result From Doctrinal Extremism



Key

B = Balanced emphasis on Justification and Faith

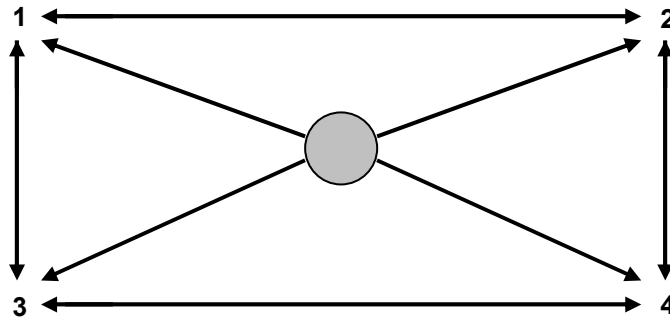
UJ = Unbalanced overemphasis upon Justification

UF = Unbalanced overemphasis upon Faith


Comments

If B is lost there only remains a choice between two unbalanced extremes. The first of these is 'UJ' where justification becomes a little more than a matter of *'accepting that you are accepted,'* (Romans 1.18), while the second 'UF' is *'faith in faith'* (Philippians. 3.9). Of the two, 'UF' is far more prevalent today. This diagram shows that in any piece of Gospel preaching, it is ALWAYS important to link both justification and faith (Romans 1.16-17). Any failure to do this detracts from the effectiveness of that preaching.

Appendix Four
The Stylistic Extremes In Preaching



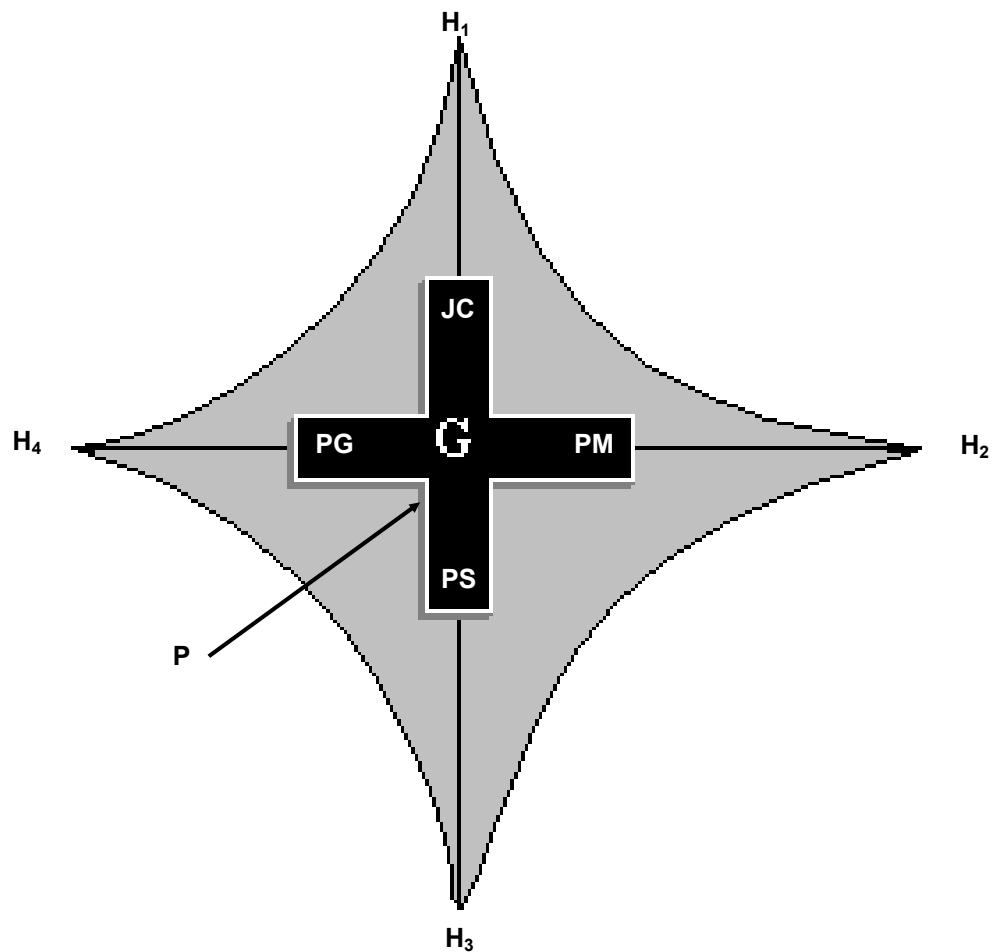
Key

-  = Circle of Spirit-anointed Bible-based truth
- 1** = the trap of *'boring respectability'*
- 2** = the trap of *'casual flippancy'*
- 3** = the trap of *'manic frenzy'*
- 4** = the trap of *'scholarly technicality'*

Comments

Preachers moving out of the circle are then likely to fall into one of four stylistic traps, (1 Corinthians 2.1-4). The diagram also shows that it is possible to fall into more than one extreme at the same time.

Appendix Five
How Different Heresies Attack the Person and Work of Jesus



Key

G = The Gospel of Jesus Christ (JC), which proclaims that, as perfect God (PG) and perfect man (PM) Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice (PS) for sin.

P = Progress of the Gospel in the world

H₁ = A heresy focusing its attack upon the actual existence of Jesus.

H₂ = A heresy focusing its attack upon the perfect manhood of Jesus.

H₃ = A heresy focusing its attack upon the perfect sacrifice of Jesus.

H₄ = A heresy focusing its attack upon the perfect deity of Jesus.

Grey Area = A smokescreen of deceitful extra Biblical traditions, philosophical speculations and beguiling mystical experiences.

Comments

For all their apparent divergences in teaching and practices all heresies (wilful denials of biblical teaching) are united in one thing – namely their denial of a specific aspect of the person and work of Jesus Christ. At the very least, such aspects are obscured behind a smokescreen of lies, half-truths and general evasiveness. The most direct attacks often attack these aspects in a very militant and dogmatic way.

Regardless of their (sometimes violent) differences, many heresies remain united in their denial of the one true Gospel.

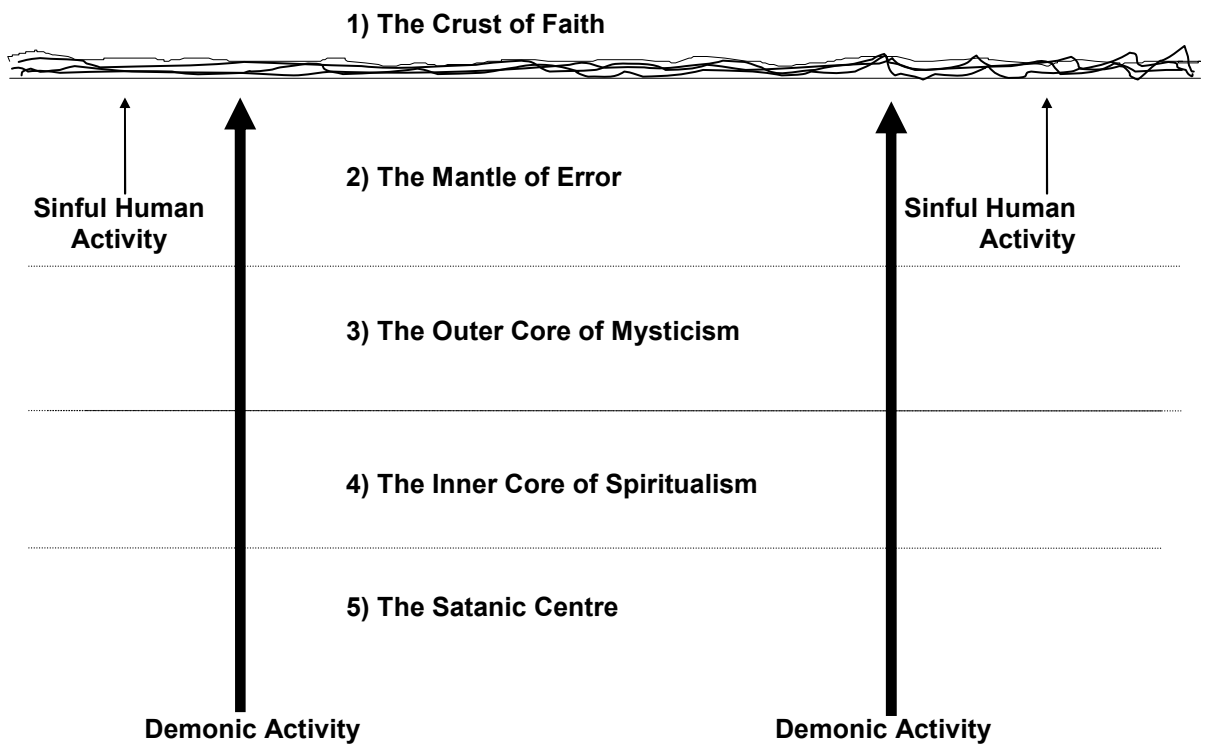
*With bold certainty,
This Gospel proclaims,
With glad confidence,
That as PERFECT God
Jesus Christ became
A PERFECT Man,
In order to offer
The PERFECT Sacrifice
For the sins of the whole world*

Found present within any heresy is an Ecumenical Union of denial wherein an essential part of the Gospel is attacked, obscured or ignored. Ecumenical denial also applies to those heresies, which on the surface don't appear to deal with Jesus Himself. Nevertheless, in the IMPLICATION of their teaching there exists a denial of a significant feature of the Gospel message. An example may well be denial of the doctrine of 'eternal damnation.' By implication, this denial reduces the importance of Christ's perfect sacrifice, which is only viewed as saving people from personal oblivion rather than from eternal misery in Hell. A further example may be the view that 'spiritual gifts ceased with the Apostles.' This view, by implication, weakens the truth that as Perfect God Jesus, through His Holy Spirit can guide people into effective evangelism via supernatural intervention – always of course, within strict Biblical limits.

Moreover, the same heresy over time may change its focus of attack or attack a number of areas simultaneously. It may also go under many different names. For instance the teaching of the fourth century Arian heresy (which that Christ was only a created being) has been perpetuated by a diverse range of groups across the centuries – one contemporary example being the Jehovah Witnesses.

Usually, any powerful heresy will combine a dangerous mixture of devious manipulation and vitriolic militancy in attacking key aspects of the Gospel message. In short, EVERY HERESY REPRESENTS SATAN'S ATTEMPT TO HIDE JESUS. He is truly the Father of lies, (John 8.44).

Appendix Six
The Layers of Error, Which Can Exist Within a Particular Deception



Comments

1) The Crust Of Error – this consists of true Bible-based beliefs and practices, which unsuspectingly serve to hide the real nature of a particular deception. Sometimes this belief is a re-emphasis of an important Biblical truth, which has lain neglected for years. An example to note is Jesus in the wilderness. Here, Satan made use of precious Scriptural truths (concerning divine protection) in order to entice Jesus into performing a spectacular stunt, (Matthew 4.6; Luke 4.10-12). It is well within Satan's nature to employ truth as a plausible mask for error, (Genesis 3.1). Usually there exists a need to look beneath the surface of a phenomenon in order to discern its nature.

2) The Mantle Of Error – this layer consists of a mixture of both truth and error, often found in rapidly changing combinations in order to sow greater confusion, (1 Corinthians 14.33). For instance both false teachers and false prophets often lay truth alongside error. One case of this was the prophet Hananiah who rightly predicted the re-gathering of the exiles in Jeremiah 28. However, he said it would take place in two years time, not in the seventy years ordained by God in Jeremiah 25.11-12, 28.3, 29.10. What is also found in this layer is the kind of harsh legalism of the kind condemned by Paul in Colossians 2.16f. On the whole, it would be correct to state that in this layer human sinfulness is more obviously evident than demon activity. Satan still prefers to operate behind the scenes. There might however be some evidence of heresy.

3) The Outer Core Of Mysticism – this layer consists of bizarre mind-emptying mystical practices designed to sedate the mind and open the seeker up to influence of evil spirits. Magical spells, designed to control the supernatural or to initiate the seeker into a '*higher realm of reality*' are also to be found in this layer, (Acts 19.18). In this layer direct demonic activity starts to become more evident - sometimes through the kind of clairvoyant abilities described in Acts 16.16-24.

4) The Inner Core Of Spiritualism – this layer consists of actual personal experience of outside spiritual entities. These experiences may be very beguiling attempts at seduction by an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11.14-15) or ghostly apparition of Jesus (2 Corinthians 11.4), or alternatively they may be very violent as with the Gadarene demonic, (Luke 8.26-39). In this layer direct demonic activity becomes predominant with evil spirits being able to assume a variety of forms, ranging from a dead person (Leviticus 19.31), through to an archangel or even being from outer space! Clairvoyant abilities also become very marked. Such abilities may characterise the ministry of the less intellectual type of heretic.

5) The Satanic Centre – at the centre of every powerful heresy is Satan himself, the father of lies (John 8.44) who is addicted to the notion that people should worship him rather than the one true God of Israel, (Matthew 4.9; Luke 4.5-7). Indeed, from Satan's standpoint every deception is simply a means to procure people's worship and thereby secure their eternal damnation in the lake of fire, which burns forever, (Matthew 25.41; Revelation 20.10, 22.8). It is in this layer that there exists the worst kind of witchcraft and the worst kinds of devil worship. Unlike previous layers where people may still think they are serving God. In this layer they have knowingly sold themselves to the evil one. They cannot plead the excuse of deluded idealism.

Based upon the words in Revelation 2.24, this diagram assumes that sinful human activity can play a part in upholding a particular deception as well as direct demonic activity. Also deceptions that are purely of human origin tend to only possess the first two layers; however, they may be no less dangerous than more overtly demon-driven errors as they can still be manipulated by the powers of darkness – as the case of Peter in Matthew 16. 21-23 shows. Most philosophy would fall into the category of mainly human driven error – whereas great heresies like Gnosticism had a very obvious demonic basis.