

## **SPIRITUAL CONFLICT**

### **GOD'S PEOPLE TRIUMPHANT**

#### **Satan's Program for the Close of the Age**

In our previous two studies in this series we dealt with the program of God for bringing this age to a close. The work of restoration among God's people and the results of restoration in a church that's renewed, united, equipped and empowered to go forth and fulfill the task which God committed to the church.

In this study we're going to look at the opposite side of the coin, if I may express it that way, that is Satan's program for the close of this age. Many Christians do not realize that Satan has a program, he's working according to it, he has specific aims and objectives which he desires to achieve. And we are liable to be deceived or to be ineffective in our warfare against him unless we have some idea of what he is seeking to achieve and the methods which he uses to achieve it.

Satan, by his name, means the resistor. That's what Satan means, "the one who opposes the purposes and the people of God." And so we can understand that whatever God seeks to do of good, Satan will oppose it with his purposes of evil. Another truth about Satan is that he essentially is a counterfeiter. He takes the good that God has provided which is genuine and seeks to substitute for it something which is evil but has the outward appearance of good. And this we'll see also in this study.

Let's begin with Ephesians 2:2-3 which we have started earlier in this series. The apostle Paul is writing to believers in Christ and speaking about their pasts before they came to Christ. And he says:

Wherein times past ye walked according to the course of this world [age], according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (KJV)

So that in this passage Paul says that as far as the unconverted and unregenerated are concerned, Satan is their ruler. He is the ruler of the realm of authority defined by the air. And in earlier studies we saw that this was precisely the realm of authority which was committed originally by God to Adam. That Adam had

divine authority over all the earth from God, and that when Adam fell and became disloyal and turned to Satan rather than to God, the result was that he handed over the whole realm of his authority to Satan. And in this way, Satan became the ruler of the realm of the authority of the air, working as a spirit in those who are disobedient to God. So that Satan's rule is valid only over those who are disobedient to God. When men and women turn back to God in true repentance, faith and submission, then Satan's legal claim and dominion over them is terminated. But he is still the ruler over the children of disobedience; the rebellious, the unregenerates. Those that will not believe and those that will not submit to God, have a king over them. He's called in the 41st chapter of Job, Leviathan, the king over all the children of pride. Pride, rebellion, stubbornness gives Satan his legal claim and his dominion over this group of persons.

Now though Satan is a ruler in this world today, he does not have everything exactly the way he wants it. He has access to the human race but he does not at this time have the human race totally under his control. As far as I understand Scripture, so far as the angels are concerned which joined with him in rebellion against God, they are totally under Satan's control. They have to do what Satan demands. Now the human race is subject to Satan through its disobedience to God but it is not as yet totally under the control of Satan. I think this is obvious. We can see it in experience. Satan has a measure of control over sinners and over world systems and governments and so on, but his control is not absolute.

Now he has two objectives which he is working towards and I have put them here in the outline: To gain complete political control on earth and secondly, to receive for himself the worship of the whole world. These are the objectives to which Satan has been working ever since the human race came under his control. And as we get nearer the close of this age, just as the objectives of God are coming nearer to fulfillment, so, in a certain sense, are the objectives of Satan. And with certain limitations, God is going to give Satan a brief opportunity to fulfill these two objectives. This will be part of God's judgment on a Christ rejecting world, as we'll see out of Scripture.

But at the present time and over many, many past centuries there has been one main force at work in the world which has hindered Satan from achieving his objectives. And that force as stated in your outline is the

working of God's Spirit, turning men back to God in repentance and submission. Wherever men are turned back to God in repentance and submission, Satan's dominion terminates. So as long as the Spirit of God is at work in the world turning men back to God in repentance and submission, Satan's dominion can never become total and complete as he would desire it to be. This is a very important thing to understand. The great restraining force in the world which prevents Satan from the ultimate achievement of his ambitions and objectives in relation to the human race is the Spirit of God working in the hearts of men and women, giving them repentance and faith in God and in His word and in Jesus Christ.

Now many people do not realize that the human race, in its rebellion and its sin, left to itself, apart from the Spirit of God which is the Spirit of grace, will never turn to God. There is nothing in unregenerate, fallen, rebellious man that will ever prompt him to turn to God unless he is first prompted by the Holy Spirit. This is a great truth of Scripture which many people do not understand, but much that's basic in the gospel rests on this fact. Apart from the moving of the Spirit of God in grace and mercy, in the hearts of men and women, there is nothing in man that will cause him ever to turn and seek God or repent to God. We are totally dependent for the initial turning to God upon the Spirit of God.

Look at the picture in the Psalms of man without the Spirit of God working in his heart. You'll find it in Psalm 14:1-3, also in Psalm 53:1-3 because the two passages are identical. I'm going to read from Psalm 14:1-3:

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men [that's the whole human race, the sons of Adam], to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (KJV)

This is man without the Spirit of God at work, he doesn't understand, he doesn't seek God, he doesn't do good. We often deceive ourselves and imagine that there was something good in us that caused us to turn to God and receive Jesus Christ. I used to say for many years, "Well, I always had a longing in my heart for the truth." And I kind of patted myself on the back for that. Then God showed me out of Scripture one day,

and by the Holy Spirit, “Don’t pride yourself on that, because My Spirit put it there. And if My Spirit hadn’t put it there, it would never have been there.” Man without God will never turn to God and never seek God. It is only God’s grace, through the Holy Spirit, that will ever prompt any man to turn from his sin and his rebellion, and to humble himself, seek God and repent and put faith in God. When the Holy Spirit does not do the work, then it will not be done. There is no other agent in the universe, no other power that can cause the heart of man to turn to God from sin and rebellion but the Spirit of God.

Now let’s look on for a further stage in the fulfillment of Satan’s project, if I may put it that way. Turn to Luke 4, and we’ll read verses 5–8. This is part of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan, and it’s the temptation that deals with earthly kingdoms and rule. I’ll read the account as given here in Luke.

And the devil, taking him [Jesus] up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power [authority] will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (KJV)

Satan is looking for a man whom he can use to gain complete political control over the whole earth so that this man may turn the whole earth in worship to Satan. His supreme objective is to be worshipped. He wants the worship of the whole earth. And he said to Jesus, “If You will worship me, then I’ll get all this power for You. You’ll be the world ruler. The world will acknowledge You. But, in acknowledging You they’ll have to acknowledge me, because I’ll be the one that gave You the power. So in worshipping You they’ll be worshipping me, Satan.” And Jesus said, “Satan, I will not do it, because there’s only one whom we may worship, that is the Lord God.” And I would like you to notice what Jesus said to Satan in the 8th verse. It’s translated in the King James Version, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” This is a suggestion of Jesus dismissing Satan. But it isn’t really, I believe, what the language actually says. The language says, “Follow behind Me, Satan.” In other words, “I’ll go first and you can come afterwards.” And I believe that this is true. Everywhere that Christ is preached and proclaimed, the devil is permitted to follow with his alternative, the antichrist. And thus, the whole race is faced with a choice. You see, the first time this choice was put

before the human race was when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate and Pontius Pilate said to the Jewish leaders, "Which of the two? Do you want Jesus, or do you want Barabbas?" And they said, "Not this man Jesus, but Barabbas." That's the first time the spirit of antichrist was manifested in human history. Prompting them to reject the true Christ and choose an evil, godless, cunning, violent man. And this is how it's going to be at the close of this age. God will present the human race again with the choice. Which do you want? The true Christ or the false Christ? First the true Christ will be preached in all nations for a witness unto the whole world with signs following and the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. And then Satan will be permitted to follow after with the antichrist. And the world will be forced to the place of a clear-cut decision. This man, or Barabbas? You see, there wasn't a third alternative. And at the close of this age there will be no third alternative. This is the valley of decision spoken about in Joel 3:14. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." So Jesus said in relation to this political dominion, "Satan, I'll not make the bargain, but you can follow behind Me. And the world can be given a choice." You see, Israel always has the first opportunity when it comes to God's dealings. It's to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Israel had the choice then; all nations are going to have the choice at the close of this age. Whom do you want, Jesus or Barabbas? Barabbas is one of the types in Scripture of antichrist. I'll not go into this, but he's a very clear type.

Now let's look at the alternatives. Jesus, the true Christ would not make the bargain with Satan. So Satan is looking for another man of outstanding ability and personality. A man of whom the world would say he has charisma. Have you noticed nowadays they're using that phrase? And there's a kind of charisma that comes from the Holy Spirit and there's a kind of charisma that comes from another spirit. And that's not always easy to distinguish between. Because Satan can't use just any man for this position. He's got to find a man of brilliant personality, appearance, intelligence and force of character. Jesus would have done it. Jesus was the ideal choice, but He wouldn't make the bargain.

Now turn to Revelation 13 and you'll see. The beast is one of the titles of antichrist without going into everything now.

The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his

mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon [who is specifically said to be the devil] gave him his power, and his seat [or his throne], and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death [this is I believe, the antichrist apparently raised from the dead by a miracle]; and his deadly wound was healed . . . (KJV)

Let me just pause and ask you this question. What would the American nation have done to President Kennedy if he had been brought back from the dead? He would have had the whole nation at his feet. Just one thing like that, this is no criticism of President Kennedy, don't misunderstand me, but it's just a little illustration of the impact of such an event.

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon [the devil] which gave authority to the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? (KJV)

No one can fight against him. He has all atomic weapons under his control; he has every government under his control. He has a secret police service that no one can deal with. He has supernatural understanding. He can tell us what we were saying at the breakfast table in our own room. Because it says in various passages in the Bible that he was wiser than Daniel. There was no secret that could be hidden from him. (This is in the 28th chapter of Ezekiel, we'll not turn there.)

We realize that we're dealing with a man of outstanding personality and ability and intelligence who has more than natural knowledge and wisdom imparted by Satan. This is the picture. He's not on a natural plane. And this is Satan's supreme objective, to raise up his representative in opposition to the true Christ, to rule all nations, be worshiped; because in worshipping the antichrist, the world will be worshipping Satan who gave him the power. And this is Satan's final, supreme objective: To be worshiped.

Now in working towards this end, Satan uses two main lines which are there briefly stated in your outline. First of all, direct intervention by spiritual agents from Satan's kingdom. And secondly, the outworking of sin's corruption in the human heart, producing progressive moral and ethical decline. Some people tell us that things are getting better and better. But basically this is not true where sin is at work, things are not getting better and better, they're getting worse and worse unless God intervenes by His grace.

So we have these two means that Satan is using to achieve his ultimate aim. One is direct, supernatural intervention by satanic spirits. And the other is the progressive worsening of human moral and ethical standards as sin's corruption progressively increases. Let me just point out that in our lifetime, the lifetime of everybody here, we have seen probably the two most cruel, wicked, ruthless, destructive rulers that human history has ever recorded. Adolph Hitler and Josef Stalin. And each of them was directly responsible for the brutal killing of human beings who must have numbered many millions. I don't believe there's anything in human history that parallels the activities of those two men. And how long ago was that? Twenty or thirty years? Let's not deceive ourselves. The human race is not getting better. My wife has always said about Hitler and the Germans: The only real criticism they had against Hitler was he was defeated. Had he won, they would still be worshiping him. Only the corruption of humanity could make it possible for men to accept rulers like Stalin and Hitler. This is part of what Satan is using.

But the other part is the supernatural intervention of evil spirits. And the two cooperate together to produce the situation and the ruler that Satan desires.

Now I'm going to take two patterns briefly from the Old Testament, each of which has seven truths to tell us about this culminating project of Satan. The first is from Noah's days, the other is from the days of Ahab, King of Israel.

Now let's look at Noah's days first and see the pattern there very clearly unfolded. Genesis 6, we'll read verses 1 and 2.

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. (KJV)

Now I know that there is difference of opinion about that, but I have no question in my mind that the "sons of God" refers to angels. They were not angels that remained loyal to God, they were disobedient angels in rebellion against God that came down from the angelic plane of living and cohabited with human women.

Now all ancient myths and records of races all around the world preserve these traditions. They're not recorded only in the Scriptures. Verse 4:

There were giants [but the Hebrew is *nephilim*, which means "fallen ones"] in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown [which the Greek calls *heroes*]. (KJV)

And if you're familiar with Greek mythology, most of the heroes, their origin is traced to the coming of a god to cohabit with a human woman, like Zeus and Lida and so on.

Now I wouldn't believe it if it were merely myth, but the Bible definitely presents the same picture. Direct intervention from a spiritual realm by Satan's representatives in the human race. And this is the root cause of all that's described that follows in this chapter. God showed me this when I was preparing a series of messages for a TV program which never came off. I was going to start with the wickedness of the human race and the Holy Spirit kind of waved His finger at me and said, "No, you go back to the origin." The origin is the intervention from Satan's realm. That's what triggered the whole thing and set it rolling so quickly. It was supernatural, satanic intervention.

Now some people say, "Angels don't marry." But Jesus said, "The angels in heaven don't marry." That's what He said. And elsewhere in the Scripture you find these angels have left their own realm and principality and had a change of nature. So I'm not going to go into that in detail, but I have studied this carefully. I am absolutely convinced that this represents the intervention of spirits into the human race. Now I have actually had contact with three cases, at least, of women whom I've met who told me that demons have sought to have sexual intercourse with them. And I'll tell you that it was intensely difficult to minister deliverance to them.

Let's just look at two comparative passages in the New Testament. First Peter 3:19–20:

By which also he [Jesus] went and preached unto the spirits in prison [that's in the lower world, in Hades]; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah . . . (KJV)



We don't need to read further. But there are spirits imprisoned in Hades to whom Jesus descended in the period between death, burial and resurrection that were down there in the realms. God had imprisoned them for specific purposes.

Now all Greek mythology is full of reference to a place called Tartarus. And in the Greek New Testament, this word is used of these angels. And if you look up a standard Greek lexicon, it will tell you Tartarus is a place of special imprisonment as far below Hades as Hades is below the surface of the earth. So that the Bible and mythology in this respect are in complete agreement.

There is a special group of angels who were imprisoned in a special place, even below the regular prison in Hades. And for some reason, which we don't need to go into, Jesus descended to them and made a proclamation to them. He didn't preach the gospel to them, He made a proclamation to them in the period between His burial and His resurrection. And again in Jude, verses 6–7, you find a reference to what I believe to be the same thing. Jude 6 and 7:

And the angels which kept not their first estate [did not stay on the heavenly plane of being, that's what it means], but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. [These are the angels referred to, I believe. And notice the immediate context:] Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example . . . (KJV)

It is very, very clear to my way of thinking that as homosexuality is a sense in which "strange flesh" applies within the human race, so here it was angels going outside the bounds of their natural being and going after strange flesh in cohabiting with women.

Now I don't want to make a tremendous issue of this, but to me the Bible presents an absolutely clear, consistent picture of this fact. And this was the source of the final avalanche of moral decline that precipitated the flood.

Now let's look on at the moral decline which went hand in hand with this supernatural intervention. And you just look at three verses in Genesis 6:5:

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (KJV)

Evil imaginations. Verse 11:

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. (KJV)

Violence. And verse 12:

And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. (KJV)

I understand that to mean sexual corruption and perversion. These were the three main features of human degeneration prior to the flood. Evil imaginations, violence and sexual corruption and perversion. You look at modern America and just ask yourself, How much of this is manifest and increasing in our world today? And we have to say there's a great deal of it.

Now I've pointed out that the Holy Spirit is the restraining influence that prevents Satan from taking complete control as long as He can operate in the hearts of men and women to create repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

And I want to point out to you, which God revealed to me when I was making this study—I have never seen it before—that the Holy Spirit has to have a channel to work through. And the channel at that time was one man and his family; Noah and his family. And when Noah and his family were withdrawn, God's Spirit was withdrawn. And you'll see for a period of seven days there was just Satan in control. And then came the final judgment.

Now this is exactly how it is going to be at the close of this age. Jesus said so, and I'll show you the words in a minute. But look at this first. Chapter 7, verse 1. Genesis 7:1:

And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. (KJV)

Notice Noah's righteousness got his family in—I want you to notice that, just by the way. He didn't say "I've seen you and your family righteous," but "You come in with your family because I've seen you righteous." Acts 16:31 says:

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. (KJV)

This is a pattern that goes all through the Bible. We have the right to believe for the salvation of our house. Not that I mean that our house will be saved without faith in Jesus Christ, but we have a right to have faith so they'll have faith in Jesus Christ to be saved. I don't mean that Noah's family were unbelievers, but they became believers because of God's grace in Noah.

All right, verse 4:

For yet seven days [God says], I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. [Verse 7:] Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. [Verse 10:] And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. (KJV)

So there was a period of seven days before the flood when Noah and his family were shut inside the ark. And the Scripture says God shut the door. And that period of seven days, within a certain sense, the human race was given over to Satan. Because the Spirit of God had moved into the ark with Noah and his family. And this is exactly how it's going to be in pattern, I'm not talking about time period, at the close of this age.

Look now in the words of Jesus in Luke 17:26. Luke 17:26:

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. (KJV)

All these great basic patterns will be reproduced at the close of this age. They are being reproduced. What does that mean? It means direct, satanic supernatural intervention. Demonic spirits. It means ever-increasing corruption, lawlessness, violence and immorality. It means that God is going to have a people on the basis of grace and righteousness who will be the restraining influence. And it means that when God

withdraws those people, the influence of the Spirit of God will be withdrawn. And then for a period which I'm not going to seek to estimate or define, the human race will, in a certain sense, be handed over to Satan. And after that, the final judgment.

Now I do not ask anybody to believe this, but I see it in Scripture and I have to say, when I was preparing this study I saw it in a way I had never seen it before. And I believe it to be true.

Now let's look at the pattern from Ahab's day. Some of you have probably not been too interested in Ahab. He was a king of Israel who was outstandingly wicked. And when I say Israel, I mean the northern kingdom of Israel and not the southern kingdom of Judah. And there were certain features of Ahab's wickedness and the other forces at work that again make this period in Israel's history a type, or a pattern, for the close of this age. And the same two things were at work: Degeneration of human character and satanic supernatural intervention.

Let's look at the main figures in the record. In 1 Kings 16:29–33:

And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat [who had made the two golden calves at Dan and Bethel. This was bad enough, but Ahab went much further than this], that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. [And introduced the worship of Baal into the city of Jerusalem, even into the house of the Lord.] And he reared up an altar for Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove [but it's probably some kind of idolatrous image or figure]; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him. (KJV)

Notice his stubbornness and his wickedness. And if you read other passages, a very weak character in a certain way, a childish character. When he couldn't get Nabal's vineyard, he went home and cried on his bed until Jezebel said, "Don't worry, I'll fix it for you, I've got a way to get Nabal's vineyard. Don't you cry." But a terribly degenerate character, like not a few monarchs that we've seen in history with tremendous power yet behaving like little children when they've met something that didn't suit them. You know, I've noticed particularly with men that there are men you meet who are fifty and sixty years old that behave as if

they were still twelve years old. Can you think of some of them? I can. And you know why? Because the demons that entered into them when they were twelve years old are still there and they still make them behave like little boys. This is just by the way. But I mean, you see a very typical type of person in Ahab. Weak, capricious, dishonest, cruel, yet rather clever in a way, but totally unstable and unreliable. And of a kind that could be taken over by a dominating, clever, scheming wife. And that's precisely what happened to him.

First Kings 21:25, Ahab is summed up in this verse. I'm in 1 Kings, chapter 21, verse 25:

But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. (KJV)

Notice Ahab sold himself. To whom did he sell himself? To Satan. See, he made a kind of bargain with Satan. He just put himself at Satan's disposal. This is a type of the antichrist. You see, making a bargain with the devil. Have you ever met anybody that has made a bargain with the devil? I have. I have met the most terrible cases of demon possession in people that actually made a bargain with the devil. And the devil regards them as his property for time and eternity. To get them free is a major battle. It happens from time to time. I don't want to go into it, but I've met people in a real difficult situation. They would pray to Satan. So we see that everything in the Scripture is real. I mean, we're dealing with realities. Realities of human nature, realities of how the forces of evil work. So we could say, within certain limits, you mustn't press these things too far. Ahab selling himself to Satan is a type of false Christ who'll make the bargain. "You can have me if I can have the power." And Jezebel, his wife, who stood him up with satanic supernatural power, demon worship, is a type of the false church. An alliance which is going to come at the close of this age just for a short period.

Now let's look at the picture of Jezebel for a moment because she is a type of the harlot. In Revelation 17 and 18, the false, idolatrous, cruel, wicked church. 1 Kings 18:4:

. . . Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them . . . in a cave . . . (KJV)

It says when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord. Jezebel was the persecutress of the Lord's prophets. She killed them ruthlessly. And in verse 13 Obadiah says to Elijah:

Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?  
(KJV)

Jezebel was out to destroy every true prophet of the Lord. And then she promoted the false prophets.

Verse 19 of 1 Kings 18, Elijah sends this message to Ahab:

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves [or the idolatrous images], four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.  
(KJV)

Jezebel maintained eight hundred and fifty false prophets but she killed the prophets of the Lord. And this is entirely typical of the very church and situation that we envisage at the close of this age.

Now notice in 2 Kings 9:22 we have the revelation of the real source of Jezebel's power. At this point Jehu has encountered Joram, who was Jezebel's son and became king of Israel when Ahab died. And Joram is asking Jehu if it's peace, and this is Jehu's answer.

And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he [Jehu] answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?  
(KJV)

Notice, Jezebel was a practicing witch. She had direct intercourse with satanic supernatural power. The witchcraft of Jezebel plus the corruption and the wickedness of Ahab's character produced this scene when the forces of Satan had practically taken over the entire kingdom of God's people, Israel.

Now at this point, God's answer was a new type of ministry and it was the ministry of Elijah. First Kings 17:1 and 18:1. Elijah's ministry is God's answer to the alliance of political power and satanic supernatural power represented by Ahab and Jezebel. We'll just read these two verses: 1 Kings 17:1:

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God

of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. [And 18:1:] And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. (KJV)

Elijah was God's answer to the situation. Now if you turn to Malachi you'll see that a similar situation at the close of this age will require a similar ministry sent by God. Malachi 4:5:

Behold [God says to His people], I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. (KJV)

Elijah's ministry is specifically related to this situation where political power is usurped and then abetted by satanic spiritual power to the destruction of God's people and the attempted overthrow of God's kingdom. And that is Satan's program for the close of this age.

Now let's look at definite prophetic Scriptures that picture these things, not in types as in Noah or in Ahab, but in clear statements from the Scripture. Let's turn to Matthew 24 to begin with. Matthew 24:11 and 24, Jesus is speaking about the period at the close of this age and giving a prophetic outline of the various successive phases and the main trends, both spiritual and political, that will manifest themselves at the close of the age. And in this He says these two things about false prophets and false Christs. Matthew 24:11:

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. [And then verse 24:] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (KJV)

There will be false prophets and there will be false Christs with supernatural power. And those that are not rooted in Christ and do not know the power of God and the truth of the Word of God will be deceived. Some people are naive enough to suppose that all supernatural power comes from God. This is not true. There are two sources of supernatural power: God on the one hand and Satan on the other. I don't believe there's a third source. And any supernatural power that is not from God is from Satan, that I firmly believe. So Jesus clearly warns us that at the close of this age there will be supernatural satanic power turned loose against the human race with one supreme objective: to deceive.

In 1 Timothy 4 we have a parallel statement.

Now the Spirit [capital “s” indicates the Holy Spirit] speaketh expressly, that in the latter times [at the close of the age] some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]. (KJV)

“The faith” is Christianity, there’s no question about that. It’s not just any faith, it’s the faith. These people have been in the faith but will depart from the faith under the influence of seducing, satanic spirits that deceive them by false teaching. So this links up directly with the false prophets and the false Christs. It’s demonic.

Second Timothy 3 we have a further picture of the same forces at work. Second Timothy 3:13. The King James Version says this:

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (KJV)

But where the King James says “seducers,” the Greek has the standard Greek word for a magician or an enchanter. And it is not just any type of deceiver, but it is a man who deliberately cultivates satanic supernatural power. That’s a magician. Just like a witch, or a wizard, or a fortuneteller, or a clairvoyant. They’re people that operate not in their own natural ability and understanding but by supernatural power and revelation that has a satanic origin. So evil men, the corruption of human nature, and magicians, satanically inspired servants of Satan, both will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. And I’ll tell you this, there’s no one so deceptive as the person who is deceived. Sometimes we marvel how a person can tell us the lies that he tells us. How can he believe such a thing? How can he ask me to believe such a thing? The answer is, that man is deceived. He really believes what he’s saying. And they are the most deceptive of all people. You know what somebody told me, I don’t know whether it’s correct, but I can believe it. That the lie detector will detect the reaction of a person who is deliberately telling a lie to get away with it. It will not detect a psychotic liar because he has no reaction. He doesn’t even know he’s telling a lie. It really isn’t him that is telling it, it’s the spirit that’s saying it through him.



I remember we had a maid—my wife will remember her—an Arab maid, and she would at times, Satan just got in and took control of her. Because she didn't walk in the Spirit, she didn't study the Word, she was a Christian. And I remember once we were talking together (I don't know if my wife remembers this), and this maid whom I don't want to name on the tape, she said something fantastically false. I mean, it was ridiculously false. And I gasped and I looked at her and said, "What did you say?" She said, "I didn't say anything." And I was going to get mad and I thought, *No, that's the truth. She didn't say it.* Maybe she didn't even know she said it. Something else spoke through her. And I mean the trouble she made with that demon, believe me, it would take a book to write about. But I saw then, really, I was wasting my time to get mad with that woman because she didn't even know she was saying it. And these are the dangerous people, the really dangerous people. Not the ones that are deliberately deceiving you, because they're telling you something they don't believe. But the ones that are so totally deceived that they believe the lies they're telling you. Those are the deceptive persons.

All right, now notice that again we are faced with the fact that there's going to be an open confrontation of supernatural power: God's on the one hand and Satan's on the other at the close of this age. Looking back just a little bit to verses 8 and 9 and you'll see that verses 8 and 9 make much more sense when you translate "deceivers" as "magicians" in verse 13 because then you understand why it's related to verse 8 and 9.

Now as Jannes and Jambres [they were the magicians of Egypt in the time of Moses] withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.  
(KJV)

They have known the faith and just departed from it. A reprobate means one who is rejected. It's not one who has never known it, but one who has known it and has turned from it. A reprobate, that's always the meaning in Scripture.

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs [Jannes and Jambres] also was.  
(KJV)

In other words, these Scriptures clearly indicate that at the close of this age there's going to be an open

conflict between two forms of supernatural power: The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit and the servants of God, satanic power and magicians, wizards, enchanters, clairvoyants, mediums, whatever you like to call them, on the other hand. And the servants of Satan are going to be put to an open shame. Their folly shall be made manifest to all men. But let me tell you, the church that is operating purely on the natural realm isn't even going to be seen. The battle is going to be in the supernatural. Few people realize that if you turn back to the account in Exodus of the clash between Moses and the magicians of Egypt, the magicians of Egypt had supernatural powers. Few people ever absorb this fact. Let's look at it very quickly, you'll find it in Exodus 7 and 8. I will not go into the background too much. We're just reading verse 10 of Exodus 7:

And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent [snake].  
(KJV)

You'd think that would convince, but oh, no. Pharaoh called also the wise men and the sorcerers. Now the magicians of Egypt, they also deal in like manner with their enchantments. They cast down their rods and they became snakes. But there was a difference which I like to notice. Aaron's rod swallowed up the other rods. But it was on the supernatural plane that the battle was fought. And Pharaoh said, "Well, Moses, my magicians can do this. Why should I believe you've got a message from God that I've got to listen to?" You see? If my magicians can do what you can do, I'm not going to listen to you. So the next test is found there in verses 19 and following:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in the vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died [and so on. Verse 22:] And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments . . .  
(KJV)

They could turn water into blood. Pharaoh said, "Moses, why should I believe you've got a message for me? My magicians can do the same." So the next one was the frogs in chapter 8:5-7:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments... (KJV)

And Pharaoh said again, in effect, “Moses, I don’t have to listen to you. My magicians can do the same.”

The next one is where the difference came. Verse 16:

The LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; [and] all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. . . . [verse 19:] Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God. . . . (KJV)

Now we’ve gone outside our realm. This is something you should give attention to.

Now it says in 2 Timothy, turning back—and notice now, read these verses again. Second Timothy 3:

As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth [with supernatural power and signs. And verse 13:]. . . . But evil men and seducers [magicians] shall [grow] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (KJV)

Let us not be deceived. The final battle is not going to be fought on the plane of human reasoning and argument; it’s going to be fought on a supernatural plane. And when the power of Jezebel’s prophets had almost taken the land over, God sent a man who could call down fire from heaven. And that was where the battle was settled. Everybody agreed on that in Israel. You read the account in the 18th chapter of 1 Kings, the false prophets agreed, the true prophets agreed, the king agreed, the people agreed, and one other person agreed and do you know who that was? God. “The God that answereth by fire, let him be the God.” Let’s have a demonstration. Let’s not have words; let’s see it done. That’s the message to the world today and it’s the message that the church has got to accept. We cannot sidestep this challenge. We’re obligated to produce the evidence. I’ll tell you one thing, Satan’s servants are doing it already.

Now let’s notice the Scriptures in the New Testament that also predict this increase of lawlessness and

moral decline, just exactly as it was in the days of the flood. Matthew 24:12, going back to that which is the key chapter for the picture of the close of the age. You should always start in Matthew 24 and work out from there because the basic spine of all latter-day prophecy is given in Matthew 24 in the words of Jesus. Then the other prophecies relate to it as the other bones in the body relate to the spine. But you build up off the spine. Matthew 24:12:

And because [of] iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (KJV)

But where it says “iniquities,” the Greek word is “lawlessness”—“Because lawlessness shall abound.” Now the Greek says “the love of the *majority* shall grow cold.” And the word “love,” *agape*, is the word that’s only used for love of God’s people. The love of most of God’s people will wax cold. Why? Because of an atmosphere of abounding lawlessness and immorality all around.

Second Timothy 3, and we go back to this, which is really one of the key chapters in relation to the close of this age. As we’ve seen, we’ve had to go there two or three times already. Let’s look once more. Second Timothy 3:1–5. Now here’s the picture of real moral and ethical breakdown at the close of this age.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection [and that means parents for children, children for parents, husbands for wives], trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God . . . (KJV)

Just notice the beginning and the end of that list—it’s very significant. It begins and ends with love. The love of the wrong thing. It begins with “lovers of their own selves” and where it says “covetous,” the Greek word is “lovers of money.” Love of self, love of money and it ends with love of pleasure. And I would invite you to look at this generation in the world today and ask yourself: Has there ever been a generation that was more taken up with love of self, love of money and love of pleasure than the present generation?

Then look at all the other moral blemishes and you’ll find almost every one of them is conspicuous by its presence in our generation. As a matter of fact, we spoke about Hitler and Stalin. If the human race had

not degenerated to this point, neither Hitler or Stalin could ever have gained control because men would have never done the wicked things that they asked them to do. Look at that. Trucebreakers. There's not a peace that Hitler ever made that he didn't break. And he had to have agents to do it, and they were willing to do it because of moral and ethical decline.

But we haven't finished; look at verse 5. This is the most breathtaking feature of it all.

Having a form of godliness . . . (KJV)

With all this wickedness and moral and ethical decline, they still claimed to be religious people. You know, I found that hard to believe! I said, "Lord, how could it be? Good Baptists, good Methodists, good Presbyterians, faithful Assemblies of God." And I now think the Lord has shown me their religion is the strength of their weakness. It's Jezebel that made Ahab so wicked. And that's how it's going to be. It's the false religion that will cover up, but also promote, the moral and ethical decline. That's not an accident that those things are joined together; it's cause and effect. And we're not far away from it.

And I've noticed— I'll ask you to notice one other thing. "From such, turn away." "Oh, but Brother Prince, I have to go to my church." Well, what kind of people are there in your church? Because if the people in your church answer to this description, the Bible says turn away. Disassociate yourself.

Now I'm not telling you what kind of people are in your church; that's not my business. But I'm telling you that if it should be that the people in your church answer to this description, the Bible says get out. Leave them. There's a great deal in 2 Timothy about disassociating yourself from evil. If you want to turn back to the second chapter for a moment, let me show you this. The 19th verse:

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (KJV)

There's two seals. The inward knowledge of God of His children, the outward life. Anyone that names the name of Christ is obligated to depart from iniquity.

But in a great house [like the church of Jesus Christ] there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonor. (KJV)

All right. Which are you going to be? A vessel to honor, or a vessel to dishonor? If you want to be a vessel to honor, listen to the next verse.

If a man therefore purge himself from these [it's not sins, it's vessels of dishonor], he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, . . . [You want to read on, verse 22:] Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (KJV)

It matters whom you go with. If you want to follow righteousness, faith, peace and charity, you've got to be with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. We've come to the separating of the ways. Revelation 22:10:

. . . the time is at hand. [I'm at the door, Jesus says:] He that is unjust [unrighteous], let him be unjust [unrighteous] still: and he [that] is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (KJV)

You've got to go one way or the other. Compromise is out. It's the valley of decision. Joel 3:14:

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision . . . (KJV)

That's where God is forcing the entire human race. And no one will come out without making a decision.