

THE WAR AGAINST GOD

The bitter conflict in the world today that we witness against God is not a new thing. The Psalmist once said: "The tumult of those that rise up against You increases continually" (Psalm 74:23). This war did not begin in the twentieth century, neither did it begin in the first century when a wise old Pharisee, by the name of Gamaliel, warned the council to "Refrain from these men (the Apostles who were attacked for preaching the resurrection) and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown, but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God" (Acts 5:38, 39). Scripture teaches that those who fight against God, even when it appears God is losing, cannot win.

It all started in Genesis when God said to the serpent "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; and he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15). The seed of the woman is mankind and the seed of Satan is mankind deceived by Satan. The word *seed* is sometimes translated "descendants" which means the part of mankind deceived by Satan become his "children". "The children ...of the devil are obvious" (I John 3:10). To those claiming to be the offspring of Abraham, Jesus stated: "you are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father" (Jn. 8:44). Paul's scathing denunciation of Elymas the magician identified him as a "son of the devil" and an "enemy of all righteousness" (Acts 13: 10). In the parable of the tares Jesus identifies the tares as "the sons of the evil one" (Matt. 13:38). The "children of God" are identified as "those who practice righteousness" (I John 3:10), and are said to be "sons of the kingdom" (Matt.13:38). This means the war against God is being waged between the seed of the woman and the seed of the devil. When God said "He (the seed of the woman) would bruise you (Satan) on the head" he was revealing the fact that Satan would be defeated by a man. However, since man had been the victim of Satan's deception he was not capable of defeating him. So Genesis 3:15 became a prophecy that one day there would be a "seed of the woman" that would defeat Satan (bruise him on the head). This ignited the war against God that would be fought between the seed of the woman and the seed of the devil. Satan then became the adversary of God (Psalm 74:10; 78:42; 107:20) and consequently the adversary of the seed of the woman that were not deceived by Satan (I Peter 5:8). He then began an intensive effort to destroy the seed of the woman that would become the one prophesied to defeat him. This effort is illustrated in Scripture many times. It was prophesied that Christ would be from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 11:1; Mic. 5:2). The New Testament shows these prophecies were fulfilled (Heb.7:14; Matt 2:6; Rev. 5:5). II Chronicles 22:10, 11 relates the story of an effort by Athaliah, the mother of King Ahazia, to kill all the royal seed of the house of Judah. This effort would have been successful had Joash not been stolen and hidden in the temple for six years when the Kings sons were being put to death. He later became king at the age of seven and reigned forty years in Jerusalem. (II Kings 12:1-17). This was clearly an effort of Satan to destroy the royal seed. A comparable effort recorded

in the New Testament is seen in the effort of Herod to kill the infant Jesus by slaying all the children in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16-23). The Gospels record numerous attempts by the Jews to kill Christ (Matt. 21:46; Luke 4:29-30; John 7:30, 32; 8:59; 10:31-39). Chapter 12 of Revelation pictures, in symbolic form, Satan's attempt to destroy the "male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" but "the child was caught up to God and to His throne" (ver. 5) (Satan defeated by the death and resurrection of Christ). The dragon (Satan) was "enraged...and went off to make war with (all) who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (ver. 17). So the war continues even after the head of Satan was crushed by a "seed of the woman." As stated above this is a war against God being waged between the seed of the woman and the seed of Satan. In this war against God it is a war to the death and there is no such thing as neutrality. It is, after all, but the natural expression of fallen and unregenerate humanity. Man is a rebel and must either lay down his arms and be reconciled to God or carry on that war in the vain hope of dethroning God.

Not only is Satan and his seed influencing the world in general, that is: politics, religion, social and economic problems, amusement and entertainment etc. but directly influences people through the occult, witchcraft, sorcery, spiritism, games, fortune telling, horoscopes, and new ageism to mention a few. This may result in demons influencing the lifestyle of people and outright demon possession. Satan is not omnipresent and cannot be everywhere at the same time. This is where "his seed" comes in. He operates through his angels called "demons" (devils KJV) or "evil spirits." These are organized in a certain hierarchy under Satan as their king. This is seen in Ephesians 6:12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers against powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies." In Revelation 9:11 is the description of the locust, a symbol of demons: "They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon (Destruction), and in Greek he has the name Apollyon" (Destroyer). By Satan being called "the prince of the powers of the air" (Eph. 2:2) and "king" (Rev. 9:1) indicates there are numerous unseen evil spiritual powers controlled by Satan and are active in the affairs of men. These unseen powers are enemies of God and adversaries of the church. George Eldon Ladd in *A Theology Of The New Testament* describes this spiritual warfare in these words: "Satan, the archenemy of God, is the ruler of the authorities of the air (Eph. 2:2), the god of this age (II Cor. 4:4), whose objective is to blind the minds of men and women that they should not apprehend the saving power of the gospel. He is the tempter who seeks through affliction to turn believers away from the gospel (I Thess. 3:5), to hinder God's servants in their ministry (I Thess. 2:18), who raises up false apostles to pervert the truth of the gospel (II Cor. 11:14), who is ever seeking to overwhelm God's people (Eph. 6:11, 12, 16), and who is even able to bring his attacks in the form of bodily afflictions to God's choicest servants (II Cor. 12:7). Satan's main objective is to frustrate the redemptive purpose of God." The most vivid manifestation of the war against God is the history of the persecution of Christians. Jesus said: "...all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they do

not know the One who sent me” (John 15:21). The book of Acts shows the first persecution of the church was not by the Romans, but the Jews. These early believers faced intimidation, beatings, prisons and death, not from the Romans, but the unbelieving Jews. The first persecution of the church by the Romans took place in the year 67 under Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome. This persecution began when Nero ordered the city of Rome to be set on fire. The following description of his atrocious barbarity in the burning of Rome is taken from the monumental work of John Fox entitled *Fox's Book of Martyrs*: “Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome in a diabolical whim ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which was executed by his officers, guards, and servants. When Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised on the Christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves. Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner of punishments for Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular he had some sewed in skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs until they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axletrees, and set on fire in his gardens, in order to illuminate them. This persecution was general throughout the whole Roman Empire; but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of Christianity. In the course of events Paul and Peter were martyred.” (This is a far cry from the whining we hear today about the Supreme Court decisions being handed down. We have “not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood” Hebrews 12:4).

The persecution by Nero was only the beginning of a continued persecution by the succeeding Roman Emperors. It did not end with the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD. Persecution continued to be the weapon of choice in the war against God as the seed of Satan continued the battle against the seed of the woman. History is replete with the record of the cruelties and atrocious barbarities committed against the people of God from the fall of Rome until the present day. It has been the civil authorities in opposition to religion; Catholicism against Protestants; Protestantism against Catholics; Protestantism against Protestants, and unbelievers against believers.

John L. Allen in a monthly magazine *The Spectator* wrote: “The world is witnessing the rise of an entire new generation of Christian martyrs. The carnage is occurring on such a vast scale that it represents not only the most dramatic Christian story of our time, but arguably the premier of human rights chilling this area. The global persecution of churchgoers is the unreported catastrophe of our time.” A recent article in *Christianity Today* stated; “From verbal harassment to hanging, persecution for professing faith in Christ is as old as Christianity itself, often comingling with ethnic violence and geo-political conflict. In the 20th century, Christians in formerly communist countries went underground with their faith, eventually gaining support and advocacy from missionary Brother Andrew and his Open Doors USA. Today this non-profit compiles an annual list of the world’s most persecutors of Christians. Muslim countries with Shari’ah law comprise 8 of the top 10 worst.” We are witnessing every day the persecutions by radical Muslims.

The war against God by the seed of Satan is nowhere more evident than in the world-wide sanction of the abortion of the unborn. Both the *International Family Perspectives* and the *Alan Guttmacher Institute* report that there are 46 million babies aborted per year world-wide, with China, Russia and The United States, in that order, topping the list. The atrocity of Herod killing the babies in Bethlehem when he heard of the birth of Christ pales beside of these facts. So also the killing of the male babies in Egypt at the time of Moses’ birth seem insignificant when compared with the world-wide abortions today. The late David Chilton in his book *Power In the Blood, a Christian Response to AIDS* states: “...Over 4,000 unborn babies are slaughtered in this country every day. They’re poisoned, chopped in pieces, suctioned, or simply delivered and left to die. Sometimes the doctor strangles and smothers them.” He then continues: “There is a connection between (a) the legalized murder of one and half million people every year, and (b) the fact that God is selling us into economic bondage to other nations. It’s called Divine Judgment, and won’t stop with mere economic judgment. Murder is a capital crime.” And murder has been another weapon of choice by Satan’s seed, battling the seed of the woman.

God has not nor will He forget the suffering of his people brought on by the seed of Satan. In the book of Revelation we are shown in symbolism that God will vindicate his suffering church: “I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, will Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also” (Rev. 6:10, 11).

Satan and his seed will not win this war, in spite of how it may look as if he is winning when we consider the terrible persecutions Christian have endured and are still enduring, and the evil that has engrossed the whole world. The Scripture is plain that God will only countenance the rebellion of man for so long before He moves in with judgment. After telling Abraham his descendants would be enslaved by a foreign nation for four hundred years, God said: “I will also judge the nation whom they will serve...then in the fourth generation they shall return here for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete” (Gen. 15:14-16). The sin of the Amorite would come to a point where evil was not permitted to go beyond. Their sin had to run its course and arrive at a certain pitch of wickedness, then God would bring judgment upon them. God will not bring judgment upon a nation until they have persisted in sin so long and arrived at such a peak of evil that their judgment is just, based upon the gravity of their sin. In the meantime there will be casualties suffered by the seed of the woman because Satan was told he would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman but her seed would crush his head. The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ dealt a radical crushing to the head of the seed of Satan, but it was not final. The war is continued against the seed of the woman. To quote the book of Revelation again: “the dragon was enraged and went off to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandment of God and hold the testimony of Jesus” (12: 17).