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The Wiles of the Devil
Ezekiel 28:1-19; Isaiah 14:12-15; Ephesians 6:11

Introduction

In Scripture, it is clear that Satan is one who makes plans and carries them out against human beings. In Ephesians 6:11, Paul refers to Satan's plans as "wiles." What are the "wiles" of the devil mentioned in Ephesians 6:11? The word "wiles" (KJV) is the Greek *μεθοδεία* or *methodeia*, meaning cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery. The Bible is very clear about the existence of Satan (Hebrew *שָׂטָן* *satan*, meaning adversary, one who withstands, opposes) as a personal being. He was once a chief angel, an anointed cherub who was a guardian of God's holiness and thus was close to God. He was the star of the morning, who sparkled with all the jewels of created beauty until he rebelled against his Creator and attempted to usurp His power and glory (see Isa 14:12-17; Ezek 28:1-10; Rev 12:7-9). He also is called the "devil," Greek *διάβολος* *diabolos* used 61 times in the New Testament, meaning slanderer, slanderous, accusing falsely. Satan is the prince of the demons, the author of evil, persecuting good men, estranging mankind from God, and enticing them to sin, afflicting them with diseases (Matt 4:1, 5, 8, 11; 17:18; Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim 3:6-7; 2 Tim 2:26; Rev 20:2, 10).

The Personal Adversary

He appears personally three times in Scripture. **First**, in the garden he is the adversary (Satan) of God to the man and woman (Gen 3:1ff). **Second**, he appears as the adversary of humankind, specifically Job, before God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-10). **Third**, he appears as the adversary of the God-Man, Jesus on the Mount of Temptation (Matt 4:1-11). Further, Jesus warned us about Satan (Luke 10:18; John 8:44; 12:31), as did Peter, Paul, James, John, and the writer of Hebrews (Rom 16:20; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Thess 2:18; Heb 2:14; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 12:9).

Satanic Methods or "Wiles"

Paul declared to the Corinthians that they should be careful not to play into the hands of the Adversary by fostering an attitude of unforgiveness. We must beware, lest Satan should gain some advantage over us by an unforgiving attitude, "for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor 2:11). We know his plans, his thoughts, his cunning, and his skill. Also, we are not ignorant of the multitude of strategies he constantly uses to injure us and destroy the souls of men. Paul had experienced the "wiles" of Satan intended to defeat his plans and to destroy the church. Therefore the church in general, and every believer in particular, should be constantly on guard against his snares (1 Tim 3:7; 2 Tim 2:26).

The "wiles" of the devil describes the various plans and strategies that he employs to drag souls down to perdition. It is easier to confront open force than to encounter the unseen elements he uses to oppose us. He does not carry on open warfare but

advances covertly, in darkness, using deception and betrayal. He recommends plausible doctrines and presents a world of alluring pleasures that will lay before us some appropriate temptation to lead us to indulgence until we have arranged our own demise. He appeals to our own bent toward sin that calls to us from his kingdom of darkness. He ensnares us with the evil passions of pride, ambition, lust, and revenge. He clouds our judgment with contradictory logic, error, superstitions, and false doctrines that are the hallmark of his kingdom.

It is against these malignant spirits and influences that we must contend. We must contend against vice, error, superstition, the occult, infidelity, atheism, antinomianism, pernicious customs, and the limitation of our human frailty. We must heed the admonition of the Word to "take up the whole armor of God" that we may be enabled "to stand in the evil day." (Eph 6:13)

The following are some of the methods, snares, and evil devices Satan uses to oppose God and us:

1. He generally opposes the work of God (Zech 3:1).
2. He subverts and distorts the word of God (Gen 3:4, 5, 22; Matt 4:6).
3. He hinders the servants of God (1 Thess 2:18).
4. He hinders the gospel (2 Cor 4:4).
5. He ensnares the wicked (1 Tim 3:7; 2 Tim 2:25-26).
6. He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14).
7. He battles the archangel of God, Michael (Dan 10:20-21; Jude 9).
8. He rules and directs demons of many ranks (Luke 11:15; Rom 8:38; Eph 6:12).
9. He rules the things of the secular world (2 Cor 4:4).
10. He opposes the nation of Israel (Dan 10:20-21; Rev 12:9).
11. He persecutes believers (2 Tim 3:12).
12. He afflicts believers (Job 1:12).
13. He brings slander against believers.
14. He brings ridicule against believers.
15. He champions immorality and lust (1 John 2:15-16).
16. He champions pride and self-sufficiency.
17. He promotes the occult and witchcraft (1 Sam 28:8-14).
18. He is the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33).
19. He is the promoter of deceit (Rev 12:9; 2 Thess 2:9).
20. He is the author of destruction (1 Pet 5:8).
21. He encourages wrong in the name of right (Luke 4:6-7).
22. He blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4).
23. He is the author of false doctrine (2 Cor 11:13-15).
24. He provokes many to disobedience (Eph 2:2).
25. **He is conquerable! (Jas 4:6-8; Eph 6:10-20)**