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The Evil Prince

I have produced and edited a serious theological paper since 1984. It is “heavy” reading, and is not for those seeking fluffy and PC theology. It is faithful to the Orthodox, Reformed faith. If you would like to be on “The Biblical Examiner” mailing list, give me your e mail address. Also, maybe 4 years ago in WV, a visitor from DC asked to receive the text of my Sunday morning messages, which were in Hebrews at the time. I have tried to maintain a weekly message. I am just finishing a series in a glorious Psalm of Victory, Psalms 45. Let me know.

With very few exceptions, the only kind of preaching I do is expository. I use an abundance of Scripture in my studies and preaching, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God. I will only give the references, so I urge you to take write them down, and take Paul’s advice, and examine the Scriptures to see if these things be so.

However, this message will be on sermon audio, and posted at biblicalexaminer.org. I can also send the notes by e mail.

This message is out of my very lengthy message series on the book of Ephesians.

Hear the Word of God:

*Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 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. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

LET US PRAY:

Father, we ask now for your blessing on the preaching of your word. We ask that it will fulfill the purpose for which it is sent. In Christ’s name, Amen

1) “*who were dead...*” There is nowhere a more clear statement of the total inability of the natural man to chose nor to please God any more than could Lazarus when he was dead in the tomb.

2) Vv. 2, 3. “*prince of the power of the air*”. (Christ called him “the prince of this world” in John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11.)

Ephesians was written before the **Great Tribulation** described of Mat 24, which, according to Matthew 21:41 and 23:34ff, took place in the Jewish-Roman war, 67- 70 AD.

At the start of the Jewish-Roman war, Josephus tells us that Titus told the Jews that God had sent him there to destroy Jerusalem, and he offered them peace if they would stop their rebellion. In accord with our Lord’s prophetic words, in that destruction, every stone of Jerusalem was overturned. Titus then plowed the foundation with a yoke of oxen, and sowed the site with salt. It remained a heap of rubble for about 300 years. (That is a lengthy study in itself.)

This letter is probably Paul’s strongest statement that God’s eternal purpose and pleasure would be accomplished as carnal Israel was to be destroyed in the coming war. That war fulfilled God’s prophesied wrath against the 1500 year old rebellious Hebrew/Jewish world.

The terrible carnage was prophesied to be the worse event of destruction in world history. It would come in just a few years, and would have caused these first century Christians to doubt that King Jesus was in control. These are words of comfort to the believers between Christ and that war.

Christians have been plagued with the same doubt down through the ages. Psalms 37, and 73 are two Psalms that complain about the wicked prospering while the righteous suffer.

We have the same issue today, for it appears that “*the whole world lieth in wickedness*”, (1 Jn 5:19) yet we have the same prophetic assurance as did the Ephesians.

Isaiah 26:9 assures us that God’s righteous judgment is at work against apostasy and evil both inside and outside of the church.

There are **four purposes of history**, and Isaiah tells us that one of those purposes is to teach the world righteousness through His righteous judgments upon the earth.

~~*With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn-*~~

righteousness.

Paul comforts the new Israel of God by giving them the same assurance that the ancient Hebrew prophets gave God's people: **Evil is not out of control, for all things work together to accomplish God's predetermined, divine purposes in history, and bring in world-wide righteousness.**

A few points about this *prince*.

First, this "prince" is not a king. In Ephesians 1:18-23, Paul made it clear that Christ is the King and absolute Ruler over everything that can be named in heaven above, on earth and under the earth. He is the undisputed ruler both in time and in eternity.

Willingly or unwillingly, the *evil prince* only does "*according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*" (Eph. 1:11.)

Second, the "prince" is in total subjection to Christ, Ephesians 1:21.

~~Eph 1:21 tells us that Christ has ascended *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*~~

ALL POWER in heaven and earth belongs to the resurrected Christ. (Matthew 28:18)

Accordingly, it is sin to attribute any independent power to Satan. He is only a prince who must answer to the King. He is "*the prince of the power of the air*".

In other words, it is sin to fret and doubt "*him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*", for the **evil prince** is under complete control.

Proverbs 29:18 tells us that without the proper Biblical vision of God's history, which is centered in the victory of the resurrected Christ, God's people become helpless victims of the powers of darkness.

Third, the evil prince and those who follow him are unknowingly doing the will of God:

Psalms 33:10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. 11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Those of Psalms 2:2 who counseled together against the Lord and his anointed are

identified by Peter in Acts 4:27, 28.

~~For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.~~

In Acts 4:23, Peter told the Jews that though evil men of history counsel together, their counsel fulfills *the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*. As evil men work their evil counsels, they are only accomplishing God's eternal purpose.

We are told in Isaiah 46:10, that only what fulfills God's Divine pleasure and counsel will stand, for he has declared the end of history from the beginning.

~~Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:~~

From the time of Creation, the evil powers and authorities of this world are only doing the pleasure of the Creator. (Another interesting and lengthy study.)

Psalms 76:10 *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

Ephesians 3:10-12. Diving Providence controls history to bring about God's righteous judgment against unbelief and apostasy, to advance the Gospel Church and to bring glory to the Son in fulfillment of the everlasting covenant:

~~To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.~~

Though Christ had all power from eternity past, He laid that power aside for 33 years, so He could provide redemption for His people. At the resurrection, He was reinstated on His throne, and from that throne all things shall be subdued to Him, as the Tri-une God accomplishes His sovereign will in the kingdom of men and devils.

One of the most quote passages in the New Testament is Psalms 110:1 *"The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."*

Ephesians 1:19-23, tells us that Psalms 110:1 was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ.

In Psalms 110, the Father promised the Son that He shall place all of the Son's enemies

under His authority. Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15:24-28** that the end shall come after the Father as subdued all things to the Son.

How will the Father fulfill His promise to the Son? Clearly not by physical, political nor military force, for it is a spiritual warfare. The Father subdues Christ's enemies through the drawing of and conviction by the Spirit of God—that is, Holy Spirit conversion. (**Jn 12:32, 17:7, 9, 11, 24. Isa 5:26, 7:18, Zech 10:8.**)

God is doing *according to his eternal purpose* in the kingdom of evil men, such as Soros, who are serving the world, flesh and the devil with all their heart, soul, mind, might and money.

Fourth, the evil prince has limited power; that is, he cannot stand against the Spirit of God.

Acts 28:18, the Lord Jesus told Paul, who had been on his way to Damascus, that he was *“To open their (Gentiles) eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”*

Fifth, the evil prince dwells in and controls the space around us. Eph 2:2

God has given him limited power and control of all things, seen and unseen – those things that are outside of the *“kingdom of his dear Son”*.

Those who are not with the Son, are outside His kingdom, and are working against the Son.

Luke 22:53, *“that evil spirit”* can only work according to *“the counsel of [God's] own will”*. It is in the sovereign will of God the Father that the *“powers of darkness”* have been given the lower region to inhabit and work. In the lower region, they are close at hand to work their mischief in the world nature, as happened in Job.

Sixth, the prince is close at hand. He is the prince *“of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”*. That prince even now walks throughout the earth seeking whom he may devour.

In Colossians 1:12, 13, Paul assured the Colossians that their redemption through *Christ's blood*, delivered them from the *“power of darkness”* and *“into the kingdom of his dear Son:”* The Son provides forgiveness of sin, and heirship to all the covenant-promises of God in Christ.

~~“Colossians 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”~~

Seventh, the prince unites all the various powers of darkness to work against the Lord and his anointed. According to Psalms 2, spirits of wickedness unite those who are “*dead in trespasses and sin*”. He unites them in counsel to overthrow “*the Lord and his anointed*”.

“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.”

The “*rulers of the darkness of this world*” appear to be prospering. However, it is only because of the merciful patience of God, he withholds their just judgment, so they are encouraged in their evil deeds. **Romans 2:1-6, Ecc 8:11.**

Ecclesiastes 8:11 *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

In John 7:24, the King warns the Saints not to judge according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment according to the promises of His Word.

Our problem is that as we observe the present turmoil around us, and see the strength of the enemy. The result is that we take our eyes off the Lord and His promise to the Son of His victory in history.

Eighth, Ephesians 2:2, 3, the prince works in the “*children of disobedience.*”

The order is important: **It is not** the “*powers of darkness*” that cause disobedience. Rather, it is the individual’s self-will disobedience that allows the “*powers of darkness*” to work their mischief in the individual, and thus into society.

James 1:13, 14, God does not cause anyone to sin; rather, God leaves a man alone so he can follow his own sinful lusts to his own destruction.

~~*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”*~~

Nor does the **evil prince** cause sin. Rather, **the evil prince** is always close at hand to work

his mischief, continually pressing his original temptation as given to Adam.

The devil does not tempt us to lie, cheat nor steal. His “job” is to tempt man to be his own god, and determine for himself what is good and evil.

James 1:14 is clear, as he tells us that we are drawn into various sins by our own lusts.

The prince works *in the children of disobedience*.

Paul warned God’s people Ephesians 4:27, *neither give place to the devil*. When we walk in willful disobedience, we give permission for the powers of darkness to work in our lives.

We either do the will of God, or we do the will of the devil as we attempt to be our own god.

Showing my age, “Flip Wilson” wore a t shirt in his sit com that said, “The Devil made me do it.”

“*But God, who is rich in mercy*” makes us a new creation in through faith in the redemptive work of Christ Jesus. **Romans 8:1, 2**, that new creation is free from the law of sin and death. The new man has new desire and power to live above sin, thereby stripping the “*powers of darkness*” of their power in the lives of the redeemed. The new man is equipped to do what Adam failed to do—Obey the Word of God.

Ninth, the prince blinds his followers 2 Corinthians 4:1-7:

*V. 4 In whom the **god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

“**god of this world**” according to A.T. Robertson, “world” is actually “age”, which is not an uncommon usage. When Satan tempted Christ, he claimed that Adam gave him unlimited rule over the world.

2 Corinthians 4:4 is the only place where Satan can be identified as a god. Elsewhere he is identified as simply a lower power, a prince.

The best explanation:

“god of this world” That is, Satan is the god of those who are outside of the Kingdom of God. He is the god of those who follow Adam’s sin of desiring to be their own god.

Romans 6:16-22, v. 16 *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his*

servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

~~*17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*~~

Paul clearly tells us that the “*the children of disobedience*” are Satan’s willing servants. Disobedience keeps the disobedient subject to the powers of darkness, and on their deadly path to destruction. Only the One Who has the keys of death and hell can release them from their prison of darkness into His glorious light. (See Barnes’ on Psalms 82:6.)

Philippians 3:18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*

The “*god of this world*” blinds those who serve the **god of lust and sensual pleasure**. He blinds them to the glorious gospel, and the freedom promised by the gospel. Only the Spirit’s call to obedience to the gospel can free the sinner from Satan’s realm of dominion, to serve the Lord God. It is the Lord God who must replace the “*god of this world*” with the Creator God of heaven and earth.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Paul gives the purpose of being quickened together with Christ. We have been created a new man in Christ Jesus unto *good works*.

Let us not be deceived into thinking that the whole earth is spinning out of control. We must proceed in our Christian profession of faith with the sure confidence that all things are working together to bring history to its final conclusion, which is THE FAHTER

SUBDUING ALL THINGS TO THE SON.

That subjection is accomplished by the Spirit: He brings peace between God and man by working in the heart of the King's enemies.

Ephesians 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who **worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:***

1 Corinthians 15:24 *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

Let us be found faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ in doing our part to expand the Kingdom of God in the realm of authority assigned to us by Divine Providence: family, occupation, community, &c.

Amen and Amen

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