

The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 6:10-14

Session 65: The Wiles of the Devil

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and **in the power of his might.**

How do we appropriate the power of the Lord's might? The next verse tells us.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **stand against the wiles of the devil.**

We appropriate the power of His might by putting on the whole armor of God. Notice we are told what to do (put on the armor) before we are told why to do it (so we can stand against the wiles of the devil). If we are going to stand against Satan's wiles, we must know what they are; and we must be able to identify them.

When Paul says that Satan has "wiles," what does he mean? What are wiles?

Oxford English Dictionary (OED): Wiles - **1.a. 1154-** A crafty, cunning, or deceitful trick; a sly, insidious, or underhand artifice; a stratagem, ruse. Formerly sometimes in somewhat wider sense: **A piece of deception, a deceit, a delusion.**

2. c1374– Deceit or deceitfulness; craft, cunning, subtlety, guile.

Satan's wiles are always intended to deceive; that is their common denominator. The different wiles deceive in different ways.

A wile is a cleverly designed deception by which someone is fooled into accepting as true, that which is not true. By his wiles, Satan blinds the saints to the truth, diverting them from the truth to his untruths. For what purpose? Two reasons: 1) to keep the saints from making an impact in the heavenly places to the glory of God, and 2) to hinder their sanctification by engaging them in doctrines which do not edify.

What are some of the wiles which Satan employs? The first one we will look at is Satan's devices.

2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his **devices**.

OED: devices - **6. c1290– Something devised or contrived for bringing about some end or result; an arrangement, plan**, scheme, project, contrivance; an ingenious or clever expedient; often one of an underhand or evil character; a plot, stratagem, trick.

As we have already learned, in this dispensation of grace the issue is doctrinal truth. We are wrestling with principalities and powers in a context of doctrine. A device is not a false doctrine; it is a scheme, devised by Satan, whereby we will come to believe a false doctrine. We will talk more about this later, for now, we are just listing and defining the wiles.

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent **beguiled** Eve through his **subtlety**, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

What is subtlety? Subtlety is an attribute of Satan. It means he is skilled in deception.

OED: subtlety - **1.a. c1405– Cunning, craftiness.**

OED: cunning - In bad sense: **Skillful in compassing one's ends by covert means**; clever in circumventing; crafty, artful, **guileful**, sly.

Satan was able to trick (beguile) Eve into eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil because he was skillful (subtle) in getting her to question what God has said. Satan wants to corrupt our minds away from understanding what God is doing during this time of the Mystery by getting us to question things written in Paul's epistles.

What does it mean to be "beguiled?" Beguiled is the goal of Satan's deception. To be beguiled is to be fooled or tricked.

OED: beguile - **1. c1230– Insidious cunning, **deceit**, treachery**

To beguile someone is to fool or trick them by a deception.

Enticing words are a wile; as they are what Satan employs to get us to question what God has said.

Colossians 2:4 And this I say, lest any man should **beguile you with enticing words.**

OED: entice - 2.a. 1303– **To allure, attract by the offer of pleasure or advantage; esp. to allure insidiously or adroitly.**

Satan knows what is attractive to each of us and he uses that knowledge to corrupt our minds from the truth. When someone is bewitched, it means they are captivated by some false doctrine to such an extent that it appears that they are “under a spell of magic.”

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath **bewitched** you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

OED: bewitched - 2. 1551– *figurative.* Utterly captivated or influenced, as if by magic; fascinated, charmed, enchanted, enthralled.

It is possible to be so influenced by false doctrine that a man will disobey the plain statements of scripture.

To spoil someone means to do harm to them. Shortly, we will look at this in more detail, for there are two particular ways in which Satan seeks to spoil us.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man **spoil you** through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

OED: spoil - III.7. The action or fact of spoiling or damaging; damage, harm, impairment, or injury, esp. of a serious or complete kind.

We learned, back in Romans 16, what to do when we encounter those teaching doctrine which is contrary to what Paul wrote to us, we avoid them.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;** and

avoid them.¹⁸ For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches **deceive the hearts of the simple.**

What do we do when we encounter those who sow the seeds of division within an assembly by opposing the doctrine which Paul has written to us? We identify them (mark them) and we avoid them. It comes as no surprise that Satan is working within a local church to deceive and confuse the saints from the truth.

If you noticed in this listing of “wiles,” they all have the common denominator of deceit. And because they are deceitful, it means that when these wiles are used, it will not be apparent that they are coming from Satan’s realm. Satan’s wiles always give the impression that whatever is happening is of God. Satan is a great counterfeiter.

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, **transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.**¹⁴ And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.**¹⁵ Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

I want to remind you once again that the battle is over doctrine. Satan is not spending his time getting men to follow the lusts of the world; that is their flesh and the working of sin. Yes, he sometimes uses that weakness to make his appeal to a false doctrine, but the spiritual battle with principalities and powers is over doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to **seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;**

The main ploy of Satan’s policy of evil (PoE) is to attack the truth of what God is doing in this dispensation of grace. He will use seducing spirits, which are spirits which use signs and wonders which appear to be from God, but they will be counterfeits. These seducing spirits will produce miracles for the purpose of entrenching their doctrines of devils.

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Closing word of prayer

Father, we pray to understand Your word when it informs us how our enemy is operating against us. In accordance with 2 Corinthians 2:11, we do not want to be ignorant of Satan's devices. We know from Colossians 2:8 that Satan seeks to spoil us, to stop our edification and to make us useless in the spiritual battle against him. But we are listening to the doctrine of Ephesians 6, and we are trusting in Your Son, and in the power of His might. We pray to become skilled in every form of doctrine; in the fundamentals of the faith, in the dispensational doctrines of the Mystery, and in the doctrines concerning Your essence and character, so that we might gird ourselves with truth, so that we are ready for every attack against Your truth. As we learn about Satan's wiles, we pray to have insight as to how these devices are being used against us. Thank you, Father, for Your word, which prepares us for the battle. May we hold fast to it as we stand against Satan, so that we are never beguiled of our reward. Amen.