

FREEDOM IN THE CROSSHAIRS #2

I. Introduction

Welcome to Part 2 of our teaching series, "Freedom in the Crosshairs".
Our foundational text for the series is:

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Theme

Jesus teaches us that there is a dynamic connection between truth and freedom. Freedom comes from knowing the truth; the corollary is that bondage comes from believing a lie.

If there is any area in my life where I am not free, there is either a truth I need to know or a lie I need to stop believing.

The same principle can apply to nations. A nation founded upon the truth of the truth of God's word will be free; but a nation that believes in a lie will be led into bondage. And the bigger the lie the bigger the bondage.

With that in mind I want to look at...

The Greatest Lie Ever Told

- This is the lie that turned an Archangel into a devil
- This is the lie that brought the entire human race into bondage
- This is the lie that destroys men as well as nations
- This is the lie that *continues* to deceive men and nations

The greatest lie ever told is found in the beginning of the Bible, in the story of how Satan used a lie to bring the whole human race into bondage. And from this story we will be able to see how the devil is still doing the same thing to this very day. Satan has set his sights on destroying America; our freedom is in the crosshairs.

Derek Prince

If I go back to the beginning, the Bible explains me to me, as a descendant of Adam and Eve, a *prototype* of all human experience in the origin of our race. The essence of what we need to know about ourselves, how Satan works, and the explanation of all God's dealings with us are all found right here!

II. Back to the Beginning

A. The Story of the Fall of Man

1. God made the man and the woman and placed them in the Garden of Eden.

2. There were many trees in the Garden; but only 2 are specified:

Genesis 2:9

And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

a. The ‘tree of life’, which many believe represents God Himself, was in the middle of the Garden.

b. But what does the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ represent? God introduces it with a *warning*.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

3. Fix this in your mind. God sets 2 trees before the human race with the freedom to eat from one that brings life or one that brings death.

4. Enter the dragon. The next 6 verses sum up the story of the fall of the human race.

a. Satan appears to Adam and Eve as a ‘serpent’; he has one goal in mind; to get them to eat from the forbidden tree, which is the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’.

Genesis 3:1-3

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

b. Notice: the 1st recorded words of Satan in scripture; he questions God’s word!

Genesis 3:1

Hath God said...?

c. When the devil wants to take away your freedom and bring you into bondage, the first thing he will do is come with a question about the truth of God's word!

The Biblical Illustrator

The serpent's first words in the Bible introduce a fatal doubt of the truth of the Word of God, designed to insinuate distrust. "Hath God said?" is a question designed to sap the foundation of all faith, all obedience, all morality, all established order. Here is the most powerful weapon of the devil aimed at human hearts; the weapon by which thousands and thousands are smitten and plunged into ruin.

d. The serpent is still calling God's word to question today:

HATH GOD SAID?

- **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth**
Genesis 1:1
(This word is questioned by those who believe in evolution)
- **Male and female He created them**
Genesis 1:27
(This word is questioned by those who believe in transgenderism)
- **You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...**
Psalms 139:13
(This word is questioned by those who support abortion)

e. The greatest shock of my Christian life has come in the last year as I have found myself debating with so-called Christians over the truth of God's clear commandments. "Has God really said you cannot eat of every tree?"

Genesis 3:2-3

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

Genesis 3:4

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5. The devil begins by questioning God's word; then he moves on to an outright denial of God's word. God had said, 'if you eat of this tree you will surely die'; the devil says 'you will not surely die'.

6. Never forget this the next time you have a thought in your mind that questions the truth of God's word on any subject! If the serpent can sow a seed of doubt about truth you're one step away from outright disbelief!

a. 'You shall not surely die' is another way of saying, "You can sin and get away with it"! You can break God's commandments. Nothing bad will happen.

b. Millions still believe this lie to this day. Even churchgoers believe that they can continue living sinful lives and never pay a price.

c. So the devil begins by questioning God's word; then he denies God's word with a lie; then he moves on to 'the greatest lie ever told'...

Genesis 3:5

For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

7. Here we have an insight into the sinful nature of the serpent.

The Biblical Illustrator

The devil's first appearance shows that there is no iniquity so foul, but he will handle it; no depth of evil so profound, but he will fathom it. He begins with trampling down all truth. "You shall not surely die." "You shall be like God". His earliest words are the lie of lies. Even so to this day he allures each victim to this extremest extremity of evil.

8. This self-same sin, believing that a creature can be 'like God' is what got Satan himself cast out of heaven. The story is told by the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:12-15

**"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!**

a. The next 3 verses tell us why Satan was cast out:

Isaiah 14:13-15

For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

b. Notice, Satan was cast out because he wanted to be like God! Now he offers the same fate to the human race.

Matthew Henry

Satan offers them the same ambition of preferment, as if they were fit to be gods. Satan had ruined himself by desiring to be like the Most High (Isa 14:14), and therefore seeks to infect our first parents with the same desire, that he might ruin them too.

9. It is the desire to be god that destroys men and nations. Believing a lie turned an Archangel into a Devil! And now believing the same lie turns men into devils.

Matthew Henry

Believing a lie, instead of making them 'like God', made them like Satan!

10. Man is never more like the devil than when he believes the lie that he can be god or become god. This is what I call...

B. The Ultimate Deception

"Ultimate"

The greatest or most extreme; the biggest, hugest or largest

1. Remember our theme: knowing the truth makes me free; believing a lie brings me into bondage; the bigger the truth I believe, the freer I become; but the bigger the lie the bigger the bondage!

Horatius Bonar

19th Century Scottish Theologian

All truth is, to some degree, liberty, and all error bondage. Some truth is greater liberty, some error is greater bondage.

2. Not all truth and error are the same size. Believing the truth about Jesus is great truth that can save your soul. But here we have the greatest lie ever told; it was a lie big enough and powerful enough to bring the whole human race into bondage:

Genesis 3:5

“You shall be like God, knowing good and evil”.

3. Early on in my walk with the Lord, the teaching ministry of Derek Prince helped me understand how huge an event happened here.

Derek Prince

“The root error of Adam and Eve was to the desire to be *like* God without *depending* on God. This is the sin of independence.”

a. What does he mean by the ‘sin of independence? To the American mind, independence is a good thing. We celebrate Independence Day every 4th of July.

“Independence”

Free from outside control; not depending on another’s authority.

Synonyms: self-sufficient; self-supporting; self-sustaining

b. To seek independence from an oppressive power is a good thing; but to seek independence from God in the knowledge of good and evil is the greatest sin we can sin.

4. God made man free and forbade him only one thing; it was the one thing that would bring him into bondage and destroy him...

Derek Prince

“The only thing God denied man in all that He created was the pursuit of independent wisdom.”

5. Notice that the issue at hand was an *ethical* issue over who would have the authority to ‘know’ (or define) good and evil? The essence of the Godhead lies in the authority to define:

- Good and evil
- Right and wrong

- Truth and untruth

6. **God created man to be dependent upon God as the source of knowledge for all ethical issues! The serpent's great lie was that man could become 'like God' in that he could 'know good and evil' independent of God!**

7. Satan's lie takes God out of the picture and places man himself on the throne. Man is dependent on God to know good and evil, right and wrong. Independence from God leads to the kind of anarchy that existed during the terrible days described in the Book of Judges:

Judges 21:25

In those days there was no King in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

8. This is what you have when turn away from the 'Tree of Life' to the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'; they become like 'gods', making up their own moral code and deciding for themselves what is right 'in their own eyes'.

9. 20 years ago, millionaire media mogul Ted Turner declared that the 10 commandments are no longer relevant.

Ted Turner

" We're living with outdated rules. The rules we're living under are the Ten Commandments, and nobody pays much attention to them because they're too old. When Moses went up on the mountain, there were no nuclear weapons, there was no poverty. Today, the Ten Commandments wouldn't go over. Nobody around likes to be commanded. Commandments are out!"

a. One wonders which of the 10 he's referring to:

- Honor your father and mother?
- Thou shalt not: Kill. Steal. Covet. Commit adultery?
- One of the new commandments he suggested was 'have no more than 2 children!

10. I don't mean to demonize Ted Turner; he's just a 'son of Adam'.

Derek Prince

“Adam never had any children until he was a rebel. And every descendent of Adam, from that day to this, has been born with rebellion inside; and the essence of the rebellion is the desire to be independent of God which is the root of all our problems.”

11. The devil appeals to our rebellion against God and the truth of His word; this is why Jesus said, “You must be born again”. But even Christians must be careful of...

C. The Devil’s Devices

1. The Apostle Paul warned Christians to be careful.

2 Corinthians 2:11

Lest the enemy should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

a. The devil is not all powerful; he cannot force us to follow him. But he has his devices.

Matthew Henry

“Satan is a subtle enemy and uses many stratagems to deceive us. We must not be ignorant of his devices.”

b. The Greek term translated ‘devices’ means:

“Devices”

(Gk. ‘noema’)

Purpose, disposition, or thought process

Modern translations:

“schemes”

2. The first 3 statements of Satan recorded in the Bible reveal his ‘devices’, his ‘schemes’, how he thinks. And he doesn’t change; he uses the same 3 schemes today as he did then.

THE DEVIL’S 3 DEVICES

“Hath God said...?”

(Satan begins by getting us to question God’s word)

“You shall not surely die.”

(He moves on to the outright denial of God's word)
"You shall be like God, knowing good and evil"
(The greatest lie ever told-we can be independent from God)

3. He has never needed new devices because the old ones still work!

The Biblical Illustrator

Satan well understands, by experience, the corruption of man's nature, which inclines him to embrace darkness rather than light, to believe lies rather than to love the truth, and this gives him great hope of prevailing, even in suggesting the foulest untruths to his hearers.

3. The foulest truth is the 'greatest lie ever told'; that man can be god.

4. Believing this lie brings men and entire nations into bondage.

III. Close: This is Where We Are Today

A. Review

1. We have come to a moment in America where every foundational truth is under attack. Our freedom is in the crosshairs. The devil's devices are at work. What are we to do?

The Biblical Illustrator

In order to defeat the devil's devices, everyone should have his mind stored and fortified with the truths of the Christian religion. He must resort to these whenever he feels disquieted; he should be able to give "a reason for the hope that is in him," and an answer to that miserable shadow that flits across his mind, "Yea, hath God said?"

John 8:32

You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

2. The truth, for men and nations, will set us free; believing a lie, for men and nations, will bring us into bondage. Remember this!

All the warfare in this world is over the authority of the Word of God.

(Who has the final authority to decide good and evil? Right and wrong?)

3. **The greatest lie ever told is that man can know truth or good and evil independent of God! That any man or any government can take the place of God!**

4. The duty of every believer is to walk in the truth and speak the truth in every situation.

Closing Prayer