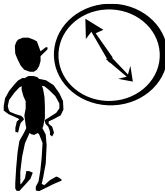


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### Time of Assembly



#### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.

#### Every other Sunday night:

Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## Old Tricks From Satan's Playbook

By Austin Hausner

*"Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has been already in the ages before us" (Ecclesiastes 1:10)..*

Solomon reminds us that there is nothing new. This is important to remember because many things that people say are new are actually the same old tricks repackaged for a new generation.

It's obvious that there is an indescribable amount of division within our country today.

- ◆ Since COVID-19 appeared on the scene, there has never been so much division over a virus. This situation has caused division between people in terms of their opinion on the virus. Our neighbor's healthcare never seemed to be a concern before, but now we are divided because of different outlooks on one virus.
- ◆ All of the rioting that took place last year and earlier this year has only divided us along racial lines more than we have been in a long time.
- ◆ As the feminists loudly voice their opinions and pursue their agenda we are more divided among genders.
- ◆ There is division on sexual orientation. Straight people are ostracized for being closed-minded and homophobic.
- ◆ There is division in regards to the family structure. Society is trying to introduce a "new" family structure. It's supposed to be normal to have two moms, or two dads, or any other unusual combination that differs from the traditional family structure.
- ◆ Many non-believers in God share the opinion that believers need a crutch to feel better about their lives as they go through an existence that's hard to cope with and hard to understand. Some non-believers insist that those who believe in God are weak-minded and superstitious.
- ◆ There is also division in regards to education. There has

been an increasing push to teach critical race theory in schools. Let's not forget, the name contains the word "theory." Some accept this theory as gospel truth and demand everyone be taught its tenants. This harmful theory only serves to divide us more.

- ◆ Another divide in education is those who believe in evolution and those who believe in creation. These two opposing beliefs don't coexist well as they have irreconcilable differences.
- ◆ Those who call themselves social justice warriors have divided our nation into an oversimplified dichotomy. One type of person is the oppressed, and the other type is the oppressor. There is no in-between. You are either a perpetual hapless victim or you are part of the problem.
- ◆ Politics have always been divided but have become more so lately. This is apparent on news networks that tend to identify with a particular side of the political spectrum. The same story reported by opposing networks is made to sound entirely different.
- ◆ The division is clear in social media. Enemies are vilified and demonized. Those who do not accept the so-called consensus are banned from social media and criticized heavily.
- ◆ There is a division between young people and their parents. The universities insist that these young people's parents taught them wrong. Their outdated beliefs no longer work in a society that is trying to move forward. Many of the faculty insist they are passing the torch to the next generation in the hopes that their so-called truth will be proclaimed and will win out over the traditional beliefs these children were raised with.
- ◆ Within the religious world, there are countless denominations. There is one God and one Bible but more denominations than we can list. Where did they all come from?

This is an old game. It's not sophisticated, but it's very effective. Division is one of the oldest tricks in Satan's playbook.

*"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" " (Genesis 3:1-5).*

Have you ever wondered why Satan asked the question that he did? He asked a question that was obviously untrue, and Eve knew this because she relayed back to Satan what God had said. So why ask the question that was chosen? Let's look at a modern example.

How many genders are there? Do you think that two or three generations ago an-

body would have given this question serious debate or thought? The biblical truth, which is self-evident, is that there are only two genders. But time after time of people insisting there is an unlimited number of genders attacks the weak-minded and unsure. It casts doubt on things that people know to be true and throws people off balance. After so many times of repeating a lie, some begin to wonder if it is a lie. After all, why would so many people be wrong?

Have you ever wondered why Satan addressed Eve only? We know that Adam was with her the whole time during this exchange. As we know, once Eve takes the fruit and eats it, he joins in and does the same thing.

We can try to imagine this situation from Eve's perspective. She came to be in a world that had already been created and already contained one person, Adam. So, even though she was the second person created, at the time she was the **last** person to be created. Now, all of a sudden, she is presented with an offer to gain wisdom which will make her like God, or so Satan says. This offer had to be very alluring for Eve. Neither she nor Adam possessed this type of wisdom and it might have seemed like it would have put her at a great advantage.

The desire to fit in is an old human trait that is exploded by Satan and the situation. At this point, try to imagine the situation from Adam's perspective. His wife is about to receive wisdom that will make her like God. Where will this leave Adam? It might look like Eve is going to leave Adam in the dust with her newfound knowledge. Perhaps it was this desire not to be excluded and that human need to fit in that caused Adam to immediately follow his wife and do something they both knew was wrong. This is no different from the things we see today.

With as much division as there is, the human desire to fit in is exploited every day. There is an infinite number of topics to take sides on. The contemporary opinion in sanctioned belief is very clear. There is a sense of security and joining with what we are told is the consensus. Whether or not the majority of people hold these sanctioned opinions, they are certainly made to look like the only acceptable opinion anyone can have.

The desire to please those around us and to fit in drives people to take sides on issues they're not even passionate about. Most people don't want to be the one who stands out, so they quickly take the side that looks the most secure. Right and wrong, truth and lie are not considerations in their decision. They are simply instinctively responding to their innate desire to gain the approval of those around them and conform.

Division is one of Satan's oldest tricks, and he is obviously still using it every day. But what does God say about all of this?

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).*

It doesn't matter to God whether you are a man or woman, or any other way in which we choose to identify and divide ourselves as humans. The thing that matters to

God is whether or not you love Him. All identifiers and titles are of no importance in God's eyes. These identifiers have become maddeningly important to people nowadays, but they are no concern of God.

What is really going on here?

*"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).*

The spiritual forces of evil are responsible for all of the conflict and division that we see today. The things that people believe are the real issues are actually just a distraction. Those are the visible and seemingly obvious things that are being done on the stage, so to speak. But what is happening behind the scenes? This is where the spiritual forces of evil are battling those of good. A spiritual war is being waged continually, where no person on earth is left untouched, yet most people don't even know it's going on.

Like the passage says, our struggle is not against flesh and blood, or other humans. It is against our real enemy, the devil. So what are we supposed to do about all of this?

*"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (Ephesians 5:1-2).*

Can you imagine if the entire world was walking in love? It would be like nothing we have ever seen or ever will see in this life. We won't see anything like that until we make it to heaven one day. In order to get there, we need to be imitators of God, like the passage says. If we are imitating God and walking in love then we can rest assured that we are on the right side of history.

Being on the so-called right side of history is a big concern for many worldly people nowadays. But we are not concerned with this. We are concerned about being on the right side of an existence that goes beyond this one and into the eternal. That is the only side that truly matters, and the one that follows us into eternity.

We don't have to join the crowd of sophisticated, wise, forward-thinking individuals with their ever-changing agenda and opinions. It's not my quote, but I've heard it said that the man who took one too many steps forward walked off of a cliff. It looks like that is what many worldly people are doing. Walking right up to a cliff and getting ready to walk off of it.

If we are imitators of God and walk in love then we will not be swept away by the ever changing fancies and agendas of men. We are commanded to imitate God and to walk in love. Nobody knows what will happen in the future. No one knows what the result of this increasing division will be in our country.

Will this eventually lead to a war on our soil where citizen fights citizen? It's happened once before, so why couldn't it happen again? Then again, our concern is walking and love the way we have been commanded. We don't have to get caught up in

the endless cycle of worrying over what people are going to do next if we are walking in love each and every day. If we are doing what the Lord has made us capable of doing in big ways and small ways as we walk and love, we have the assurance that we are right with God.

As we walk in love, we will safeguard our eternal souls and hopefully influence those around us for the better. This is how we navigate through a difficult existence. Imitating God and walking in love.

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## It Won't Work Unless You Use it!

By Bill Pierce

The Bible is God's inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; Eph. 3:3-5). As such, it deserves our interest, reverence and obedience. We should study it for several reasons, but let us notice two:

We should study the Bible because there are no direct communications from God today! The Gospel or the Faith has been once given – it is complete, perfect and sufficient for man's every spiritual need (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). To those who believe that revelation continues – that God speaks directly to them today, we would like to ask these questions: "Were the Apostles led by the Holy Spirit into all truth as Christ promised them?" (John 16:13). If so, what truth is left to reveal? "Did Paul receive a full Gospel, which he, by inspiration, said was God's power to save?" (Gal. 1:8-12; Rom. 1:16). If Paul revealed and preached a complete Gospel and it is God's power to save, what more can be revealed that is essential to man's salvation? Anyone who claims to have received a revelation from God since the time of the Apostles, DENY Jude's statement that the faith has "ONCE" been delivered and they DENY that Paul preached a complete, soul-saving Gospel!!

We should study the Bible to learn what we must do to be saved! Ignorance is not bliss and what you don't know can hurt you in religion! Ignorance will not excuse. A lack of knowledge causes alienation from God (Hos. 4:6; Rom. 1:20-28; Eph. 4:17-19). We are to study and rightly divide the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15). We need to understand that the Bible is divided into three parts: THE PATRIARCHAL AGE when God spoke directly to the head of the family and revealed His will to them (Gen. 6:14-22; 17:9-14). THE JEWISH OR MOSAIC AGE. God chose the descendants of Abraham as his people. He gave them a written law. This law was given to define and condemn sin (Rom. 7:7) and to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:19-25). THE CHRISTIAN OR GOSPEL AGE. When Christ came, he fulfilled or ended the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages by his death on the cross (Mt. 5:17; Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:12-19). By His death, he established his Testament, the Gospel which is God's final revelation to man (Heb. 1:1). Salvation from sin is not found in the Old Testament, but in Christ by the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:18-23; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38).