

June 2013 Newsletter

Escaping The Snare Of The Devil

“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” - 2 Timothy 2:26 - και ανανηψωσιν εκ της του διαβολου παγιδος εξωγρημενοι υπ αυτου εις το εκεινου θελημα. Continued

*“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,” - ek tes tou diabolou pagidos. The word for **snare** is *pagidos* and it referred to anything that fastened or held fast, whether a noose, a snare, a net for birds, a fishing net for fish, a hunting net for game, or a pit one has dug with sharpened stakes at the bottom of it.*

Now bait can be used, as in the case of the pit, where it would be hung over the pit to have the prey go for it, and in so doing, it would fall into the pit and die on the sharpened stakes. Nooses and snares would be placed along the path that the animal walked so when it was on its way it would become ensnared. When nets were used for fish they would be cast out onto the water, to trap the fish as they came in to feed. When nets were used for birds, the fowler would place grain on the ground, so when the birds came in to eat, the net would be dropped on them.

Some of the things we find in common are: all the prey are unsuspecting, they are not thinking about the fact that a trap might be set for them; the traps or snares are placed on a path that they frequently take; the snares are all cleverly camouflaged; the bait used is the food, or whatever else it is that they might be looking for, that they will go for.

The Christian, who has departed from living the spiritual life and is now pursuing after the things of the flesh and the world, has now taken a different path in life. On this path he is seeking after love, money, things, fame, success, security, pleasure, fun, or one or more of the other 28 lusts of the flesh. And the devil is very clever in this. If he chooses, he can dig a pit, place sharpened stakes at the bottom and hang bait over it, the bait being what the Christian is looking for, which in the case of 1 Timothy 6:9 is **money!** *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”*

Or, he can take an area, scatter the seed/bait of what the Christian is looking for, and when the Christian goes in to pick up the bait, the net falls upon him and he is trapped as well. Or, he can just place a noose or snare along the path that the Christian frequently takes in his pursuit of the many things he is lusting after, and just leave it. Sooner or later the Christian will happen along that path and become ensnared. Or, he can use all of them! And he is also like the clever fisherman, who can take a lure and make it look like what the Christian wants, only to hook him and now he's captured.

The problem lies in the Christian, who has gotten off the path he's supposed to be walking, and has now taken a different path in life! He has wandered into the enemy's territory, who has traps set all over the place! Now he will still have to be on the watch everyday, even when he's walking on the path God has chosen for him, but the problem is greatly intensified when on the wrong path. This is why we're to always be on the alert. ***“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”*** 1 Peter 5:8 ***“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”*** 1 Peter 4:7

One of the things that assist the believer, who is still walking on the right path, in his watching out for the snares of the devil, is **familiarity**! Because he walks on the same path day after day he is familiar with his surroundings. He is familiar with the various things to be found on the path and things normally found alongside the path. And whenever anything different shows up, then a note of caution comes into play. He becomes suspicious. And even when he isn't sure, he stays away from it, because who knows! "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Another thing that will greatly help the believer in avoiding the traps of the devil is, if he **doesn't want any of the things that the devil is offering!** If he's content with what God has provided for him in grace, if he is not lusting after, if he doesn't want, the many things that the devil has to offer, and if all he wants is to know the Lord in life, then he is not as likely to fall for the devil's tempting offers!

Another thing that will greatly help the believer in Christ in avoiding the traps and pitfalls that the devil will place before him in life is, if he is **sitting under the sound teaching of the Word of God.** As he learns Bible Doctrine, he will be informed on the many things in life that can cause his downfall and, because of his wisdom and insight, he will be able to recognize them and avoid them!

The goal of the devil is to get the believer in Christ away from the Word of God, away from living by faith, away from the filling of the Holy Spirit, away from doing the will of God and following down the path that the Father has chosen for him. To accomplish this he uses **deception! He deceives us into thinking that what he has to offer is what we want, what we are looking for!**

Of course, when it isn't, we realize that it isn't what we really want. But too late, he's already trapped us. Another tragic case of the believer gone astray. And even then, the majority of the believers do not even realize that they have gone astray and are taken captive by the devil! But not to worry. The devil has something else to offer the believer, **only this time it will really be what he's been looking for!**

One lie after another and so the deception continues on. **Deception and being led astray** are different concepts, but they always go together. To lead someone astray in life you must first deceive them! And after they have been deceived, and are led astray, and after they realize this isn't what they want, you must deceive them again, but you can't use the first trick because they are already wise to that, so the devil uses a different one! The devil isn't called the **Tempter** or **Deceiver** for nothing! "*For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.*" 1 Thessalonians 3:5

Now how the devil tempts us is through our own lusts. He puts before us what it is that **we want**, that which **we are lusting after**. And when we go for it, then he's got us! "*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: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*" James 1:13-15

The word for **drawn away** here is *exelko*, whose root word is *helko* used for the drawing of a magnet, or the drawing of a fish net. The drawing of a magnet fits best here because it's like an invisible force inside the believer drawing him to the thing he is lusting after. It is the believer who has the lust or desire going on inside of him. All the devil has to do is place that thing before him, and the power or force of that lust dynamic inside of him will draw him toward the object. The object, which, the devil has placed before him, and once he goes for it, the devil now has hooked or trapped him, and once he has trapped him, he is taken captive to do the devil's will.

In ancient mythology, and in almost all religions, there was the concept of “*pagis tou diabolou*”, or the “snare of the devil”. Where they believed that gods and demons were equipped with snares and nets which they used to overcome their enemies. And the most crafty of all is the devil!

The goal of Satan is to get believers in Christ away from the Word of God, the will of God and away from them living in the spiritual life that God gave to them. Once he accomplishes that, then it is only a matter of time when he takes them captive to do his will. To do that he baits the trap with money, success, love, fame, material things, power, jobs, security, pleasure, etc., and once the believer goes for them, then Satan has now hooked or trapped, them.

Other concepts that Satan uses to entrap believers are discouragement, disillusion, grief, rejection by other believers, personal laziness, lack of discipline, failure to apply the word of God in their lives, especially in areas such as spiritual recovery through the confession of sins to God, failure to live in the filling of the Holy Spirit, not living by faith, indifference toward the Word, rebellion against Biblical authority, so-called religious experiences, legalism, trapped by the lusts of the flesh, trapped by one or more feelings of the emotional complex of the soul, non doctrinal associates, etc..

“*Who are taken captive by him at his will.*” - *ezogremeni hup'autou eis to ekeinou thelema*. Taken captive is the perfect passive participle of *zogreo*. Now the perfect tense denotes that an action began at a point in time, then progressed on over a period of time, and finally got to the place of a completed action with results that continue on into the future. It denotes **a very permanent condition**. Which in this case, becomes a very serious matter for the erring believer in Christ.

The passive voice tells us that the subject of the verb, which in this case is the believer once again, receives the action of the verb. **He** has been taken captive and it is the devil who has taken him captive. This is not of his own choosing, it never is. The last thing on his mind was that his decisions and actions were going to result in him being taken captive by the devil! He was on his merry way in life pursuing after the many things that interest him, things he wanted to do, places he wanted to go, things he wanted to accumulate, things that he was desiring, goals and plans for his life that centered around the flesh, but not around Bible Doctrine and the will of God for his life. The participle form tells us that it has become a way of life for him. **He is now the prisoner of the devil!**

Zogreo meant to capture men alive. Which also indicates a diabolical purpose for them. In those days, for certain, it was better to die on the battlefield, rather than being captured alive by the enemy troops. The sadistic tortures they inflicted on captured soldiers are too horrible to even mention. Skinning them alive was but one of many – and there were others far worse!

Believers, who consistently reject Bible Doctrine and the spiritual life God gave them, and go after the things of the world and the flesh, run the risk of dying under **the sin unto death**. “*If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*” 1 John 5:16,17 The sin unto death can be short and painful, and it can also be over a long period of time and painful. Either way it's painful. Which serves as an example to other believers in Christ to not follow their lifestyle and choices.

There were trappers who captured their prey for the purpose of eating them to sustain themselves and their families, and there were trappers, who captured their prey to harvest their hides, so they could sell them for money. And then there were other types of trappers, who captured their prey alive.

Zogreo tells us that we're dealing with this third kind of trapper, **those who capture their prey alive**, because he has something else in mind for them and it's not good. Once they have wandered into his trap; once they have taken the bait, he's captured them. Now he places them in a cage to do with as he pleases from that point on.

Like the **parrot** that has been captured alive in the wild, but now has been placed in a cage spending the rest of its days learning to speak the words of its new master. Or captured **bears**, who now perform tricks for a crowd. Or the **Africans**, who were captured, put in chains, and then sold as slaves to do their new master's bidding. Or **pretty girls**, under the allurements of fame and fortune in Hollywood, go away from their home and right man to end up in drugs, prostitution, or pornography. Or **women**, who go after ads for some type of work in the Orient, end up being sold into white slavery. Or **main stream women** today, who have bought the women's lib rhetoric hook, line and sinker, and follow after their fulfillment in the work force of Babylon and miss out on a great life with their right man! Or we could talk about how many millions of people, who have become addicted to **drugs**, because they bought the lie of what drugs could do for them.

Satan is the master at trapping Christians. He knows exactly what we will fall for and he cunningly baits the trap with just that thing and another Christian "bites the dust". It may be money and success, or it may be fame and fortune, it may be something out of the emotional complex of the soul, it may be a security issue, or it may be for love, or for something else.

Whatever it is, he has now captured the believer alive and that believer is going to be doing his bidding now. But the believer can be so deluded that he thinks he's still doing the will of God! Just like the arrogant believer, who gets in the face of the Pastor-Teacher of a local church to straighten him out, thinks he's doing the will of God. Even if, and when, he leads members of that Pastor's flock out of the Pastor's church, he still is convinced he's doing the will of God – but he's not! He's doing the will of Satan now, only he doesn't know it!

The only way out of it for the arrogant believer is to have a true and genuine change of mind and heart toward the Word of God, toward the entire doctrinal system of God. But, because of his entrenched arrogance toward authority and the authority structures that God has set in place, it becomes doubtful if he will. The other side of the optative mood.

The lofty thinking of pride is a difficult thing to recognize in oneself, and even more difficult to deal with. Humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God is the last thing that pride wants to do! But it is the very thing that the believer in Christ needs to do! "*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*" 1 Peter 5:5,6

The problem that these types of believers have, (and so do many others, yet do not challenge the authority of the Pastor), is **the mental attitude of pride and not having a full understanding of the nature of grace and God's dealings with them in grace**. And because of that, they think that they have brought something into the matter of their relationship with God in salvation and in their post salvation experience. They need to see that they have been saved by his grace and in his grace he has provided everything necessary for their salvation – **everything!** They also need to see that he has also supplied everything they need in their post salvation experience to go on to spiritual completion, and that includes the local church, the Pastor-Teacher gift and the Bible doctrine he teaches!

The Doctrinal System Of God

System: A group of units so combined as to form a whole comprising a method of procedure for one's life.

Bible Doctrine – the sound exegesis of teaching of God's Word from the original languages.

Local Church – the assembly of believers in Jesus Christ, who come together, not to be entertained, but for the purpose of being taught the Word of God.

Pastor-Teacher – the spiritual gift given only to male believers, whose ministry is to shepherd the flock of Christ given to them, and to study and teach Bible Doctrine.

Spiritual Gifts – given to each believer in Christ whose ministry is to other believers in Christ so they can go on to spiritual completion.

New Nature – given to believers in Christ at the moment of salvation, in which we are now to live.

Old Nature – we are to live our lives by putting off the old nature through confession of sins to God.

Holy Spirit – indwells the believer at salvation, he never leaves us – never, and we are to live in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Confessing Sin – 1 John 1:9 tells us to be forgiven and cleansed from sin, we must first confess them to God.

Thinking Divine Viewpoint - means that our viewpoint in life about life is to change so that we have the viewpoint of God and this is accomplished through the consistent intake of Bible Doctrine.

Prayer – is one of the functions of the believer-priest and our prayers are to be directed to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Fellowship – is our active, verbal spiritual communion with other Christians and it is only there when the Word of God is the focal point between the two believers.

Worship Of God – the true worship of God is found in only these two things: the Word and the Spirit.

Walking By Faith – is mandated for all believers in Christ. Faith in the Father and faith in his Word.

Godliness - the application to life of the doctrinal spiritual life going on inside the believer's soul.

Grace – grace not only needs to be understood by the believer, but also it is to be the standard by which they live their lives before God and their standard for dealing with other people.

Will Of God – the motivating force by which all believers are to live their lives.

Spiritual Sacrifice – is us setting aside our will for life, so we can do God's will.

Undeserved Suffering – is suffering when we have done nothing wrong and is patterned after Christ.

Believers in Christ can become casualties in the angelic conflict one of two ways. Either they can be taken out under the sin unto death, or they can be captured alive by the devil and taken as prisoners of war. This passage is dealing with the second one in that Satan has set a trap for them, they went for it, and are now his prisoner. *“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”* 2 Timothy 2:26 This passage also deals with the matter of recovery, or getting free from Satan's grasp.

But God has provided all believers in Christ the spiritual armor, whereby we will not only be able to avoid being taken captive by the devil, nor dying the sin unto death, but be able to stand up against Satan and all his attacks and be victorious over him! And this armor is found in Ephesians 6:10-17, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your **loins** girt about with truth, and having on the **breastplate** of righteousness; And your **feet** shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the **shield** of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the **helmet** of salvation, and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”*

God issued every believer in Christ, at the moment of their salvation, the spiritual armor needed to be able to withstand Satan and his army of demons, but to avail us we need to pick up and put on each and every piece of the armor and use them! Failure to use the armor of God will result in the believer in Christ becoming a casualty in this war of Satan against God!

The **loins** refer to the sensitive side of our nature, our emotions, from the stomach down to the groin, covering everything in front and back. And the way they are protected is by truth, by overlapping truths concerning related doctrines. The **breastplate** protected the front and back of the torso, the heart, lungs, etc., and it did so with the knowledge of our righteous standing before God and living in righteousness in our daily lives. Our **feet** being shod with peace denotes the idea of living in the peace that Christ gave us so we can have stability in life and have stable footing when attacked by Satan! The **shield** of faith looks at the exercise of the Christian's faith in two areas. One, in that it can ward off all the longer distance burning darts of Satan's anger fired against our souls. Two, it can ward off the blows of his swords in close combat. The **helmet** of our salvation, which is used to protect the brain, deals with our knowledge that we have been saved by the grace of God, and the chin straps that hold the helmet secure looks at the knowledge that we can never lose our salvation, or our eternal security. And the **sword** of the Spirit, which is an offensive weapon, is where we take the pertinent doctrine needed for the attack and apply it to the situation.

It is vitally important that all believers in Christ utilize each various component part of the armor of God for that is how we protect our souls from Satan's rage, *“that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,”*! And it is an evil day when Satan attacks us, but if we stand our ground with the spiritual armor God supplies to us, then we will win the day and he will flee from us! But to do this, we must submit ourselves to God, resist the devil and he will flee from us! *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* James 4:7 But remember, we must do both! We must submit ourselves to God and his authority over us, and we must resist the devil. If we do both, then the devil will flee from us. By standing firm in our faith in the Word, and continuing to live in the spiritual life dynamic means that the devil flee from us and we will not be taken captive by him to do his will!

Everybody thinks of the devil as an angel, a fallen angel, and he is! But not many think of him as being a fierce warrior and predator! *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* 1 Peter 5:8 - νηψατε γρηγορησατε οτι ο αντιδικος υμων διαβολος ως λεων ωρουμενος περιπατει ζητων τινα καταπιη.

The believers who need to repent, the ones who have been taken captive by the devil, are the ones who did not attend to their own spiritual life, the one that the Father gave to them at salvation. They were not on the lookout for getting involved in the things of the world, or the snares of the devil, nor did they maintain living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, but allowed themselves to continue living in the flesh.

Peter tells us to be sober, to be vigilant, and then goes on to tell us why! Because the devil is looking for the straying sheep that he can devour! The word for **be sober** is the aoist active imperative of *nepho*. We see that is a command and a command to start doing immediately. Obviously we know that **physical sobriety** is always in view here telling us that we're not be drunk on alcohol, nor even get mildly buzzed! And that certainly includes any drugs that would alter our thinking, legal or non legal.

But what this speaks of is **mental sobriety**, which tells us that we're to have clear thinking, doctrinal thinking, thinking without the influence of the emotions, or thinking based on assumption. We can not allow our thinking to be affected by the **fear** complex, or the **anger** complex, or the **guilt** complex, or the **grief** complex, or the **envy** complex, or the human **love** complex, or the thinking of wanting to be **happy** all the time. Our thinking is to be the thinking of **Bible Doctrine!**

The next command we are given is to **be alert**. To be alert is the aoist active indicative of *gregoreo*. It meant to be wide awake, to be vigilant, to be watchful. It was the word used for the soldier standing on the wall of the fort, or the soldier out in the field with his fellow soldiers, watching for any tell-tale sign of the enemy's presence. He not only had to be wide awake, but all his senses had to be in tune to pick up on any movement or sound of the enemy. And if something didn't look right, or *feel* right, then there was something **wrong**. *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Some activities of the enemy are obvious, other activities are more subtle, devious. It is Bible Doctrine that gives us wisdom in both scenarios. But sometimes there is nothing obvious, and nothing subtle, it just doesn't *feel* right. This is where one has sort of a spiritual sixth sense that picks up on things. And this is where get into the area of the function of **peace** in our souls. Philippians 4:7 talks about peace guarding our souls. *“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

The loss of peace could be a tell-tale indicator that something is wrong. We are either back operating in the flesh nature, instead of the new nature; or we are not operating in the filling of the Holy Spirit, who gives us peace; or we are not operating in the sphere of faith, where peace operates; or we are afraid or worrying about something; and just maybe, we are, or will shortly be, under the attack of Satan!

Whenever there are any tell-tale signs that something is wrong, and it will be the doctrinal Christian, who is walking with the Lord that will pick up on that. It will be then that he or she needs to prepare for an assault by the devil and his forces and employ the spiritual armor that God has given him, and in so doing, will be able to withstand his attack. The **roaring** of the lion paralyzes the auditory response, so the prey cannot move. That dynamic in the Christian's life is **fear**. When fear grips the believer, he is not able to respond to the attack with faith in the Word. But by going back and focusing on the Word, the believer will receive the faith from the Word needed to defeat the devil.

Now when the believer is attacked by the devil, Peter commands us to resist him! “*Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*” 1 Peter 5:9 The word for **resist** is the aorist active indicative of *anthistemi*, which meant to hold your ground. The Roman soldier was assigned a three foot by three foot piece of ground that he was to stand his ground against the enemy. And so does every Christian have their place in the front line of the battle of truth against the world **and we are to take our stand and not give an inch!**

Stedfast in the faith is *stereoī te pistoi*, which meant to be solid, hard, stiff, strong, and from there it developed the idea of being immovable. In the faith not only looks at the summation of the orthodox doctrines of Christianity, but also the idea of our faith in the promises and doctrines of God's Word! We are not going to walk away from them. **We're not even going to back down one iota from them!** We're going to hold the line and stand our ground.

You see, **one of the areas that Satan defeats Christians in is their faith!** They can become ensnared by their carnality, or their emotions, or their lofty thinking of pride and religiosity, or their involvement in the world system. But they either stop living by faith in their own personal life, or depart from one of the doctrines and promises of God's Word. And when and if that happens, then it is only a matter of time until Satan captures them.

But Peter gives us something here that will help us from being defeated in our mental attitudes and in our faith and that is the word **knowing**. **Knowing** that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. The word **knowing** is the perfect active indicative of *oida*, the word for having and full and complete understanding on a subject, which comes from having a consistent intake of Bible Doctrine over the years.

The implied subject here is the undeserved suffering of the believer in Christ, and all the negative mental and emotional dynamics that we can go through because of that. And what Peter is saying is that we're not alone in this! We're not the only believer going through these trials and sufferings in life! That all our fellow Christians are suffering as well. Not only that, it is suffering, plus Bible Doctrine, plus the exercise of faith, that produces spiritual growth, which conforms us to the image of Christ!

Now in addressing that issue of the suffering we experience because we are going through a trial, so our faith won't falter, Peter tells us that, “*But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you **perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.***” 1 Peter 5:10

He's telling us that after we have suffered what was needed for us to suffer, so as to accomplish the Father's purpose for us, then the Father will make us **perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle** us. The word for **perfect** is the future active indicative of *katartizo*, which was used for the mending of nets, for making something right, and meant to repair the damage! To **stablish** is the future active indicative of *sterizo* and it meant to prop up a vine, or to use a cane to walk with, and meant to prop us up to get us back on our feet once again. To **strengthen** is the future active indicative of *sthenō*. And to **settle** is the future active indicative of *themelioō*, which was to lay a foundation so one can build something on it, such as, a house, or tower, or city. The suffering the believer is going through is actually **a period of transition**, but in this transition God now is going to be laying a new foundation for the next phase of his life! So, after we have suffered for a little while, God the Father is going to **make it right and repair the damage**. He is going to **prop us up**, (often using other believers to do that). He is going to **strengthen** us. And he is going to **lay a foundation for a new life!**