

(Ephesians) the God of This Age

by Brian Brodersen

The devil is the God of this age, working behind the scenes to control the world and influence people's lives.

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Topics: "Suffering And Evil", "Divine Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the common question of why God allows suffering and disasters to occur. He uses the example of Job in the Old Testament to illustrate that while natural disasters may happen, it is Satan who manipulates nature to bring about disastrous circumstances. The speaker then shifts to the New Testament and recounts the story of Jesus calming a storm on the Sea of Galilee. He emphasizes that Jesus had the power to rebuke the wind and bring about peace. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God to pour out His spirit and bring salvation to many in these perilous times.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to Ephesians 6, and before we actually get into our study tonight, we're going to have a friend come up, and we're going to pray for her. Come on up, Ina. Ina is a good friend.

She's, you know, to me, she's kind of the Corrie Tin Boom of this generation. She just sort of travels around the world, just ministering as God leads her, and she spent a couple of years with us in England, helping us lay the foundation of the church there, and we couldn't have done it without her. And at a point in time, she told me that she thought the Lord was calling her to Australia, and so we prayed about it, and sure enough, God sent her off to Australia, and then after she was there for a period of time, we got an email from her.

She said she felt the Lord was calling her back here. She came. September 11th came.

God called her to New York City. She spent quite a few months out there ministering, and now she believes God's calling her to Jerusalem, and I believe He is, too. She hears the Lord, and so she's going to head out, and we want to pray for her that God will use her as she goes over to Jerusalem.

Do you want to say anything? Let's pray for her. Father, we just thank you for Ina. We thank you for the blessing that she's been to us, and just the blessing she is wherever she goes.

We know you're going to bless those in Jerusalem as she comes there to help in the work that you're doing. We pray, Lord, that you would just guide her and direct her. We pray you'd provide for her, and

Lord, we pray that you'd use her in a powerful way to touch people's lives in that dark city, in that place where there's such a desperate need.

Lord, just keep her safe as well as she ministers there, and may she just find that sufficient grace with her as she journeys, and may she daily have those divine appointments that you would set up for her, Lord. So we commit her to you, and we just look forward to the reports of what you're going to do through her life. We thank you for her in Jesus name.

Amen. Okay, Ephesians six. Once again, this evening, we are continuing our series on the subject of spiritual warfare.

And so let me read to you again. Ephesians six, verses 10 through 13. We'll sort of look at those verses again tonight.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand.

In our previous study, we learned that we as Christians are in a spiritual battle. We also learned a bit about our adversary, the devil. We saw that he is exceedingly powerful, ultra intelligent.

Thoroughly wicked and forever the enemy of God and man. We also saw that the devil and his forces are presently ruling this world. In our study this evening, I'd like to bring to your attention some of the devil's activity in the world.

There are many things that the devil is behind. That we might not realize, and I think it's important that we get some insight into what his activity is in the world, and in doing so, hopefully we can get a better perspective on why the world is the way it is. We'll get a biblical perspective on why the world is the way it is.

So we want to look this evening at the devil's work in the world in three different areas. We want to look at the devil's work in the realm of nature. We want to look at the devil's work in society.

And then finally, we want to look at the devil's work in regard to religion. So the devil's work in the realm of nature. Did you know that Satan has a degree of power within the realm of nature? We don't usually think of that as being the case, but we have much biblical evidence for that actually being the case.

Many of the things that we commonly refer to as natural disasters. Are in reality, many times the work of the devil. Now, notice that I said many times, not all the time, not every natural disaster that occurs is a work of the devil.

But I think that. As we consider what the scriptures say and as we consider the very character of Satan, I think we could really make the statement that he's probably much more involved in those kinds of things than we often realize. Now, of course, some disasters in history have been the direct result of the activity of God.

God has judged the world in the past and he's used natural disaster as his instrument of judgment. The flood, of course, is a great example of that. The reigning of fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah would be another example of that, or even the plagues that occurred in Egypt as God was liberating the nation of Israel from their bondage in Egypt.

Those plagues, with the exception of the 10th plague, which was the judgment upon the firstborn, all of them were manifestations of things that were going wrong in the natural realm. So there are times when God is the one who is directly involved in the natural disasters. And then I think some disasters are truly natural.

There is no spiritual element involved in it, but they're truly natural and they are the result of the fact that we live in a fallen world. We live in a world that, as Paul the Apostle described it, is in bondage to decay. The scientists use the term entropy, the law of entropy.

Everything is tending toward decay. Everything is falling apart, basically, and because we live in a world that's falling apart sometimes as the world is falling apart, that ends up bringing disastrous circumstances for people. But then.

There is the possibility that Satan is occasionally and perhaps more than we have ever thought behind some of these things that are commonly referred to as natural disasters. Let me give you a couple of examples from the scripture where we see Satan active behind the scenes, manipulating the realm of nature and causing disaster in people's lives as a result of it. Let's turn to the book of Job to the first chapter, Job, chapter one, verse six says, Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.

And Satan also came among them, and the Lord said to Satan, From where do you come? So Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro on the earth and from walking back and forth on it. Then the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? So Satan answered the Lord and said, Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge around him, around his household and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.

And the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power. Only do not lay a hand on his person. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Now listen to this. Now, there was a day when the sons and daughters of Job were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and a messenger came to Job and said the oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them when the Sabians raided them and took them away. Indeed, they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you while he was still speaking.

Another also came and said the fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them. And I alone have escaped to tell you while he was still speaking. Another also came and said the Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away.

Yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword. And I alone have escaped to tell it. And while he was still speaking, another also came and said your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house.

And suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house and it fell on the young people and they are dead. And I alone have escaped to tell you. Here we see an example of natural disaster, but it's very clear that Satan was behind the scenes, manipulating nature in some way to bring about.

These disastrous circumstances that occurred in the life of Joe now over in the New Testament, in the fourth chapter of Mark's gospel, turn over there with me in verse 36 of Chapter four, Jesus and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee. Verse 36 says now when they had left the multitude, they took him along in the boat as he was. And other little boats were also with him and a great windstorm arose and the waves beat into the boat so that it was already filling.

But he was in the stern asleep on a pillow and they awoke him and said to him, teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Then he arose. And here's the key word and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Now, this word rebuked here is the exact same word that's used whenever Jesus would rebuke the demons. And. It's highly likely that this storm that suddenly arose on the lake, a storm that was so of so powerful that these seasoned fishermen, these men who had grown up on this lake, that they were afraid for their lives.

It's highly probable that once again, here we have Satan behind the scenes manipulating the natural forces and bringing about this great windstorm, attempting to destroy Jesus. He attempted to destroy him on many occasions, and I think this was one of them. And so Jesus rebukes the wind.

And because he uses that same terminology that he used in the context of delivering people from demon oppression, I think that he was speaking to Satan who was operating here behind the scenes. Now, as we look at. Job's experience and the experience of.

Our Lord and the disciples here. I think that we can build a case that. There are times when storms, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, these kinds of things that we commonly refer to as natural disasters.

There are times when it's actually Satan behind the scenes. You know, sometimes these kinds of things are referred to as acts of God. Have you ever heard that term? The insurance companies will refer to earthquakes and things like that as acts of God.

That's their way of not. Paying the bill when your house, you know. Is wrecked in an earthquake, they say, well, you know, God did that, we can't really do anything to help you there, but they actually refer to it as an act of God.

And isn't it interesting that back in the account we read there in Job. When the fire came down. And consume Job's possessions and his servants, how did the servant communicate it? The fire of God fell from heaven and many, many times.

When natural disaster of whatever sort does occur, we find that Satan. Takes advantage of these kinds of things. And what do we see so often we see people are blaming God for these kinds of things.

That's why I think the devil is behind it to a large degree, because he wants God to get the blame for these kinds of things. So people will not come to God and. Trust in him and so forth.

Two things that often occur when natural disaster strikes. Are the destruction of lives and the blasphemy of God. It's interesting that in Revelation.

Chapter nine, verse 11 of all verses and chapters, Revelation 9, 11, Satan is referred to there as a polygon in the Greek, which is destroyer. And that, of course, is usually what happens when natural disaster strikes. People are destroyed.

Lives are destroyed. And because millions of people have been destroyed through natural disaster, I think that many of these things are satanically inspired. Because of the blasphemy that comes, Revelation 13 one tells us really basically that blasphemy originates with the devil himself.

And I don't know if you can think back to times when you maybe it was after one of the big hurricanes hit the southeastern part of the country or when the earthquakes have happened in various places. And, you know, the news people are there and they're interviewing victims. They're interviewing family members.

And so many times right there on camera, people will say things like, well, why did God allow this? And of course, whenever you're in a situation where you're ministering to people where these kinds of things have happened, that's the first thing they say, why did God allow this? And if this is the kind of God there is, get away. I don't want to hear anything from you, you know. And we had that experience a little bit when we were in New York City after the terrorist attack.

And because natural disasters. Lead to the destruction of lives and the blasphemy of God so often. Because of those things, I really do believe that Satan is more involved in these things than we would generally think.

So I think it's important that we know that. So that when these kinds of things do occur and we have opportunities to speak to people and try to help them, try to comfort them and try to, you know, bring them to trust in the Lord. We need to know this stuff so we can remove that stumbling block that might be there as a result of the disaster that has affected their lives.

We have to be able to say, hey, God is not responsible for this. God did not do this. But this is the work of the devil.

This is what the devil does. And so we see that the devil is working in the realm of nature. The devil is working in society.

Satan is working among men. He works through political systems, educational processes, the news and entertainment industries. It's important to understand this, because once again, I think as Christians, we tend to view a lot of what goes on around us as.

Merely politically or socially related. But yet, that's a big mistake. There's something else going on.

Remember, in our previous study, we talked about the principalities and the powers. We talked about the reality of spiritual forces controlling things from behind the scenes. And I'll tell you, I don't know what your

experience was back in January of 2000.

Around the whole election fiasco. But I personally sensed that there was a major spiritual battle going on at the time. Now, I believe that George W. Bush was the man that got appointed to be the president of this nation.

And I think the last couple of years have. Kind of confirmed that I remember, you know, shortly after the whole terrorist thing. Came about, I remember reading articles.

Where people who were supporting Al Gore. We're actually thankful at the time that he didn't win the presidency. Because they doubted his leadership ability under the kinds of circumstances that we were facing as a nation.

But I personally sense that at that time there was there was a battle that was taking place, a spiritual battle. And I think that's what we would sense as Christians, because that's what's going on. That's what we see as we look at the scripture.

And it's so important that we get a biblical perspective on what's really happening in the world. Because we can easily just, you know, get caught up in the way everybody else thinks, and it's just, you know, this party versus that party and it's these issues over against those issues. And that's what it's all about, ultimately.

No, that's not what it's all about. Ultimately, it's all about the principalities and powers behind the scenes who are in control. And they've got their people that they want to see in those positions because those people are going to carry out their desires.

And the last thing they want to see is a man who trusts God, believes in God, prays to God, encourages other people to do that. In a position of great authority, like the position of the president of the United States. So we have got to realize, remember, according to Ephesians 2 to Satan is controlling the course of this age behind the systems of the world, whether political, social, philosophical, educational, religious, business or otherwise, this great evil mind is at work.

Satan is working among men, Satan said to Jesus on one occasion. As he was tempting him. He, of course, was tempting Jesus to follow him, and perhaps you remember, he finally said that he took him up onto a high mountain and he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said this to him, he said. Bow down and worship me and I will give you these kingdoms. For they are mine and I give them to whomsoever I wish.

Jesus Christ did not dispute that claim of Satan. He, of course. Rebuked him, get behind me, Satan, you so worship and serve the Lord God only, but he didn't say which he could have said if that was anything less than a fact, Jesus could have said, Satan, these kingdoms do not belong to you.

And you can't give them to anybody you wish, but Jesus didn't dispute that. Why? Because that is reality. That's what the Bible teaches.

Jesus even himself referred to Satan in John, chapter 16, as the God of this age. Paul refers to Satan as the God of this age in 2nd Corinthians, chapter four. And so.

We have got to remember who's in control now, that's not to say that God has lost control, God is ultimately in control. In other words, God is still sovereign. And even though Satan has been allowed an element of authority.

And he exercises that authority. Over man, yet he has not been able to do that apart from God's sovereign allowance of such a thing. Jesus said concerning Satan that he is a murderer from the beginning, he is a murderer.

And so as we look around us and as we see the murderous activity going on in our world today, as we go back over the long history of humanity and we see the murderous activity that's occurred throughout the long history of man over and over again in every generation. We see in that as well, we see the activity of the devil. And as we look at the current situation, as we look at everything from radical Islam to communism, to racism, to drug trafficking, to homicide bombers, to teenage suicide in all of these areas, Satan's influence is seen now.

Of course, people are involved in these things, but there are people who are under the control of the devil, not to alleviate them of their own responsibility, they are completely responsible and they will suffer the consequences of their rebellion to God and their submission to Satan. But we have to understand that he's the one behind the scenes. That's why Paul says we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

That's why we have to remember that if we're going to obtain a complete victory ever, it's got to be a victory that occurs in the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm. We've got to defeat those forces that are behind the scenes manipulating things. And we can only do that through those spiritual weapons that we discussed last time.

Prayer and the word of God and worship and those things. One of the most revealing events in history as to the personality, purpose and power of the devil was seen in Adolf Hitler and the events that surrounded his attempt to rule the world. But if you want to get a real up close and personal of what the devil is like, just study the history of Adolf Hitler in the Third Reich.

I mean, that's all of the brutality, all of the murderous rage. Oh, it's just it's so clearly seen there and especially in his animosity toward the Jewish people. You know, sometimes people want to.

Downplay. The wickedness of the devil. They want to sort of approach it in a lighter fashion and all, but you can't do that.

And his personality, his purpose, his power is most clearly seen in some of these dictators that have come and gone in world history. The communists have also left us an example of the true nature of Satan. If you get into studying the history of.

The activity of the communists in the very various parts of the world in Eastern Europe and what Lenin and Stalin did to their own countrymen in Russia or what happened in the revolution in China or in Cambodia and places like that is just unbelievable. But the interesting thing is not only the the murderous aspect of it, but the radical antichrist element to it all as well. Very much opposed to Christ, as a matter of fact, Richard Wurmbrandt, the Romanian.

Pastor who suffered much persecution under the communist in Romania, he wrote a book entitled Marx and Satan. And he does research back into the early life of Karl Marx and shows that there was a connection between Marx and Satanism. And his whole philosophy that came forth as communism or

socialism has that satanic element to it, and it's crystal clear, again, by the murderous element and by the antichrist element in it.

And now we're seeing the radical Muslims and they are providing new insights into the vicious character of Satan. And could there be any question about the origin of this when their main hostility is toward Jews and Christians? The ambition of Islam is to rule the whole world, but presently their ambition is to destroy Israel and the Christians who they see is supporting Israel. So in all of that, I mean, I think that you have to be blind to miss the spiritual element in that.

I don't know if you heard about it on the news or not, but this past week, the Southern Baptist Convention met and one of the leaders, formerly the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Vines from Jacksonville, Florida, he was addressing the Southern Baptist Convention and he was talking about Islam. He was quoting directly from the Koran, from the Hadith, from the Islamic sources, and in doing so, he was building a case for Mohammed not being a prophet of God, but actually being a deluded, possibly demon possessed individual quoting from the Muslim sources. Mohammed thought he was demon possessed.

It was his wife who told him, no, you're not. It's God who's speaking to you. And he went on to, you know, just sort of expose Islam, but using all Islamic sources.

And, you know, what a an outrage and an uproar coming not only from the Islamic community, but coming from the news media. And, you know, it's so ironic since September 11th, we've seen a demonstration of what radical Islam is all about, but we've got. People in our country who are trying to dismiss that as sort of an extreme.

Fringe type of a thing, these people have not read history. This is what's happened historically. From the time Mohammed gained power and but, you know, as you look at this whole thing and, you know, the irony to me is that you can, you know, in the papers or, you know, in your news broadcast or whatever, you can speak in a derogatory manner about Jesus Christ or the church or, you know, you can say anything you want, but boy, you talk about Islam and that is that is unacceptable to talk about Islam in a negative fashion that that's intolerance, they say.

It's just crazy. But all you can in my mind, all you can really ultimately, finally attribute it to is just the delusion of the devil himself upon the minds of people. But this is his activity.

This is what he does. And the final aspect of the devil's work that we want to consider tonight. Is seen in the realm of religion, the so-called great religions of the world are actually false religions and the most subtle and deadly form of satanic activity.

Now. That would get me enough hate mail to last me for quite a while, but you know, it's true. It's true.

And again, you know, we're living in a time when when people say, no, no, nothing's true. They don't want to say anything is true. But, you know, anybody who's a serious Muslim, anybody who's a serious Hindu, anybody who's a serious Jew, Christian, whatever, take any religion.

You know, it's only these humanistic. Postmodern minded people, it's the non-religious people, for the most part, who are standing back saying, oh, no, all religions are equally the same. Everyone, you know, is just as equally valid and you should never, you know, like these people in the news that are coming against Dr. Vines because of his statements.

Do you think these guys are believers in God at all? They're pure humanists, they're atheists. But you see, it works into their agenda to have all religion just basically teaching the same thing, just sort of a muddled down and nothing, really, so they can ultimately control. Even that element of society.

But the fact of the matter is this, you talk to a Muslim and ask him if Christianity and Islam teach the same thing and he'll laugh in your face. Of course, they don't. And Muslims are very bold about their claim that Muhammad is the greatest of the prophets and that Jesus was a prophet, but he's not as great as Muhammad.

And if you even indicate such a thing, you could be put to death and Hindus will tell you that Hinduism is superior to Islam and Christianity and Judaism and everything else, and everybody, you know, this whole thing of all religions teach the same thing and so forth. Nobody who's serious about the religion believes that because they don't teach the same thing.

And one of the things that, you know, this article I read from The New York Times today was, you know, talking about was, you know, they were castigating this guy because he said that Allah is not the Jehovah of the Bible. Well, how in the world do they know who Jehovah of the Bible is? But he's not. And the fact of the matter is.

Both religions cannot be true, and every true Muslim knows that and every true Christian knows that. Islam and Christianity are mutually exclusive, they can't both be true. One is true and one is false.

And that is the same with every other religion. And so these religions of the world, the great religions of the world, they all can't be true because they all contradict each other. They all can't be true.

They all could possibly be wrong. Even ours could be wrong conceivably. But only one can be right, ultimately.

And the question is, which one has. A better case for truth and hands down, Christianity has it, there's no contest, the historicity of Jesus Christ. The whole Bible itself and its historical setting, you know, when you read the Bible, you're reading history, it's obvious, it's plain, it's clear.

And the biblical history is accurate. All the liberals have tried to say the Bible is inaccurate historically, that's all been proven to be nothing but rubbish. The Bible is historically accurate.

The Bible is geographically accurate. The Bible is archaeologically established as, yeah, this event that is recorded here in the Bible did take place in this part of the world at this time. And we have archaeological evidence from that time to prove it.

And so when it comes down to looking at all the religions of the world, you know, somebody might say, well, how could you say that all the other religions are false? Well, you have to do a comparison. You have to sit down and you have to look at the claims that are made and then you have to build your case from history. And you find that no other religion has a case.

Muhammad lived, yes. He lived at a point in history. But as I've pointed out to Muslims when I've been speaking to them and they've insisted to me that Muhammad is the greatest of all the prophets, I say, you know, that's.

I find that very hard to believe. On these grounds, if Moses was or if Muhammad was the greatest of the prophets, how come? There was nothing. To announce that he was going to come into the world, how come there was no advanced notice, how come there were no prophecies about his coming? If Muhammad was one of the greatest of the prophets, why didn't he do some miraculous deed to show that he was a great prophet? Why didn't he do something like rise from the dead? And, you know, quite honestly, when you get down to those kinds of things with them, they themselves are puzzled about that.

They're taught not to think about that sort of thing. But that's reality. If Muhammad was the last and the greatest of the prophets, God sure did it all backwards.

And what what gives him that position of greatness, what did he do to, you know, prove that greatness? He didn't really do much of anything in a spiritual sense, but you look at Jesus and you have Jesus who didn't simply appear on the scene out of nowhere, but his coming was predicted. And anticipated for thousands of years, Israel was looking for a messiah because they had scriptures that declared that he was going to come when he was going to come under the circumstances that he would come, where he would come to and all of those things. And then when he comes.

He doesn't just live some obscure life as a Bedouin. Out in the desert, but he goes about doing things that no person in the history of the world ever did before or has ever done since. He goes around healing people of sicknesses.

He multiplies small amounts of bread and fish and feeds thousands of people, he does these kinds of things, he raises the dead. Then he goes to his own death and then he rises again from the dead and the men that followed him gave their lives to prove that that his testimony or that their testimony of his resurrection was a reality when they were called upon to deny his resurrection or lose their lives. They said, kill us.

We know he lives and we'll live with him. So when I say that the great religions of the world are false religions. That's not just.

A dismissal of them without understanding what they're saying, but it's a it's an absolute necessity if Christianity is true. Because Christianity and these other religions are mutually exclusive. They cannot all be true.

They cannot both be true. Whichever one you compare with the other. Now, as I said, the false religion is the most subtle and most deadly form of Satan's activity.

It's the most subtle because they claim to lead people to God, and this is where you see Satan's this is the masterpiece of the devil is false religion. They claim to lead people to God. They're the most deadly because they're aimed at destroying men's souls eternally.

These other philosophies and things that have caused great injury and pain and suffering to people as bad as they were. To a certain extent, they were limited to the physical. Part of the person.

Jesus said, don't don't fear those who can destroy your body, but after that have no power, but rather fear him who, after you're dead, has power to throw. Your soul into hell. And this is where Satan really.

Seeks to trap people, he seeks to trap them in false religion. And. Because if he can do this, he doesn't only destroy their life in a physical sense, but he destroys their soul eternally.

So in this category. Of false religion, we have everything from Hinduism with its millions of gods. You see, here's a great example, how could Christianity and Hinduism both be true? Hinduism teaches that there are millions of gods, literally millions of gods, not just a few more than one, but millions.

And Christianity is clearly there's one God, so all religions don't teach the same thing. Buddhism, many people don't realize this, Buddhism is an atheistic religion. Buddhism does not believe actually in a personal God.

Buddhism is is more of a philosophy in some ways than a religion, actually. But there is ancestral worship as a part of it. So it does bring it into the category of religion.

But everything from Hinduism with its millions of gods down to Islam, with its one tyrannical God Allah. And everything in between. That would fall under the category of false religion also included would be what we would call the pseudo Christian cults.

We're familiar with the Jehovah's Witnesses. We're familiar with the Latter-day Saints, the Mormons. And other similar kinds of groups, they would they would come into that same category as well as apostate Protestantism.

Protestantism that long ago left what Protestantism was in its beginning. And many of the Protestant churches today known as the mainline Protestant denominational churches have long ago left the faith. They no longer believe that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

They no longer believe that he was born of a virgin. They no longer believe that he died an atoning death on the cross. They no longer believe that he literally rose bodily from the dead.

They don't believe that he's coming back. They don't believe that the Bible is the word of God. You wonder why in the world do they call themselves Christians? They reject outright everything the Bible teaches.

But yet there are multitudes of people that attend those churches still their attendance and membership is declining. But nevertheless, they would be into this same category here and then to a large degree, Roman Catholicism would fall into this category as well. And so this is where Satan is busy at work in these different realms, the realm of nature.

Manipulating the natural forces and bringing disaster upon men. Resulting in the destruction of many lives and the questioning of the goodness of God and often the blasphemy of God as a result of it. The devil's work in society and just oppressing people.

Through. Various philosophies and things and keeping people deceived, you know, he really, you know, Satan is ultimately a deceiver and however he can deceive you, that's what he's going to do. That's what he's going to use.

People have inclinations toward religion, you'll deceive them through religion, people's people have dislike of religion. He'll get you into philosophy that suits you. But whatever the case, his ultimate goal is to destroy us eternally.

Jesus referred to him as. Both the deceiver and the thief, and Satan comes that he might steal men's souls and rob them of eternal life. But thank God that his reign of terror is just about over.

There is an appointed time in which he will. Pay the ultimate price for the rebellion that occurred so long ago and all that he has done in history to. Oppose the work of God and to inflict the creation of God.

And. The death blow really came. Through Jesus upon the cross.

Remember the prophecy all the way back in the garden that was given the woman through whom sin really was introduced into the world. She was deceived by the serpent as we know the story. And you remember that God said in speaking to the serpent, he said.

That. The seed of the woman. Will crush the head of the serpent.

He said, you shall bruise his heel, but he shall crush your head. And the interesting thing to me is that. I don't think the devil knew that at the time.

But it was simultaneous. As the devil was bruising the heel of the seat of the woman. He was crushing his head at that moment because it was at the cross that Jesus destroyed.

The devil. Now, you might say, well, if he destroyed him at the cross 2000 years ago, what in the world has been happening since then? I mean, he seems to still. Be pretty active.

He does, but the power that he holds over men now is only a power that is allowed by the man himself. You see, people who are under the devil's influence today are under it because they. Choose to be under it, in a sense, Jesus Christ has done everything that needed to be done to liberate them from that prior to the coming of Christ.

There wasn't that. Liberation, it hadn't been provided, but now Jesus has destroyed the work of the devil to the extent that. Any person.

Can come out from under his authority. By receiving the gift of salvation and coming under the authority of Jesus Christ. And what God is doing presently is he's demonstrating his victory over Satan on an individual level, really, from person to person.

In the future, he's going to demonstrate his victory over Satan on a universal level, and that's what we're waiting for. That's what we're heading toward, and that's what we can't wait to see. But presently.

He gives victory to men and women on an individual basis. And all of us at one time or another were the servants of sin and the servants of Satan, we were bound by him, we were in his camp, so to speak, we were under his control, we were deceived by him and we were basically his servants. But the spirit of God came and convicted us of our sin and brought us to a knowledge of the salvation that God has provided.

And now we have been set free from that captivity and we are the children of God. And because of that, Satan is angry with us and opposed to us and seeks with everything he has to try to thwart the work that God's wanting to do in us and through us. But.

Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil and through staying vitally connected to him, we have the victory over the enemy in our lives personally, we can pass that on to other people personally. And ultimately, finally and completely, we'll see it manifest on a universal level. And it seems like that's actually not too far down the road, really, as we think about these things, as we get a better understanding of these things through the word of God.

May God equip us with these things to help people. People who are perhaps under his deception still. May God equip us and use us to help them come out from under.

That delusion may God use us to reach out to people who are maybe involved in other religious systems. To instruct them on the truth that's in Christ, Jesus, to show them the beauty and the glory and the superiority of Christ over everyone else and and of true biblical Christianity over every other system, may God use us in these days. And of course, we need that equipping.

So we need to know these things and then we need that power of the spirit of God upon our lives and we receive that as we just seek the Lord daily and ask him to fill us up. And so may God lead us into victory. He's already won the war.

There are just these battles that are still going on here and there, but we have the promise of the word of God. That the ultimate victory will come and that we're on the winning. Side, thank God for that, father, we thank you that we are.

Your servants, Lord, we were formerly serving the devil. All of us, most of us anyway, and Lord, we thank you that you have liberated us, you've set us free. And Lord, we pray that in these dark days that you would use us to lead other people out of darkness into your marvelous light.

And Lord, we think of how you commissioned the Apostle Paul and you said to him that you were sending him to turn people from the power of Satan to the power of God. And Lord, we pray that you would use us to do that as well. And Lord, this information that we receive from your word about who's really behind these destructive things that go on in the world.

Who's really behind what's happening in our society, who's really behind these religions, Lord, may we wisely. Tactfully, lovingly and yet powerfully, firmly communicate these things to people that you bring our way. Lord, we think of people that we know who are under the spell of false religion.

People who choose to believe a lie over the truth, we pray that you would open their eyes and Lord, we know that the scripture says that the God of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. And so, Lord, in Jesus name, we pray that you would remove the blinders. We pray, Lord, that that veil that the devil has placed over the mind and the hearts of so many.

That by your mighty spirit that would be removed, people could see the truth and come to salvation. Lord, pour out your spirit. We cry out to you, Lord.

We look around us and we just see, Lord, that these are perilous times and we desperately need your power. Pour out your spirit and bring many into the kingdom. In these days, we pray in Jesus name.

Amen. Let's stand. Bless you.

If you need some prayer tonight, some of the guys are up front here. They'd love to pray with you. And we just trust the Lord is strengthening and encouraging you through his word.

And we trust that God will use you as you go out to serve him. God bless.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/brian-brodersen/ephesians-the-god-of-this-age/>

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