

Satan's Devices - Part 3

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. explores how Satan uses devices of compromise to hinder the true work of God in the church today.

Duration: 49:39

Scripture: Ezra 4:1

Topics: "Satan", "Compromise in the Church", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the ongoing battle against Satan's devices aimed at hindering God's work, particularly as seen in the rebuilding efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah. He highlights that true works of God are initiated by God, contrasting them with human efforts, and warns against the devil's tactics of compromise and mixture that can infiltrate the church. The sermon draws parallels between the historical opposition faced by the Israelites and the modern challenges believers encounter today, urging the church to remain steadfast in holiness and reliance on God's power. Beach Jr. encourages believers to recognize and resist the enemy's attempts to corrupt their spiritual endeavors, affirming that the work of God must be done according to His will and not through worldly means.

Transcript

As you who have been coming on Sunday nights know, we've been preaching a series of messages on Sunday night, and I believe this is our third one, regarding the devices of the devil against the true work of God. The devices of the devil against the true work of God. Anytime the Holy Spirit begins to move and begins to initiate a particular work of God that will inevitably have the potential power to destroy the kingdom of darkness and to advance the kingdom of God on the earth, the devil is always plotting some kind of a plan in order to hinder and stop this work from furthering and from increasing and from prospering.

We understand through the Scriptures that the Bible teaches us that the greatest, most powerful work that God ever initiated in this entire world was that which he did when he called Mary to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit conception and brought forth Christ into the world. We believe tonight that Jesus Christ is the spotless Son of God. We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin Mary and he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, not by Joseph.

We believe that Jesus Christ tonight was 100% God and he was 100% man. He never stopped being God and he never stopped being a man. He was God and man at the same time.

And the plan of redemption that was wrought through Jesus Christ enabled all mankind to be free from their sins, to be delivered from the dominion of the power of darkness, and to be translated into the kingdom of light. This is what the Bible says regarding the greatest work that God ever did. Now we've been reading in the book of Nehemiah and Ezra and we've been showing you the characteristics of a true work of God.

Mainly we've discussed these facts that a true work of God is always initiated by God. It is never initiated by a man. It is never the result of a particular person coming up with an idea of himself and then trying to fulfill that idea or that plan.

The true work of God is always initiated by God himself purposing in his heart to fulfill what he himself desires to do. This is what distinguishes between the work of God and the work of man. Man's work is never a result of God's vision or God's plan, but it's a result of man's vision or man's plan.

Now we've showed you in Ezra and Nehemiah that God moved upon people. He moved upon a king. He moved upon the Jews and he caused a work to begin to take place.

And we showed you that as in Ezra and Nehemiah and as we see that God initiated the work and God put the work together, we saw that that was in fact a type of what God has done through Jesus Christ. And through Jesus Christ, God now by the Holy Spirit is building a spiritual temple, a spiritual church. This church is founded upon the rock Christ Jesus himself.

He is the chief cornerstone according to the Bible and the foundation of this church is the Word of God. The Bible says in Ephesians that the church has been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. So we need to be able to see tonight that God has initiated a great and mighty work in the land today.

He initiated it because he himself desired to do it. This great work that God initiated is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and he initiated it through the power of the Holy Spirit and he's drawing men and women unto himself through the drawing of the Holy Spirit and he's lifting up Christ himself in the midst of this church. The Bible says that Christ ought to have the preeminence in everything that we do.

Jesus Christ ought to be the center of our attention. Jesus Christ ought to be the center of our fellowship. Jesus Christ ought to be the center of our conversation in this church, in this new work that God is doing in the world today.

And we saw that as in the Old Testament in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah when God initiated a natural work we saw that the devil tried to oppose the work that was truly of God. You see, Jeremiah prophesied that the Jews would come back to Jerusalem and build the temple. The devil is always afraid of what God initiates.

He's never afraid of what man initiates because the work of man offers no threat, poses no threat to the work of the devil. The work of man cannot liberate souls from sin. The work of man cannot cause a person who is crippled and blind and dead to become alive in Christ.

The work of man has no power to cause a soul to be free from sin. Therefore the devil doesn't mind all the works in the world today that are initiated by man. But as soon as a group of people come under the influence of the Word of God and believe the gospel and make Jesus Christ the head and Lord and master of their life and give their selves over to the allegiance of God alone and begins to live a holy

righteous life and runs from evil and begins to renounce the things of this world and lives a life before God where they go out and they let their light shine, the devil gets upset because they have come under the influence of the work of God in the land today.

You see, the work of God is not religion, it's not the methods and ideals of men, but it is the sovereign move of God initiated by Jesus Christ under the direction and leadership of the Word of God. That's the work of God in the land today. And just as in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, Satan came and sought to try and stop the work of God and its effectiveness, likewise today the enemy is coming and doing the identical thing, the same thing.

Now I would like for you to consider for a moment something that I would like to read you, if I can find it. Oh, nope, we're going to take a few moments here and I thought I had put it in my Bible. Well, praise the Lord.

Isn't that strange? It just disappeared. I don't think so. Praise the Lord.

Well, nevertheless, we won't consider it. I don't want to really spend too much time looking for it here because, um, huh? I did, okay. Where's the songbook? Right here.

Let me see here. Nope, I don't see it in there. Well, that's all right.

We can work without it. As I was saying, just as the devil, and this is so important for us to see this tonight, church. It's so important for us to see this tonight.

Just as the devil sought to try and discourage Ezra and Nehemiah from obeying God and building the temple, likewise the devil is trying to discourage and trying to stop those whom Christ has touched and anointed, trying to discourage them from going on with God in order that their spiritual temple might be built. Now, in order to learn what the devil is doing today, we can go back and find out what he did then. See, because the devil does nothing new, does nothing new.

His tricks are as old as history goes back. You know why he doesn't use anything new? Because he knows that what he used 2,000 years ago still works today. His tricks are the same.

So therefore, as we learn the Word of God and we allow the Word of God to dwell in our hearts and our minds, we can become aware of the enemy's devices, thereby know how to resist him when he comes. Doesn't that make sense? So what we're going to do tonight is we're going to see the first attack that Satan made on Ezra while he was overseeing and supervising the building of the natural temple in Ezra. We're going to see how it was an attempt made by the devil to destroy the effectiveness of the work of God then, and then we're going to show you the identical device that Satan is using today, this identical trick that he used back here in the book of Ezra, is the same device he's using today individually within the life of the believer and corporately within the body of Christ in many local churches.

So I want to encourage you to pay attention so that you can see the area that the devil will try and make you vulnerable to as he did in the book of Ezra so that you can be aware and resist him when he comes. How many have turned to the book of Ezra? How many are in Ezra chapter 4? Okay, I guess I got a second breath here. I'm trying one more time to find that piece of paper.

Actually, I'll tell you what it is. I went home right before the service tonight, and as I went home, I just seemed to get a...I just seemed to get a...I'll tell you. There it is.

I knew it was in there. I just seemed to just get a setting in order to introduce this message tonight, but before I read that, let's read Ezra chapter 4. Now, in my Bible, there's a heading that the translators put in, and it says, opposition to the rebuilding. So the setting is this.

God has already moved upon the Jews. They've come out of captivity, and they're in Jerusalem, and under the leadership of God and under the power of God, they have begin to erect the temple of God that had been desecrated during the time of captivity. When Nebuchadnezzar took Israel and brought him into captivity, he desecrated the temple and destroyed it, but God moved in heaven, said it's time.

He moved upon Ezra. He moved upon Nehemiah. Now, they're different times, but they basically did the same kind of work, and he moved upon people, and under the direction and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, they began to rebuild under God's commandment the temple of God.

You and I are doing the same thing today. God is building a spiritual temple through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a temple that is an honor and a glory to God, a temple that defies and disbelieves the philosophy of this world, a temple that is holy unto God, a temple that is blameless without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

And if you're a true Christian tonight, then you have been enlisted in God's army, and you are part of the workers, spiritually speaking, that God has brought together in order to build this spiritual temple. Look what your enemy is going to try and do in your life. Look what he's going to do.

Make it personal. I don't want you to see this as a story, although it is. I want you to see it as more of a story.

I want you to see it as something that's going to happen in your life that it hasn't already. Chapter 4, the book of Ezra. When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard the exiles were building a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and said to the heads of the families, stop right there, look up at me.

The Bible says when the enemies heard. I want you to know tonight that when you make a public confession of Jesus Christ that produces a radical change in your lifestyle and causes you to begin to renounce the things of this world and causes you to begin to renounce evil and its evil influence and enables you to live a holy consecrated life unto God, your adversary the devil and all the demons are going to hear the word sooner or later. They're going to take note of your commitment to Christ.

The devil takes note of everything that pertains to the work of God. Remember, the devil is not threatened by man's work. The devil is not threatened by all the religious institutions.

Actually, that's where he goes to church. That's where his gospel is being preached today. In the religious institutions that deny the Word of God, that are teaching men and women not to believe the Bible, that are teaching men and women that there's no real devil and that God is not really a God that condemns people because of sin.

That's where the devil's gospel is being preached today. But the enemy and the spirits in the unseen world, they take note of those who are being moved by God to do the work of God. And once they take note, the Bible says that once they began to see the exiles were building a temple for the Lord.

And oh, I can't help but see it, church. God is building a temple and it is a spiritual temple and Christ was not defeated. He could not be overcome by Satan.

He could not be overcome by all the powers of hell. And now there's a spiritual temple being erected in the world today. Christ is the head and you and I are living stones in that temple and the Bible says that God dwells in that temple by the habitation of the Spirit of God.

And this temple is growing in the world today and God is purging this temple and God is cleansing this temple and God is getting this temple ready for the day when Jesus Christ comes back so that he can present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And this is what the Lord is doing. But when the enemy hears that God is building a temple and when the enemy sees these people's lives that begin to get transformed by the power of God and they become living stones in this temple, this is what he does.

They came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, let us help you build because like you we seek your God and we've been sacrificing to him since the time of Eshar Aden, king of Assyria, who brought us here. Verse number three, but Zerubbabel, Yeshua, and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, you have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us.

Now I want you to take note tonight. The very first device that Satan introduced to those who were laboring to build the temple of God was a device that I have entitled the device of mixture through making a treaty. The device of mixture through making a treaty, which basically equals compromise.

Now I want you to consider, this is what I'm going to read here, consider the setting right now. Here there were a remnant of people who were moved upon by God, touched by the Holy Spirit, and they were laboring laboriously day and night under the leadership of God, trying to erect a temple where God could institute a place where his holy presence would be and where people could come and learn in worship of him. The work was great.

The load was heavy. The path was narrow. The price was great.

The persecution was real. The heat and burden of the walk was weighing upon Zerubbabel, was weighing upon Ezra. They were making slow progress, and all of a sudden Satan comes, knowing their weakness, knowing their vulnerability, and says, we will help you.

We will work with you. What better time for the enemy to come and offer his services to us than the time when we've labored through the day and were weak and tired and have even prayed that God would send his help. Now I want to show you tonight the fulfillment of this particular device that was used against Ezra in our New Testament day.

There are basically four areas that the devil has come into the church in the day that we live in through this advice, through this device I mean, and has caused many people to depart from the faith. It's the same device, it's just in a New Testament manner. Now listen, the four areas, and then we're going to go through each one of these areas and show you.

The first area is the devil has caused the church to compromise on her stand of holiness. Secondly, the devil has caused the church to turn to carnal methods to do God's work, rather than relying upon the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word of God. Now we spoke on that this morning.

Thirdly, the devil has allowed the church to become appealing to the fleshly nature of man, rather than repulsive to the fleshly nature of man. And lastly, the devil has introduced false doctrines into the church today. These four areas constitute the modern device of what I've entitled mixture through treaty, which constitutes compromise.

This very device that Satan sought to use against Ezra is a device that's being used today. Now I would like to point your attention to Revelation chapter number 3, and we can see first of all in Revelation chapter 3, as we mentioned earlier, beginning with verse number 14. Revelation chapter 3, verse 14.

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write, these are the words of the Amen, the faithful and the true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other.

So because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. Listen now, you say, why was the Laodicean church saying this? Because there was a time when the Laodicean church was walking in holiness before the Lord, walking in the power of God, and the devil came to them and their leaders and said the same thing that he said to Ezra, we will help. Now in what way did the devil offer help to the Laodicean church? Listen closely.

I am rich. I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. I submit to you this evening that the church has become vulnerable to using wealth and prosperity as an instrument to further the cause of Christ.

In her weakness, in her poverty, in her struggle with prayer, in her struggle with believing the Lord and waiting for God to bring about His promises, the devil came to her and offered to help her the message of prosperity, the message of wealth, the message of the abundance of things, and in clinging to this false doctrine, she has become ineffective in her pursuit after the Lord. Right here we say, the Bible says, this Laodicean church says, I am rich, I have acquired wealth, and do not need a thing, but you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. This very testimony is a testimony that is a compromise, it is a compromise on our stand for dependency wholly upon God.

Dependency wholly upon God. Now also, when the church clings to such things as the prosperity message, the gospel then appeals to what? The flesh. The gospel appeals to the lower nature of man, and there is no inclination in the entire New Testament where the gospel that Jesus and Paul and Peter preached that ever appealed to the fleshly nature of man, promising them wealth and prosperity.

There's nothing in the Bible, in the New Testament, that gives any kind of hint. On the contrary, 1 Timothy chapter 6 warns the church that there was going to come a day when men would run after false doctrine, and they would teach people that godliness is a means to financial gain, and Paul said stay away from it. It's a false message.

It is a mixture through treaty. The enemy came, offered the church his device. See, when we cling to that false doctrine, we're basically letting the enemy work with us.

You see what the enemy says in Ezra chapter 4? We too want to build your church. We too want to build your life. We too want to help you become spiritual.

We too. See, it comes in a harmless way, does it not? It comes with the testimony of what? We can help you. We can better you.

We can make you more spiritual. Secondly, in Revelation chapter 2, and see, these treaties and this compromise was even beginning to show up in the early church. This is the book of Revelation.

These are the letters to the church that the Apostles founded. Revelation chapter 2, beginning with verse 14. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you.

You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent, therefore.

Otherwise, I will come to you and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Here we find the compromise on our stand of holiness. We find false doctrine, and we also find the departure from the Word of God.

All of these devices are the old devices that Satan was using to try and get Ezra to fall from building the natural temple, and now he's using the same devices. Let's look more closely at this. I have a few things against you.

You have people there who hold the teaching of Balaam. Now, the teaching of Balaam, very brief, is that teaching that is characterized by leading people and giving people the license and making them feel that it's okay to flirt with the world. That's the teaching of Balaam.

If you want to know the story of Balaam, it's in the book of Numbers. I'm not too sure which chapter, but it's in the book of Numbers. But the teaching of Balaam is compromising the stand of holiness, which means we tolerate sin, and we don't make an issue of sin, and we don't tell people they need to repent of their sins or they're going to hell.

That's what it is to teach the doctrine of Balaam. Remember what the Bible said to Ezra? We'll build with you. We'll help with you.

So many times we think that in clinging to these erroneous doctrines, it will help the cause of Christ, but it only hinders the cause of Christ. Now, if you would turn your Bibles to James chapter 4. James chapter 4, verse 4. Listen to what James says about this erroneous doctrine. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? So, to cling to the teaching of Balaam is what? Hatred toward God.

It's spiritual adultery, and this is one of the devices that Satan is using in order to destroy the effectiveness of the work of God. You know that the devil destroys things many times, not by an external foe, but through internal corruption. You know the great empires of the yesteryears? They were destroyed by internal corruption.

You know the great country that we live in, America? Guess who is destroying America? Herself. Isn't she? Sure she is. Is there some kind of an enemy that has brought us under oppression? No.

Is there some kind of an external enemy that lives in another country that has really done damage to us? No. Where's the destruction coming from that's destroying America? Internal. It's coming from within.

The devil has got America believing that it's okay to renounce the faith of the founding fathers. The devil has got America believing that the Constitution that guaranteed the religious freedom and guaranteed that

government would serve people to protect them rather than to force them to deny God. The government feels like they need to be changed in those laws, and we're destroying ourselves internally.

And likewise, the devil knows that there's no foe that can destroy the church, including himself. He cannot destroy the church. Hitler cannot destroy the church.

A Nero cannot destroy the church. A modern-day Gorbachev cannot destroy the church. But you know who can destroy the church? And you know what can destroy the church? Internal corruption.

When the church herself begins to cling to these doctrines and begins to cling to these false things. And then before you know it, the work of God stops. Not because someone came and chained us up and said you can't do that anymore, but because we have fallen through our own internal destruction.

The Bible is full of exhortations warning God's people not to make a treaty or to compromise with sin. And we find in Ezra chapter 4 that the first device that was used was this very thing. Compromise your stand on holiness.

Compromise your stand on the doctrine of the Word of God. Compromise your stand on your hatred for sin. Cling to something else is what the devil will seek to make you do.

And in doing so, he will internally corrupt you. And this is why we see such mass confusion in general corporately with religion. Because religious people have clung, clinging to a compromising stand.

They're renouncing the Word of God and they're renouncing the stand that the Word of God takes. And they're letting the philosophies of this world be incorporated into the church and they think that together they can combine the two and make an effective outreach for Christ. You can't do it.

In the book of Ezekiel, that's the Old Testament. In the book of Ezekiel, I want to point out a scripture to you. It's a very, very sobering scripture.

I'm not too sure where it is, but I'll find it. Okay, Ezekiel chapter 44. Ezekiel 44, verse number 6. Ezekiel 44, verse number 6. Listen to this.

Say to the rebellious house of Israel, this is what the Sovereign Lord says. Enough of your detestable practices, O house of Israel. In addition to all your other detestable practices, listen, you brought foreigners uncircumcised in heart and flesh into my sanctuary, desecrating my temple while you offered me food, fat, and blood, and you broke my covenant.

Instead of carrying out your duty, listen, in regard to my holy things you put others in charge of my sanctuary. Do you know what that scripture means to us spiritually? God is rebuking the religious church today in this scripture, and He is saying that you have allowed uncircumcised, unholy, sinful people to occupy places of leadership and places of authority in the church today. When the church opens up her arms to people who aren't living right and puts them in places of leadership and authority, then what happens? They begin to influence people and they begin to influence the people and turn their hearts from the Lord.

That's a serious charge, but once again that's because the devil comes and says to a preacher, now look at that person. They're gifted. They can draw a crowd.

All right, grant it. They're not living holy lives. They don't really have a stand for the word.

They're involved in ungodly things, but hey, are you to judge? Just look what they can do for the church. Boy, I tell you, a crowd would come and hear the preacher. He's weak.

He's struggling, and he hears the devil says, we will come and help, and he gets the person and he puts him in a place of leadership, and they don't deserve to be there. God didn't put him there, and that's when compromise comes, and that's making an allegiance, and that's working with that which God does not want us to work with. So, the first attempt that the devil made to destroy the effectiveness of the rebuilding of the natural temple, and an attempt that he's making today, and many are believing it, is to offer himself, his methods, and his people.

The devil's people are those who come, they worship false gods. They don't come out and say, I worship Muhammad. They come and say they worship Jesus, but that doesn't impress me one bit what someone says.

They say they do, but they're living in sin. Their lives are not committed to Christ and to his cause. They're aliens.

They're uncircumcised in heart, but they come to ministries, and they offer their services. They offer their gifts and their talents, just like the devil came to Ezra and said, we will come and help you. Before we close, I need to show you something very important.

What was Ezra's response? Verse 3, Ezra chapter 4, But Zerubbabel, Yeshua, and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us. The response in the heart of Ezra was a refusal to compromise and allow that which is unclean and unholy to be a part of God's holy work.

And my friend, I want you to know that today, your response to this device, when you're tempted to compromise your stand on holiness, on the Word of God, on prayer, and seeking the Lord, when you're compromised, when you're tempted to compromise, you also must refuse and say, this work is not for you, O sin. This work is not for you. It is only for the Lord and me as we walk together in holiness.

That's it. Galatians chapter 4, verse 21. Verse 28.

Galatians 4, verse 28. Now you brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. The children of promise are those who have placed their faith in Christ and have renounced the pernicious evil ways of this world and who are only willing to do things God's way.

At the time the Son born in the ordinary way persecuted the Son born by the power of the Spirit. The slave woman and her son represents all of those devices the enemy will try and introduce to us to try to help us in our walk with the Lord. Devices that are not in the Word of God.

The Bible says they have no part in the work of God, and the true work of God can only be sustained by the Lord, His Spirit, the Word, and people who are yielded to Him. And when we turn to other things to further the cause of Christ, we are in fact compromising. And compromise results in internal corruption, and internal corruption results in God spitting it out.

Next week, Lord willing, we're going to look at the next device, which is discouragement through fear and intimidation. Discouragement through fear and intimidation. Have you ever been discouraged and

intimidated and found that it has the power to cause you to stop with your walk with the Lord? Fear and intimidation and discouragement.

Next week we'll see what Ezra and Nehemiah did in order to overcome fear and discouragement. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the power of the Word of God.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you give us power tonight to renounce the devil's lie that would seek to offer himself and his evil ways. Lord, help us to take a stand tonight, as Ezra did, and say, devil, get away from me. This work is not for you, nor is it for anything that you have to offer me, but this work will be done by the grace of God and nothing else.

Lord, we renounce the devil tonight and his pernicious evil influence in our life, and we pray that you'll turn our hearts and minds towards the tools that you are using to perfect your work in our life. Brother Norman, would you please come with your guitar and let's sing a song of victory. You may stand, please.

Let's sing a song of victory tonight. You have one in your heart? No? Yeah, where's that? 26, is it? Victory in Jesus we're gonna sing. Victory in Jesus.

Where is it? All right, number what? Number 46. Yeah, that's okay. In the name of Jesus, we have the victory.

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