

MAN'S WAR AGAINST GOD

August 20, 2017

II Corinthians 2:9-14

Unbelief is more than a decision of the mind. It reaches deeper, to the very core and substance of the person. This is evident inasmuch as it is often expressed with annoyance, even anger—a passionate rejection of Scripture. Why? In this message we consider (1) unbelief, (2) God's answer to unbelief: Christ, and (3) how that answer is appropriated to the human condition.

I. Mankind: A Natural State of Unbelief

A. Innate Unbelief

“. . . we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:14).

B. Satanic Deception

“. . . The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Corinthians 4:4).

C. Worldly Wisdom

“. . . In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness” (I Corinthians 3:19). “. . . The world by wisdom knew not God” (I Corinthians 1:21).

D. Suppressing Truth

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (hold down, suppress) the truth in unrighteousness. . . . That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them” (Romans 1:18, 19). . . . When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (21).

E. Given to Unbelief by Divine Action

“. . . Their foolish heart was darkened” (21). . . . God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves (24). . . . God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature (26) . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (28). “. . . Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

II. Christ: God's Answer to Man's Natural State

A. No Unbelief

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25).

B. Rebuffed Satan

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him” (Matthew 4:10, 11).

C. Rejected Worldly Wisdom

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34, 35).

D. Embodied Truth

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

E. Enlightened by Christ

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

III. Appropriating God's Answer to Man's Natural State

A. To Innate Unbelief: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).

B. To Satanic Deception: “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

C. To Worldly Deception: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:15, 16).

D. Rather than Suppressing Truth, “Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psalm 86:11). “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8).

E. God-given wisdom rather than delusion: “The LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 2:6). “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:15).