

## Oppression, Obsession, and Self Deception

As we enter into the wonderful Fall holiday season, it would be good for us to examine Philippians 4:8.

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are at hand. The Thanksgiving breakfast is about one month away, but the time will truly fly by before we get there. We rush to put up the Christmas decorations because the Christmas season starts immediately after Thanksgiving. These are truly some wonderful true, honest, just pure, lovely things of good report but that is not all there is to the holidays. Included in the Fall celebrations is Halloween. On TV they have been and continue to show one horror movie after another which is the opposite of true, honest, just pure, lovely things of good report. This serves as the perfect contrast between the kingdom of God and Satan, the usurper. Satan would like to make the largest rebellion in all the heavens look like a dark but cheerful party. It is concerning that there are many Christians who will roll their eyes, turn away, and support that occultic celebration. Instead of huffing because this seems too extreme, people should take a sober, realistic, and honest look at the warnings God gave us in the Bible about the demonic.

### 1. Glorifying Satan -

Halloween might not even have survived as a celebration if it weren't for commercial interests. In other countries it is no big deal, unless you have those who want to cash in on what they see in

America. Halloween is a huge money-maker for the entertainment industry. They make the most money at Halloween from young people between the ages of 18 and 24.

Halloween is no longer just a children's holiday - far from it. The big spenders are not children or their parents, but 18 to 24-year-olds, who plan to shell [a fortune] for Halloween fun, according to the retail federation. In the world of Hollywood, especially, Halloween costume parties have become huge draws...

Once considered a children's holiday, it has grown in recent years to encompass adults as well. It has become our bacchanal, a largely secular celebration in which the national *id* is allowed to run rampant [The *id* what psychologist assume it part of the unconscious mind that is the source of impulses that seek satisfaction in pleasure principle] (Los Angeles Times, October 23, 2001, p. A-1).

We must be careful to heed what the Bible says -

2Cor 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

What makes this celebration the opposite of true, honest, just pure, lovely things of good report? Let's look at some of those devices that he uses to deceive us.

- Halloween honors death

Halloween honors death. When we think of Halloween we think of things like the classic popular horror films *Dracula*, with Bela Lugosi, as the vampire, and *Frankenstein*, with Boris Karloff as the monster. Dracula was a dead man, who supposedly rose from his coffin to drink human blood. Frankenstein's monster was sewed

together from pieces of corpses. Karloff's monster was a dead man, brought back to life by a mad scientist. These two movies are representative of all that followed after them and both films glorify the dead. They are movies about dead people. This is not only unnatural and weird - it's also wrong! Why wrong? Because death is the enemy of mankind! The Bible says:

1Cor 15:26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

Death, decay, and corruption should not be glorified, honored, or magnified because it is mankind's greatest enemy! Sensible people hate death and everything associated with it. Only an abnormal, demonically motivated generation would honor and exalt death. For those who are believers, we look beyond death and look forward to heaven, but we do not form a cult around death itself. At Christian funerals we celebrate, as opposed to funerals where people mourn. What *we* celebrate is life. We celebrate the life the beoliever lived well and the life he now experiences in heaven. Halloween celebrates the *terror* of death.

- Halloween honors Satan and demons.

1Cor 10:20 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

It is harmful for you to have fellowship with demons! Why? Because Satan and his demons want to destroy you! The Bible says that God sent demons, called "evil angels," as a judgment against sin:

Psalms 78:49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*.

The Devil and his demons are out to trick you and destroy you. Demons can cause mental disorders. They can lead you into sin. They can lead you into false doctrine. They want and will accept control of your mind and heart. Demons and Satan can pluck the preaching of God's Word out of your heart and keep you from getting saved. Jesus said:

Luke 8:12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Halloween does not honor or praise God. It exalts the Devil and demons. It doesn't take much to figure it out when you look around at Halloween and see people dressed like demons, ghouls, witches, and Satan himself! Nowhere is the Bible quoted! Nowhere is God honored by those celebrating this Satanic holiday!

Dr. D. A. Waite correctly says:

Halloween, as we know it, originated in Europe...The truth is, it was brought over from the Satanic Druid culture of the Celts.

The Druids were Satanic to the core in their worship and pagan practices. Halloween is a Druid holiday that we in America have received from Satanic paganism.

(D. A. Waite, Th.D., Ph.D., Halloween - the Devil's Birthday, The Bible For Today, n.d.).

1Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

## 2. Demonic oppression -

What is the effect, then, that Satan, fallen angels, and demons have on us? I do not want to sensationalize the demonic to have us obsess about them. I

don't preach regularly about the demonic world because people *do* become preoccupied. But this is an appropriate occasion to give some thought to what this is all about. Henry Thiessen wrote:

- They inflict disease. Not all disease is the result of demonic power, but some *is*.

Job 2:4-7 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life.

7So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

- Demonic possession

Matt 9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

Matt 12:22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

- They can cause mental disorders (not all, but many)

Mark 5:4-5 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.  
5And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting

himself with stones.

Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

- They lead many into moral impurity

Num 25:1-2 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

- They disseminate (spread) false doctrine

1Tim 4:1-2 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

- They oppose God's children

Eph 6:12 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*.

(above adapted from Henry C. Thiessen, Ph.D., Lectures in Systematic Theology, Eerdmans, 1963, pp. 208-209).

- Fortune telling and astrology are demonic

Isa 47:13-14 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly

prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee.

14Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: *there shall not be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it.

Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

When the destiny of a person is shown ahead of time, it is the work of demons.

Deut 18:10-12 There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

### 3. Lustful obsession -

Don't blame everything on the devil for our sin. He has no more real power in our lives than what we allow him. Our obsession to fulfill our lusts (although we minimize this by calling it temptation or desire) is taken advantage of by Satan.

Jas 4:7-8 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.  
8Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

Eph 4:22-23 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

James 1:14-15 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Isa 59:1-4 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

3For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

#### 4. Willful self-deception -

The problem we ultimately face is our willingness to believe a lie rather than the truth. We feel the pressure of the Holy Spirit convicting us but would rather reject Him than have to admit we were wrong.

Prov 26:12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? *there is* more hope of a fool than of him.

Isa 47:10 For thou hast trusted in



thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I *am*, and none else beside me.

Isa 28:15-19 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

16Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

17Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

**18And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.**

19From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report.

Isaiah described the wickedness that we see in *our* time.

Isa 5:18-24 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

19That say, Let him make speed, *and* hasten his work, that we may see *it*: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know *it*!

20Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

22Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

23Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, *so* their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

People *willfully* deceive themselves.

Rom 1:21-24 Because that, 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.

22Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Pastor and author Bob Smith lists some of our self-deceptions: “Others have prejudices, but we have convictions. Others are conceited, but in me it’s self-respect. When you spend time on your personal appearance, it’s vanity; in me,

it's just making the most of my God-given assets. In you, it's touchiness; but in me, it's sensitivity. In you, it's worry; in me, concern."

— Our Daily Bread, October 22, 1998

For fifteen years Jim Fixx, author of the 1978 bestseller, *The Complete Book of Running*, ran eighty miles a week. He appeared to be in tip-top shape. It didn't seem possible that a man his age could be in better condition. Yet at age fifty-two Fixx died of a massive heart attack while running alone on a Vermont road. His wife,

Alice, later said she was certain that Fixx had no idea he suffered from a heart problem. Why? Because he refused to get regular checkups. After Jim Fixx's death, doctors speculated that his heart was so strong he may not have had the telltale chest pains or shortness of breath that usually signal arterial heart disease!

— Today in the Word, May, 1990, MBI, p. 7

Jim Fixx exercised himself but never thought that he should take time to examine his heart. We have an advantage, spiritually, however. We have the conviction of the Holy Spirit to prompt us to check our heart before God. Worry about how your emotions cloud your judgement. Worry about the ways we deliberately blind ourselves. Don't willfully blind yourself about sin or salvation. While we focus on Christ, keep an awareness that Satan is trying to destroy you on the side. He will slip in what he can, playing upon our weaknesses. Keep a strong mind for Christ.

Eph 5:14-15 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but

as wise,

Phil 4:8

1. Glorifying Satan 2Cor 2:11, 1Cor 15:26, 1Cor 10:20, Psalm 78:49, Luke 8:12, 1Pet 5:8
2. Demonic oppression Job 2:4-7, Matt 9:33, Matt 12:22, Mark 5:4-5, Luke 8:35, Num 25:1-2, 1Tim 4:1-2, Eph 6:12, Isa 47:13-14, Acts 16:16, Deut 18:10-12
3. Lustful obsession Jas 4:7-8, Eph 4:22-23, James 1:14-15, Isa 59:1-4, Job 15:35
4. Willful self-deception Prov 26:12, Isa 47:10, Isa 28:15-19, Isa 5:18-24, Rom 1:21-24, Eph 5:14-15