

4 March 2012

Flee the Devil & his Disciples (Pt 3 Flee)

This is the third part of our study on the word *flee*, in the Holy Scriptures. In our introduction we mentioned that there are 105 occurrences of the word *flee*, 3 of *fleeing* and 8 of *fleeth*, and according to the on-line Oxford dictionary the word means:- “run away from a place or situation of danger.”

In our previous study we covered three points, which focused on the use of the word *flee* in the Scriptures and how it applies to the believers:-

1. True believers in the RC Church are to *flee* from her.
2. Believers are to *flee* from evil, including fornication, idolatry, youthful lusts and the love of money.

In this our third study on the word *flee* we will cover three (3) points which include:-

1. Believers should *flee* false teachers
2. The false shepherd *flee*s his congregation in times of trouble.
3. Believers are to submit to God, resist the devil and he will *flee* from them

Let us add a little more detail to these three points:-

1. Believers should *flee* false shepherds.

Jn 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Verse 1-5 are stated in the gospel of John to be a parable that Jesus spoke. Given that His audience was previously the Pharisees, it is likely that they remain his audience. It is also likely that the stranger is a false shepherd or teacher, whom the sheep will not follow, and if any do follow the stranger then they should *flee* him. Let us apply this parable to the false teachers today, the false shepherd today. Such a false teacher or shepherd will not have come in through the door (via Jesus, who is the door - see verse 9), but climbeth up some other way (see verse 1). Those sheep who have come through the Lord Jesus Christ and know His voice and sit under such false teachers are to *flee* from them.

Perhaps Arcdeacon Cardy from the Anglican church in the city is a false teacher, a false shepherd, because he denies the authority of the Holy Scriptures when he gives his blessing on Sodomite relationships. I am sure there are those who are truly saved by the work of Christ on the cross and perhaps their family has gone along to that church when it was a bible believing Anglican church that used the Authorized Bible as its authority, but slowly over the years, just as a frog dies in the water that is boiled without noticing any change until it is too late, so the congregation have had shepherds that have gradually moved away from the Authority of the Scriptures. Whatever the reason, those who are true believers, born of the Spirit of God are called to *flee*, just as we learnt in our previous teaching that believers are flee from evil, including fornication, idolatry, youthful lusts and the love of money, so we are to *flee* false teachers.

But, how do we spot a false teacher, a false shepherd?

According to the Scriptures, we recognise a false shepherd by:-

- a) their fruits (see Matt.7: 15& 16, 20). Because a teacher or shepherd that is born of the Spirit of God, called by God to be a teacher or shepherd CANNOT bear evil fruit, just as a peach tree cannot bear apples. Just as a false (evil) teacher or shepherd can not bear good fruit, but only evil fruit.
- b) their willingness to follow the good shepherd (the Lord Jesus Christ). In other words the shepherds willingness to follow the Holy Scriptures, for it is in them, that God has spoken to us. If the shepherd is prepared to change what God has said in the Holy Scriptures or does not have the Holy Scriptures, or preachers from his own experience, rather than from the Scriptures, then he is either ignorant of his deception or he deceived and so is a false teacher who is transformed by Satan, into a minister of righteousness (see 2Cor.11: 14). And as per point a) the ministers of Satan who are transformed as ministers of righteousness are known *according to their works* (see 2Cor.11: 15).

Before you can identify a counterfeit you must first be familiar with the truth. Before you can identify a counterfeit \$5.00 note a bank teller must first be able to identify a legal \$5.00 note.

Perhaps those that get sucked in by counterfeit or false teachers do not know or have not the Holy Scriptures, so therefore they have nothing to compare their counterfeit teacher with.

There was a Pastor in the US who was preaching the angels, instead of Christ crucified and was able to do so on the basis that God had spoken to him and told him to preach the angels.

Why would a congregation allow their Pastor to teach such a doctrine?

Again, perhaps they did not know the Scriptures and so accepted a false teacher, instead of *fleeing* him. So, if you know anyone that is sitting under a teacher or Pastor that is not preaching from the Book, encourage them to *flee*!

2. The false sheperd *flee*s his congregation in times of trouble.

Jn 10:12, 13 *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.*

If the true believers do not *flee* from a false teacher then the false teacher should *flee* the pulpit! From our verse in John we are going to make an application that when a wolf comes into to destroy the sheep and they are being watch over by an hireling (hired hand, who is perhaps only preaching or teaching for the money), then the hireling will *flee* when such danger comes.

The hireling in the passage is likely to refer to the Pharisees, who Jesus has been speaking to in the previous chapter. They who get paid to teach the law to the children of God, yet when an imposter comes in, because they are only doing the job for money, self importance and not out of service and obedience to their God. Most of us who are only doing a job for money, will run a muck when trouble strikes. It is only when we know that the Lord God in heaven is with us that we will stay put and when an imposter comes along we will defend those whom we are given to serve and protect. John 10: 13 says, *The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep.* The difference between an hireling and a good shepherd, is that the hireling does not care for hte sheep.

A minister of the word of God, who looks after his sheep and seeks to follow the example of his Lord, who identifies himself as the “good shepherd” (see Jn.10: 14), who cares for his sheep. The good shepherd does run when wolves attack his flock, but he lays his life down for the sheep (see Jn.10: 15), for man hath no greater love than this, that he *lay down his life for his friends* (see Jn.15: 13).

You take any sheep farmer, would he *flee* his farm if a wolf came to destroy his sheep? Even in the movies the sheep farmer takes his gun and goes looking for the wolf, because he careth for his sheep. Whereas a farmer that was only in the game to make a quick buck and didn't actually care for his sheep, might leave the wolf or even flee the scene.

The same is with an hireling who is over the church of God and is deceived by the cares of the world and has no care for his sheep. Perhaps he grew up from a seed that was sown amongst thorns, where the cares of the world choke the word and it becometh unfruitful (see Matt.13: 21, 22 & Mk.4: 18, 19). You can be sure that, if he is an hireling, if he is a paid worker and only cares for his status or his job and not the sheep, he will flee when trouble comes. From memory, the American Pastor who preached the angels ran a mile (fled) when trouble came. Such an action is exactly what the Scriptures say, an hireling will flee his sheep in times of trouble.

3. Believers are to submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from them

Jas 4:7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

This verse in James does not say, resist the devil and he will *flee* from you. It says, *submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you.* Before the devil will *flee*, we must first submit to God, then resist the devil and then he will *flee* from us.

The hardest part for most of us is to submit to God first. That doesn't mean wait for an audible voice like Moses or Abraham heard, it means to submit to the authority of what God says in his Holy Scriptures.

It doesn't mean submit to the verses that we are happy to submit to, it means submit to the all that God requires of us in the church age, when we rightly divide the word of truth (see 2Tim.2: 15).

Who finds it easy to submit to charity out of a pure heart, as being the end of the commandment (see 1Tim.1: 5)? It is opposite to our flesh.

Our flesh finds it easy to reprove and rebuke, but hard to do so with all long suffering (charity).

Our flesh finds it hard to show fervent charity, to our brother or our family members, day in and day out (see 1Pet.4: 8).

We are even told that, greater than hope and faith is charity (see 1Cor.13: 13).

And so we are called to submit to all that God says, we are called to submit unto His righteousness. Romans 10: 3 indicates that the Jew who has rejected Christ is *going about to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God*. And that is what we are called to do...to submit unto the righteousness of God. When we have done that, then we are to resist the devil! How do you do that?

In front of the TV? NO!, that's inviting the devil.

In front of a rugby game? NO, that's inviting the devil.

Getting involved in worldly activities? NO, that's inviting the devil.

Each of the above get us entangled with the affairs of this life...And *no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier* (see 2Tim.2: 4).

If we are going to resist the devil, then we need to remember that we are a warfare, and hence we are warring against the wiles of the devil. And we war as in a wrestling match (see Eph.6: 12), which is strategic, hand to hand combat, close contact, that is hard work and physical. Just watch wrestling at the world championships or the Olympic games and you will see that it is a very physical sport. So don't expect your daily wrestling with the devil to be any different!

In Gen.32: 24, 25 - Jacob is said to have *wrestled with a man until breaking of day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him*. And we find out in the subsequent verses that he was wrestling with God.

So we today wrestle with our adversary the devil and although we wake each day in a new battle, we can win a battle on any given day, we can resist the devil on any given day and he will *flee* from us.

But how do we resist the devil?

First step would be to put on the armour detailed Eph.6: 11 -18

Second step spend more time in prayer and reading the Scriptures.

In doing so we will stand,

THEN the devil will flee!

Are you struggling with the devil?

If you are, then ask yourself if you are actively submitting to God, if you are submitting to the Holy Scriptures?

Are you actively resisting the devil in warring a good warfare?

If you are, then the devil will *flee* from you. But, because this battle is not all over in one day, or one year, but until we go to be with the Lord, then we are called to war a good warfare every day, and every day submit to God's will, resisting the devil and he will *flee* from us. And just because Eph.6: 11-18 doesn't use the word *flee*, there is nevertheless, still a sense that our adversary will *flee* when we stand firm and when we war a good warfare (1Tim.1: 18).

Let us conclude this point by considering two examples in the Scriptures;

a) where *certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying we, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth...And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know and Paul I know; but who are ye?* (see Acts.19: 13, 15).

b) where the disciples could not cure a lunatic, then the Lord rebuked the devil and he departed out of the child and he was cured that hour. When the disciples ask why they could not cast him out, he replied; *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting* (see Matt.17: 14-21).

These verses raise a very important point.

If you are an armchair Christian, if you are a want to be Christian and are not soaked in the Scriptures, daily, praying and warring a good warfare, and therefore *not* submitting to God's Holy Scriptures, then **DO NOT** attempt to resist the devil, because he will certainly NOT *flee* from you. But if you are soaked in the Holy Scriptures, praying without ceasing (1Thes.5: 17) and warring a good warfare, and therefore submitting to the Holy Scriptures, then let us encourage each other to resist the devil and he will *flee* from you.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our third study on the word *flee*, we have covered three points which include:-

1. Believers should *flee* false teachers
2. The false shepherd *flee*s his congregation in times of trouble.
3. Believers are to submit to God, resist the devil and he will *flee* from them