

Swept off your Feet

Beyond Worship-as-Usual

Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

CHAPTER 37

Responding to the Truth without Falling for Deception

Our Heavenly Father seeks worshipers. He awaits an ever-increasing multitude from both heaven and earth. As God performs signs and wonders to confirm the truth about Himself, Satan conspires with mystical phenomena to deceive those leaning in a wayward direction.

And he [a beast with ten horns, seven heads, and ten crowns] performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. (Rev 13:13-14 NIV)

But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. ... (Rev 19:20 NIV)

Signs, wonders, and miracles performed by the power of God inspire faith, ignite hope, and merit a reverent response. True worshipers discern the difference between God's miracles and Satan's mimicry.

God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. (Heb 2:4 NAS)

Demonic signs and false wonders are the work of Satan; they lead to confusion and end in destruction. Satan tempts prospective worshipers to venerate idols by nudging them off balance until they fall after inferior substitutes.

*Men **worshiped the dragon** [Satan] because he had given authority to the beast, and they **also worshiped the beast** and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" (Rev 13:4 NIV)*

*The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they **did not stop worshipping demons, and idols** of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. (Rev 9:20 NIV)*

***All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast**—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. (Rev 13:8 NIV)*

Seeing Satan or one of his associates as a god to be worshiped invites devastating consequences. Apart from Christ, supernatural events promote idolatry. Counterfeit miracles distract those who are perishing, because they refuse to love the truth.

*The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of **Satan displayed** in all kinds of **counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders**, and **in every sort of evil** that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because **they refused to love the truth** and so be saved. (2 Thes 2:9-10 NIV)*

Because Satan performs counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders with every sort of evil, identifying the source of supernatural power will become increasingly important. Distinguishing motive and merit behind a miracle requires spiritual discernment.

*"The kingdom of God does not come **with observation**; nor will they say, '**See here!**' or '**See there!**' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Then He [Jesus] said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will **desire to see one of the days of the Son of***

Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.
(Luke 17:20-24 NKJ)

Fake signs and false wonders reveal a desperate scheme by Satan to attract misinformed worshipers. With apocalyptic fear, this fallen angel aims to gain their loyalty and terminate their faith.

Worshipers Rival Warriors

Conflicted by two extremes, faith and sight, worshipers lay their life on the line. Conflicted by two other extremes, fear and courage, warriors lay their life on line. Both groups arrest the attention of their Heavenly Father. One proclaims praise and then responds with reverence while the other proclaims war and then responds with violence. With a prophetic urgency, each group attempts to seize the initiative beyond their traditional borders.

As local congregations participate in weekly “worship services”, combat battalions participate in military service; some individuals participate in both. Worshipers gather in sanctuaries, cathedrals, chapels, basilicas, auditoriums, theaters, convention centers, sports stadiums, mountains, valleys, and parks while warriors assemble on the battlefield.

Century after century worshipers and warriors have laid down their lives for a cause. While devout multitudes render thanks and praise, legions unleash bombs and bullets. The legacy of the human race affirms pious devotion and fatal destruction.

Endeavoring to show our Heavenly Father what He seeks, worshipers generate thanks and praise with a passion that rivals the devotion of tyrants and terrorists. True worshipers should honor their Heavenly Father with more priority than loyal soldiers demonstrate on the battlefield.

In the Revelation, Satan appears to hold an ominous sway over an unspecified number of misguided worshipers. In a context of global tribulation, victims of catastrophe are particularly vulnerable to coercion, intimidation, and deception. They may say and do things that would otherwise be unthinkable.

Albert Marrin describes the eruption of decadent behavior during the French Revolution.¹ Children kicked human heads down the street like footballs. Women pinned severed ears to their dresses as they encouraged weary executioners. Before eating bread, executioners dipped it in the blood of quivering victims. When human depravity joins forces with demonic rage, wicked behavior follows. At times like this, forgiveness from sin and deliverance from evil assume an unmistakable urgency.

Despite satanic pressure to do otherwise, true worshipers will live up to their potential as they demonstrate reverence with relentless conviction. By articulating praise and demonstrating reverence, they will affect multitudes of indecisive spectators while showing their Heavenly Father what He seeks.

Knowing the truth about Jesus activates an irreversible tipping point for worshipers. It inspires strength and courage to oppose demonic censorship and intimidation. Informed worshipers do not tolerate demonic propaganda because the truth propels them to follow the Holy Spirit where their own strength cannot take them.

Responding with Certitude

In one way or another, Satan will eventually test the human race with life-threatening ultimatums.

He [another beast] was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. (Rev 13:15 NIV)

¹ Albert Marrin, *Napoleon and the Napoleonic Wars*, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 1991, pp. 27-29.

Knowing the truth about Satan reinforces our need to connect with God for a strong finish. True worshipers therefore, must distinguish the veracity of God from the mendacity of Satan. They must discern how God conforms to truth and how falsehood characterizes Satan. Informed worshipers know precisely who they are and they know whom they worship. Jesus said, *“we worship what we know”*.²

Radical militants are expanding their ranks at an alarming rate as tyrants and terrorists mass-produce warriors. According to international journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave, ninety-nine percent of the world’s Muslim population holds moderate beliefs.³ However, he adds that 1 percent of 1.6 billion represents 16 million extreme militants who believe America is the Great Satan, the fount of all evil, to be attacked and demolished.

Through systematic indoctrination and calculated brainwashing, radical terrorists are grooming candidates from an early age to carry out militant agendas. With an assortment of religious coercion and spiritual intimidation, they manipulate vulnerable accomplices. While worshipers of Christ don garments of praise, radical Islamists cloth themselves with deadly explosives.

Homicide bombers of all ages are bypassing conventional warfare for the sake of a militant Jihad. Combat zones now extend beyond battlefields into everyday venues. Civilian targets include office buildings, transportation vehicles, malls, schools, hospitals, stadiums, restaurants, and theaters. In this unconventional war, the line between soldier and civilian no longer exists. Warriors without uniforms are becoming weapons without conscience; they shamelessly deploy sons and daughters along with wives and infants as covert explosives. Demonic evil has no regard for human dignity let alone the Geneva Convention.

² John 4:22 ESV

³ The American Conservative, Radical Islam Rising;
<http://www.amconmag.com/article/2003/jan/13/00029/> (Retrieved 9/30/2011)

