

What Are The Fiery Darts Of Satan?

Rick Railston

October 5, 2013

As we've talked about recently in the last several months, perilous times are coming on all of us, on the world, on our country. People will be lovers of their own selves. They will be narcissistic. And, again, Dale and I did not talk about his sermonette, but it fits in perfectly with the introduction today because we have to look no further than the recent congressional comedy and gridlock between the White House and the Congress. No one is willing to address the major issues and everybody is willing to point fingers at everybody else.

It reminds me of a quote from H. L. Mencken. He was born in 1880 and died in 1956. And he was a journalist and a satirist and a critic, and he was a democrat. He wrote this comment in an editorial in *The Baltimore Sun* that appeared on July 26, 1920—and talking about words coming true. He said:

As democracy is perfected, the office of the President represents more and more closely the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day, the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last and the White House will be occupied by a downright fool and a complete narcissistic moron.

And you could say that about Congress too. It's not just one person, but we get what we vote for I guess. And this is going on in the United States. It's going on round the world. It's human nature in the raw. So, we can't point fingers at anybody else. We need to point fingers at ourselves too.

But in addition to people being lovers of their own selves and narcissistic and perilous times are coming, Satan, as we've said before, is far more active among God's people than he has ever been before. And with that in mind, let's go to Ephesians 6 and verse 16. I'll read it out of the New King James. But let's read this in context of Satan being more active in the minds and the hearts of God's people as we get closer and closer to the end. Ephesians 6:16, notice what Paul says. He says:

Ephesians 6:16. *Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (NKJV)*

The Greek word for "darts" is Strong's 956. And it's the Greek word "belos" (bel'-os). And it means *a missile; that is, a spear or an arrow*. And the Fenton translation calls it "artillery," the artillery of Satan.

But it's interesting that Paul would use this term—darts. He could use a lot of other things but why did he use "darts" or "fiery darts" in getting his point across? Well, let's take a minute first and look at modern-day physical fiery darts or physical artillery just to

get a picture of maybe what Paul was referring to. Then we'll talk historically about what he was referring to in his day.

Now, I was born during World War II, but it seems impossible almost that it happened over sixty years ago. But the big battleships in World War II, the gigantic U.S. battleships were of the Iowa Class. And they had nine 16-inch guns. Now, that means the inside diameter of the barrel was about that big around. Now, think about that! They had nine of them. And they shot a 2700-pound armor-piercing round which could penetrate up to thirty feet of concrete. And it was accurate within two football fields at 20 miles. Now that would be like launching a VW Beetle from the Roecks' house to here. Now, think about that—2700 pounds twenty miles! And it just created all kinds of havoc and all kinds of damage.

Now that technology is 60 years old. Let's look at a couple of modern fiery darts. One of the ones that comes to mind is the TOW Missile System (T-O-W). It stands for tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-commanded. It looks like a big tube about that big around. It looks like an old bazooka but it's got an optical sight on it. And it consists of a tripod, a missile guidance set, the launch tube and the optical sight and the battery assembly. And the whole thing only weighs 50 pounds and it's got a 13-pound warhead, but the operator through his little scope has his crosshairs and whatever he sets those cross hairs on, the missile tracks, once it leaves the tube, tracks and finds where those crosshairs are. And there's a wire that strings out behind. That's why it's wire guided and all the commands to the missile keep it on track as long as he's got those crosshairs where he wants them. And they will take out a tank at 3/4 of a mile. A 13-pound warhead, it penetrates. It's rocket powered. It penetrates the armor of the tank and blows up inside and just wipes a tank out. Pretty fiery dart when you think about it.

The most recognizable one, of course, is the unmanned aerial vehicle we talk about today—UAV's, the Predator. It's a propeller driven little aircraft. They can fly 400 miles out and then loiter for fourteen hours and then come back to base—totally remote controlled. It can carry cameras or other sensors, but it also carries two Hellfire missiles. Those are rocket-powered missiles. They weigh about 106 pounds apiece. They have a 20-pound warhead and they have a range, once the Predator launches them, of about five miles at mach 1.3. That's a little over 1,000 miles an hour. And we've seen pictures of some car going along and this rocket comes in and blows the car to smithereens. Or back in the day when the U.S. attacked Iran, you can see a building and this missile goes through a window in the building and that's a Hellfire missile in many cases. That's modern technology. And talk about fiery darts today, the enemies don't stand much of a chance.

So, with that in mind, let's ask the question. Is Satan less sophisticated than the U. S. Department of Defense? Is somehow he inferior to the U. S. Department of Defense and the weaponry that he can bring to bear? Is Satan less powerful than the modern weapons of war that we've just described including nuclear warheads? I think we all have to agree that Satan and his weapons are far more potent and far more

sophisticated than anything the U. S. Department of Defense can come up with or man can come up with.

So if Satan has weapons that are far superior to what humankind has developed, then we need to ask the question, “Who would he use those weapons against? Who are Satan’s enemies?” And I think we know the answer to that but, as a reminder, let’s go to 1 Peter 5:8 and see who Satan’s enemies are. His weapons are far more powerful than any human weapon and he is far more sophisticated than the application of those weapons than any human. 1 Peter 5:8, Peter warns us. He says:

1 Peter 5:8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, [walks] about, seeking whom he may devour: (KJV)*

Now the Greek word “adversary” is defined by Zodhiates as the equivalent of the Greek word “echthros” meaning *enemy*. Satan is our enemy and we are Satan’s enemies.

And if we have such a powerful enemy, then it seems logical, it would seem to our benefit to know what his fiery darts are so that we can avoid them and we can counteract them. So, the subject of the sermon today is:

The Fiery Darts of Satan

We’re going to talk about them because Satan uses those to destroy us, in an effort to destroy us.

So the first point we want to make and ask really (It’s a question.) is: “Why did Paul use the term “fiery” darts?”

He could have used darts, missiles, javelins, arrows, but he used the term “fiery” darts. Why did he do that? Well the Greek word for “fiery” is Strong’s 4448 and it’s a Greek word “puroo” (poo-ro’-o). And it just means *to literally be on fire*.

Now Zodhiates says this, “an evident illusion to those arrows or javelins which were sometimes used in sieges or battles. Sometimes they were missiles fitted with combustibles,” like you would put some flammable material on the head of an arrow and shoot it.

Now Clarke’s Commentary says this: “It is probable that the apostle alludes to the darts called falarica [That’s a Latin word.], which were headed with lead, in or about which some combustible stuff was placed that took fire in the passage of the arrow through the air and often burnt up the enemies engines, ...”

Now, that was a term used for the battering rams that they used and those giant slings that would catapult burning things over a wall into a besieged city. He said, “... often burnt up the enemy’s engines, [the enemy’s] ships, etc.; they were calculated also to stick [to] the shields and set them on fire.”

And, as we know, most of the soldiers in those days used a wooden shield. And if a burning arrow went into the wooden shield and caught the shield on fire, then it would render the shield useless. Clarke goes on. He says, "When they stuck on a shield and set it on fire, the soldier was obliged to cast it away; thus becoming defenseless."

So again, we ask the question: Why did Paul use the term 'fiery' darts? Well, with all this in mind, it seems obvious that Satan's fiery darts, as the fiery arrows that Paul was using as a physical analogy, destroy the enemy's shield and render him defenseless. That's what Satan wants to do. That's why his darts were described as "fiery" because it would yield us defenseless.

Now, let's look at an important principle back in 2 Corinthians 10 and we'll read verses 3 and 4. Paul is using a physical analogy to illustrate a spiritual issue. 2 Corinthians 10 verses 3 and 4, this is something we have to remember. We, so often in our lives, relegate everything to the physical when we should be doing the opposite. Everything that we should think and analyze we should do so from a spiritual perspective. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 3, Paul says:

2 Corinthians 10:3. *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:*

4) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, ... (KJV)

Now the word "carnal" in the Greek means *of the flesh*. So he says, "The weapons of our warfare aren't of the flesh."

2 Corinthians 10:4b. *... but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (KJV)*

So, Paul was using an example of a fiery dart that was a weapon of war in his day to illustrate and to teach us spiritual principles. That's why he used the term. And if we can better understand what Paul was referring to, then we can better understand what spiritual fiery darts might be. Satan's not throwing something physical that's burning at us. He's throwing something spiritual that can inflame us. Spiritual fiery darts, if allowed to penetrate our spiritual shield, will inflame us. That's the point he's trying to make. Satan wants to inflame us to do his will. Not God's will.

So, the first point is: Why did Paul use the term "fiery" darts? Because they inflame us. Satan's fiery darts will spiritually inflame us.

Now, the second big point, and we'll take up the majority of the time talking about, is: What are Satan's fiery darts?

What are the things that he can launch at us that will get us inflamed?

First, Satan's fiery darts can inflame us and provoke us to let our emotions run uncontrolled—let our emotions run uncontrolled.

A few years ago someone in the Church, a teacher in the Church proclaimed that—and I'm quoting—"All emotions are a tool of Satan." He also said that agape ... "There is no emotion in agape love." We're going to take a little bit of an aside here and explain and address that subject. Let's step aside and address for a moment "Are all emotions a tool of Satan?"

I think we all know that Christ showed emotions. He wept. Didn't He? Let's go to John 11 and we'll read verses 32 to 35. The context is the death of Lazarus and Christ is coming on the scene after Lazarus has died. The people there were mourning his loss. They loved him very dearly. John 11:32.

John 11:32. *Then when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if [You had] been here, my brother [would not have] died.*

33) When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and [He] was troubled, (KJV)

It distressed Him.

John 11:34. *And said, Where have [you] laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. (KJV)*

And verse 35, two words:

John 11:35. *Jesus wept. (KJV)*

Crying is a powerful emotion and He was grieved because they were grieved.

Now Christ grieved over Jerusalem. Let's go to Matthew 23 and look at verse 37. Put yourself in Christ's situation. He knew He was going to die for the sins of the world. He knew God had a chosen nation that He married [Christ, the God of the Old Testament] and because of their sins had to divorce them. And here He is standing over Jerusalem. Matthew 23:37, He says:

Matthew 23:37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [you] that [killed] the prophets, and [stoned] them which are sent unto [you], ... (KJV)*

Notice this.

Matthew 23:37b. *... how often would I have gathered [your] children together, even as a hen [gathers] her chickens under her wings, and [you] would not! (KJV)*

Do you think there might have been a little emotion in His voice? A little emotion in His feeling about the countless deaths and misery and suffering that these people brought upon themselves because they refused to follow God?

Let's go over to Hebrews chapter 5 and see that Christ was so emotional on the night that He was taken captive, He sweated blood. Hebrews 5, verses 6 and 7, Christ had deep emotions.

Hebrews 5:6. *[And He said] also in another place, [You are] a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

7) Who in the days of his flesh [referring to Christ], when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; (KJV)

Or the Greek means *had reverence for God the Father.*

But He offered up prayers with crying and tears, our Savior. He had great emotion at that time.

And then, Paul shed tears of emotion many times. Let's go over to Acts chapter 20 and verse 31. This is an aside on this first fiery dart about emotions. Are all emotions a tool of Satan? Acts 20:31, Paul is talking to the assembled elders, as you can see in verse 17. Verse 31, Acts 20, Paul says:

Acts 20:31. *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. (KJV)*

Very emotional warning! Very concerned!

Then look at 2 Corinthians 2 and verse 4, another example of Paul's deep emotion for God's people. And there are many other examples by the way that we could use. 2 Corinthians 2:4, Paul says:

2 Corinthians 2:4. *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart ... (KJV)*

When you're anguished in your heart, that's an emotional experience too. He said:

2 Corinthians 2:4b. *... I wrote unto you with many tears; not that [you] should be grieved, but that [you] might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. (KJV)*

Paul is saying, "I have this great love and I've written to you in tears and deep emotion."

So, we see here in just a few short scriptures that Christ and Paul showed emotions and they were proper emotions, appropriate emotions. Therefore, the more accurate statement rather than saying, "All emotions are a tool of Satan," one could say,

“Emotions can be a tool of Satan. They can be used for good or bad, just like most anything can be used for either good or bad.”

But my point is in this first fiery dart of Satan is: That unbridled emotions, uncontrolled emotions can inflame human beings to do horrible things. And that’s just what Satan wants—just what Satan wants!

Let’s take anger for example. Anger can inflame one to commit murder; either literally commit murder or murder in one’s mind. We see that in the newspapers all the time. Somebody gets angry. They stab somebody. They run over somebody. They do all kinds of evil things. Let’s go to Ephesians chapter 4. That’s why we’re told to watch our anger. We’ll read verses 26 and 27 and then jump to verse 30. Ephesians 4:26 and 27 and then we will read verses 30 and 31. Paul is saying with good reason, he says:

Ephesians 4:26. Be [you] angry, ... (KJV)

It’s not wrong to be angry, but he says, “Don’t sin.”

Ephesians 4:26b. ... sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (KJV)

Resolve it. Deal with it. Solve the problem. Verse 27:

Ephesians 4:27. Neither give place to the devil. (KJV)

So the clear implication is that if we don’t deal with our anger, we give a position, a place in our mind to Satan. And if we don’t deal with the anger, then horrible sins can result.

I knew a fellow in the Church once. It was comical if it wasn’t so sad, but he had an anger problem. He had a very short fuse. And, out of persnickety-ness, he would come to church in a polo shirt with a coat on but he had an anger problem and invariably somebody would make him angry.

He would say something. And you could watch; you could just watch it happen. Somebody would say something and his fists would start clinching down by his side and his teeth would start clenching and his eyes would start bugging out. And you could see a red line start above the neck of the polo shirt and go all the way up to the top of his head and, then, you knew an explosion was going to occur. You could just watch it. And, as I said, it was almost humorous if it wasn’t so sad that somebody could allow anger to control them this way. You see uncontrolled anger lets Satan in us and we have to be careful. And people have been killed as a result of that.

Look at verse 30 now, talking about anger. “Be angry and sin not.”

Ephesians 4:30. And grieve not ... (KJV)

And the Greek means *to make sorry*.

Ephesians 4:30. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby [you] are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)*

God's spirit is a spirit of love and goodness and kindness and gentleness and so on. And he says, "Don't grieve God's spirit"—that spirit of love—by being angry. And then he goes on to say:

Ephesians 4:31. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and [clamor], and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)*

So, if Satan can get our anger to the point that it becomes uncontrolled and not dealt with, he's got us. He's right there with us. It's similar with jealousy. Jealousy can inflame people to lie, to deceive, to actually hate. And lust can inflame people to commit fornication, to commit adultery. We've lost two members in the past year because of that. These emotions are all tools of Satan as just you see if you—I don't do it very often, but you—turn on television on a Sunday morning and you see the Pentecostals dancing around and rolling their eyes and falling down and shaking and all of this. Those emotions are a tool of Satan. They're uncontrolled.

So, let's understand this first fiery dart of Satan. We cannot allow ourselves to be inflamed by this fiery dart of emotion being unchecked, uncontrolled.

A second fiery dart of Satan is: Inflaming us, provoking us to think only of ourselves.

Remember in the end-times perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves. 2 Timothy 3:1.

2 Timothy 3:1. *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, ... (KJV)*

And then it goes on. But notice verse 5.

2 Timothy 3:5. *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (KJV)*

And so, by thinking only of ourselves, we focus on our concerns, our problems, our feelings, our desires, our issues. Or, in thinking of ourselves, some people say, "Well, look to me," or want to be in the spotlight, want to be in a prime position. I covered that in the sermon on narcissism here recently, but you see if not challenged, if not dealt with, our entire being, our thoughts, our words, our deeds become or can become self-focused. We focus only on ourselves, not on other people. And that is exactly the opposite of Christianity.

You see selfishness, if Satan can destroy our shield with a fiery dart, can penetrate us so that we think only of ourselves, then guess what? He knows what's going to happen because our sins, our selfishness, can separate us from God and that's exactly what he wants us to do. Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Selfishness separates us from God because our mind isn't on God. It's on us. 1 Corinthians 6, we'll begin in verse 9 and go to the beginning of verse 11. 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul says:

1 Corinthians 6:9. *[Don't you know] that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ... (KJV)*

We need to understand that. Not everybody is going to be in God's kingdom. He says, "Don't be deceived." He says, "Don't think that you can be a fornicator and be in the Kingdom of God. Don't think you can be idolater and be in the Kingdom of God. Don't think you can be an adulterer and be in the Kingdom of God." And you see fornication, idolatry, and adultery is all about the self—satisfying the self.

1 Corinthians 6:9b. *... nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, ... (KJV)*

Again, taking for the self, wanting for the self.

10b) ... nor drunkards, ... (KJV)

Wanting to have the effects of the alcohol; again, that's for the self.

10 continued) ... nor revilers, nor extortioners, ... (KJV)

He says, "None of those are going to inherit the Kingdom of God." And, then, he points out, "Some of you were like that," as we all were. And he says, "But don't play games with yourself thinking you can do these things and be in the Kingdom of God."

The point I'm making is that the fiery dart of selfishness, thinking only of the self, will separate us from God. It will pull us away from God. It can keep us out of the kingdom.

Well, what's the solution or the antidote for selfishness? We've talked about that before. Let's go to Philippians 2 and verse 4. The next verse talks about having the mind of Christ, but Philippians 2:4, I'll read that out of the New King James. Notice what it says. This is the antidote for selfishness. He says:

Philippians 2:4. *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (NKJ)*

It's simply getting the mind off the self and onto other people. And some of the most unhappy people that you will ever meet are people who think only of themselves. They are unhappy, Philippians 2:4.

Now, let's go to another scripture. An antidote is Romans 12:1. We, as Christians, need to have a mindset of thinking about others. Paul says to the Church at Rome and by extension to us today; Roman 12:1, he says:

Romans 12:1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, ... (KJV)*

Beseech is a strong word. He says, "I'm crying out to you, I'm making a strong appeal to you:"

1b) ... by the mercies of God, that [you] present your bodies a living sacrifice, ... (KJV)

Not a dead one. The Jews of the day were very familiar with dead sacrifices. But Paul is saying, "Unh uh. I want a living sacrifice from you."

1 continued) ... holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (KJV)

Or "reasonable duty" as the Greek can mean.

So remember the core of being a Christian. Yes, we love God first with all our heart, but what's the second biggest command? It's to love others as much as we love ourselves, to look out for others as much as we look out for ourselves and to be able to sacrifice what we want for the benefit of somebody else. That's the core of being a Christian.

And so the second fiery dart is if Satan can get us thinking about ourselves, he will destroy us.

The third fiery dart is: Inflaming or provoking us to promote division.

If Satan can divide us, He can conquer us. Let's understand that.

Now, the Corinthian Church had this very problem and it's there for our teaching today. Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Paul starts off with the letter to the Corinthians Church and he's telling them of the many problems they had. He says, "You've got one big one here." 1 Corinthians 1 verse 10, again he uses the word beseech. He says:

1 Corinthians 1:10. *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... (KJV)*

You can't get any stronger than that. He says, "I am crying out to you in Christ's name."

1 Corinthians 1:10b. *... that [you] all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that [you] be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (KJV)*

Now, verse 12:

1 Corinthians 1:12. *Now this I say, that every one of you [says], I am of Paul; [or] I [am] of Apollos; [or] I [am] of [Peter]; [or] I [am] of Christ. (KJV)*

That's what He's illustrating now. What was happening is that there were factions developing in the Church. And he went on to say, "Is Christ divided? We all should be of like mind." But that was happening. Satan was stirring that pot.

Now look at chapter 3 and verse 3. He's admonishing them pretty strongly. 1 Corinthians 3:3, he says:

1 Corinthians 3:3. *For [you] are yet carnal: ... (KJV)*

Meaning: *of the flesh*. They were baptized. They had the seed of God's holy spirit, but he says, "You're yet of the flesh."

1 Corinthians 3:3b. *... for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are [you] not carnal [of the flesh], and walk as men? (KJV)*

He said, "We shouldn't be doing that."

So people can become absolutely inflamed as they were back then saying, "I am of ." And we see that in the Greater Church today. "I am of so-and-so." Or, "I belong to so-and-so." Or, "I follow so-and so." They are not Christ; they are not God. They're men; they're corporations.

Or, some people say, "I know something you don't know. Let me stoop down to your level and teach you what I know." That leads to self-righteousness but it promotes division. And some people say, "I am God's man on earth. Look to me. Follow me." Again promoting division. Some people say, "Hey if you agree with me, I'm your brother. If you disagree with me, I'm your enemy. You are my enemy." And that leads to criticism of other people, self-righteousness, cliques, exclusivism. The result is division and this is exactly what Satan wants.

And we know division is prophesied. Some people say, "We all ought to be together." Well, the New Testament tells us that division is prophesied. Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and see that. We've talked about this before, but we need to understand that when we see divisions, there is a reason behind it: God either causes it or God allows it. 1 Corinthians 11 verses 18 and 19, Paul says:

1 Corinthians 11:18. *For first of all, when [you] come together in the church, I hear that there [are] divisions among you; and [he says,] I partly believe it. (KJV)*

And the reason he partly believes it is in verse 19. He says:

1 Corinthians 11:19. *For there must be also heresies ... (KJV)*

And the Greek word for “heresies” can mean *division*. There must be heresies which cause division and there must be divisions among you and he gives us the reason why.

1 Corinthians 11:19b. *... that they which are approved [might] be made manifest among you. (KJV)*

And it gets back to that Greek word “approved,” Strong’s 1384. It means “dokimos.” As I’ve said before, it is a term applied to coinage. And if a coin was “dokimos”, that means it was of the right weight, of the right purity, and it was a legitimate coin to be used for transactions. And so, that word can also mean *approved* or *genuine*.

So, what Paul is saying here is there must be heresies and divisions among you to show those who are legitimate Christians and those who are legitimate ministers from those who are not. Because two can’t walk together unless they be agreed and, if you try to mesh people who are true Christians with people who are not, they’re not going to walk together. They’re not going to agree and, eventually, there will be a separation.

God cause or allows these divisions to occur to make it very apparent who are legitimate Christians and who are not.

Now understand this important principle about this third fiery dart. There is a difference between causing division and reacting to division.

We can look back... There is no need to look back any further than the breakup of Worldwide. We didn’t cause the division. The leadership of Worldwide began to change the laws, God’s laws—the holy days, the Sabbath, introducing the trinity, Easter, all of that. So, they were the ones that caused the division. Now, we had to react to that division. Do we stay there and be absorbed in that division? Or, do we vote with our feet, so to speak, and walk away? Now, we reacted to division. They caused division. So, let’s understand that.

But causing division ends in separation from the body of Christ. And remember the body is not a corporation. The body of Christ is comprised of those who are led by God’s holy spirit. Let’s go to Romans 16 and verse 17. Those who cause division, then, end up separated from the body of Christ. Romans 16:17, notice what Paul says. Again, he uses the word beseech. He said:

Romans 16:17. *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [those] ... (KJV)*

The Greek means *to take note of*.

Romans 16:17b. *... [take note of those] which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which [you] have learned; and avoid them. (KJV)*

So, he's talking about "Take note of those who are walking contrary to the teachings in the Bible, the truth that you have been taught, and just stay away from them." That's all. In that case he says, this is a reaction to those who cause division.

So, how do we prevent division? How do we do that? By, and we won't turn there, but Philippians 2:5—having the mind of Jesus Christ. If we all have the mind of Jesus Christ, there won't be any division. And what God is doing is calling people all over the earth to have the mind of Jesus Christ.

Understand we're not talking corporations. We're not talking where somebody sits. We're not talking where somebody tithes to. We're talking about people led by God's holy spirit.

And he's [Paul's] calling all of those people all over the world who are led by God's holy spirit to have more and more and more of the mind of Christ. And over time, if Christ is up here and we're all down here, we will come closer together as we become more like Jesus Christ. It's like a pyramid. Christ is at the top. We're scattered at the bottom, but as we grow and grow year by year, we become more and more like Jesus Christ. And guess what? As we go up and ascend to that level, we get closer and closer and closer and closer together.

If we have that attitude, of having the mind of Christ, then we will not be the cause of division. That's not to say we might have to react to it, but we will not be the cause because we will be Christ-like. We will set an example. And if people want to follow that example and associate, then we just welcome that and love that. If people don't want to do that, then that is their choice. That's their decision and they can do whatever they wish.

So, let's understand that this third fiery dart is that Satan will do anything he can to provoke us to cause to division. We have to be very careful about that.

The fourth (and last one we'll cover today) fiery dart of Satan—and this is the biggest one, of course—is that: He will inflame us or entice us to sin.

If Satan can get us sinning, then he's got us. And Satan is not a fool. Satan will attack us on our weak points. Where we are weakest, he will attack us.

Now, when Paul was using the term fiery darts, you wouldn't shoot a fiery dart into a stone. It wouldn't work. You would shoot a fiery dart into some material that was combustible, generally wood or straw or hay or something like that that would start a fire. And Satan will do the same thing to us. He won't attack us where we're strong. He'll attack us where we are weak. He will shoot his fiery dart into an area where we can personally be inflamed. And then, being inflamed, it will lead us to sin.

Look at 1 John 2 and verse 16. This hits three broad categories of where a human being can be inflamed. 1 John 2:16, I think we know this one by heart, but let's turn there just to look at it, carefully look at it. 1 John 2:16. It says:

1 John 2:16. *For all that is in the world, ... (KJV)*

What he's going to mention now, is not of God. It doesn't come from heaven. It's in the world. He says:

1 John 2:16b. *... the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, ... (KJV)*

All three of those things [are]:

1 John 2:16 continued. *... not of the Father, [it] is of the world. (KJV)*

Not of the Father—it's of the world.

And, as Dale was pointing out in the sermonette, Pharaoh succumbed to pride. If the pride of life can get us as it has gotten many people in God's Church, then we don't listen. Our heart is hardened. We turn away from the truth. We don't have a soft heart anymore. We don't have the love that we should have or the compassion or the consideration of other people. We think only of ourselves through pride.

And then lust, you see it on television all the time and you see it in movies and magazines and such. Lust can just inflame people to do all kinds of things—inflame people to destroy marriages, inflame people to turn into a thief, turn into somebody who is disreputable and dishonest because they lust after certain things, covetous, jealousy, envy. All of those can inflame us to do things that are ungodly and unchristian. They inflame us to sin.

And then, guess what? Sin separates us from God. We know the scripture. Let's go to Isaiah 59 and look at verse 2. If Satan can get us to sin, then he's got us. That's the easiest way he can inflame us. And we are all susceptible to sin. In some areas we're strong, and in some areas, we're not so strong. And he knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows where we are weak and he will bring something to pass to attempt to cause us to sin. God, in many cases will allow it as a test for us so that we can develop character. Isaiah 59:2.

Isaiah 59:2. *But your iniquities [or your sins] have separated between you and your God, ... (KJV)*

And all he has to do is to get us to sin. And then, distance occurs between us and God. I've seen it so many times where somebody will start and commit a sin. Then they feel guilty and because they feel guilty and maybe a bit ashamed, they don't go to God. And to satisfy their feeling of guilt and shame, they go do other things. Then, another sin

occurs and, then, another sin occurs. And then all of a sudden, they're over here and God's over here. God hasn't moved. They've moved away from God. And over time, people stop praying, stop studying, stop thinking about God and they get involved and consumed by their sins. And they leave the Church. They're gone—absolutely gone! Sin separates us from God. So therefore, we have to be on constant alert to committing sin. And Satan is so subtle he can get us into a pattern and we don't even recognize it sometimes.

The dark winter days are coming. The sun is setting earlier and the sun is rising later. We're in the period of darkness until the Spring Holy Days. Let's use this time between now and the Passover to examine ourselves. "Do I have the mind of Christ or do I not? Am I following God's Word or am I compromising?" Let's take the time and let's understand that if Satan can get us to sin, he's got us.

So here in this big second point, we've seen some of Satan's fiery darts.

Now the third and last point we want to make or want to ask really; it's a question. What is the ultimate solution to these fiery darts of Satan?

The Bible is very clear. We read over it in the beginning. Let's go back to the original scripture, Ephesians 6:16. I purposely read over it just to focus on the term "fiery darts," but notice what Paul says. He started off by saying "Above all." Notice what he said:

Ephesians 6:16. *Above all, taking the shield of faith, ... (KJV)*

That is a spiritual shield. It is not a physical shield. He says:

Ephesians 6:16b. *... taking the shield of faith, wherewith [you] shall be able ... (KJV)*

If you have this shield of faith, you will be able—this is a promise!

Ephesians 6:16 continued. *... to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]. (KJV)*

And this is far more effective than a wooden shield that some Roman soldier would hold up—far more effective. Let me again quote from Clarke and his commentary on verse 16 here. Notice what he says: "To quench or extinguish such fiery darts the shields were ordinarily covered with metal on the outside, and thus the fire was prevented from catching hold of the shield." So, you have a weapon and then you have a counter-measure. So instead of a wooden shield, they began to use a sheet of metal over it so the fiery dart would just fall off. It wouldn't stick.

Going on, Clarke says, "The fiery darts of ... the devil, are evil thoughts and strong injections...." Mr. Armstrong talked about Satan is the master of the airwaves and he likened it unto radio. He can broadcast a thought in your head. "A strong injection,"

Clarke says, “as they are termed which ... inflame the passions, and excite to acts of transgression. While the faith is strong in Christ it acts as a shield to quench [all of] these.”

If we have faith in Christ, then when we have the thought come into our head, we have just a knee jerk reaction rather than acting on the thought as we would if we were carnal. The first thought, when it comes into our head, we would think “Would Christ have this thought?” Or, “If Christ had this thought, what would He do with this thought? Would he cast it out of His head? Or, would He dwell on it?” By having faith in Jesus Christ and by having faith in God and the holy spirit, we then begin to counter these fiery darts.

Let’s go to Hebrews chapter 10 talking about the ultimate solution here to these fiery darts. We’ll read verses 21 and 22. Notice what Paul says, Hebrews 10:21-22. He’s talking about Jesus Christ in verse 21. He’s saying:

Hebrews 10:21. *And having an high priest over the house of God; (KJV)*

Verse 22, he says, “Because we have this High Priest:”

Hebrews 10:22. *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (KJV)*

He says, “Come to God with a true heart, a pure heart, filled with faith, with absolute assurance.” Because, you see, faith will quench these fiery darts. If we have faith that God is more powerful than Satan—if we don’t have faith in that, then we’re lost. But if we have faith that God is more powerful than Satan, more intelligent than Satan, then if we have faith in God, we know anything can be conquered; any fiery dart can be dealt with. If we have faith that through the power of God’s spirit we can be transformed from the old person to the new person—only through the power of God’s spirit—He will take us from the way we used to be to the image of Christ and to behave and think and act like Christ. If we have faith in that, we can quench any fiery dart.

If we have faith that God will never do anything for our harm, nothing for our harm and so, therefore we have faith that no matter what comes upon us, it’s for our ultimate good. God doesn’t hate us. He’s not out to get us. He’s not trying to squash us as a little bug, but rather He allows these things to come upon us with the ultimate goal of our being children in His kingdom. And then, we have to have faith—this leads to this logically—that if God does nothing for our harm, then obviously we need to have faith that God wants us in His kingdom. He wants us to be there!

Let’s go to 1 Timothy 2 and verse 4. Sometimes we forget this scripture. Now, the Protestants use this scripture saying that God’s trying to call all people right now or the Catholics do the same thing. We know that is not the case. 1 Timothy 2:4, it tells us a very important principle about God and about Christ.

1 Timothy 2:4. *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (KJV)*

We know that that is in stages: The firstfruits, then in the millennium, and the great white throne judgment that refers to all mankind. But this tells us that God's desire is to have everyone saved. It doesn't mean that everyone will be saved. That's up to us. We're free moral agents, but God's desire is that He wants all to be saved. He wants everyone to be saved.

Now I went to military school and it was Texas A&M back in the early '60s. I went there in the fall of 1960. And, at that time, it was all male and it was all military, had about 10,000 students. And you went in as a freshman and, if you made it, you graduated as an officer. It was the largest producer of officers for the military. It produced more than the Naval Academy and West Point and the Air Force Academy put together.

But the goal was, when you came in as a freshman, the goal of the upper classmen was to run off everybody who couldn't take it. So, for the first freshman year, you were hazed unmercifully—yelled at, screamed at, abused, physically abused, sleep deprived for a whole year. And the fact is that over half the class didn't last the first year. They left. But, you see, the object was to run off those who were weak and who couldn't take it. And, at the end of four years, only 10 percent were left—at the end of four years.

So, when I came into the Church, I had this idea of God that it was this boot camp mentality. That what God was trying to do to those He called was to weed out all the weak ones. And that God would just slam us and slam us and slam us like my drill sergeant used to do and push and push and push and test and test and test until the weak ones just went away. The weak ones didn't make it and He was only looking for the select few. I thought God was a spiritual drill sergeant and He was trying to run off those who couldn't take it.

When I came into the Church having had that experience (I came in right out of the Air Force.), that was my idea. I never really consciously thought of it, but unconsciously, I thought God was this spiritual drill sergeant trying to run off those who didn't meet His standards when the exact opposite is true.

God wants everyone to make it. He has love for all of His children and He will never do anything for our harm. It's always for our good. And He uplifts us. He encourages us when we need it. He gives us "At a boys!" when we need it, but sometimes when we need a 2 x 4 between the eyes, He gives that too. And pain, as we all know, is a very effective teacher, but God doesn't willingly use pain. He wants us to learn. Read the book. Do what it says. Become like Jesus Christ. And you can avoid pain if we will only do that.

So, you see here the ultimate solution is to be like Jesus Christ. The ultimate solution is the shield of faith.

Now in conclusion, let's go to Revelation chapter 3. We're going to break into the letter to the Laodiceans. Notice what it says here. Revelation 3 and we'll read verses 18 and 19. Notice what is said here because it uses the same word "fiery" that we read in Ephesians chapter 6. He says:

Revelation 3:18. *I counsel [you] to buy of me gold tried in the fire [Strong's 4448], ... (KJV)*

He said, "I counsel you; I'm advising you to buy from Me gold that has been tested or tried:"

18b) ... that [you may] be rich; and [you have] white raiment, ... (KJV)

We know in Revelation 19 that the Bride has prepared herself clothed in white raiment ready to be married to our Savior Jesus Christ. So, He says, "Buy of Me gold that's tried in the fire that you're rich, and that you will have this white robe, symbolic of the Saints that have overcome."

18 continued) ... that [you may] be clothed, and that the shame of [your] nakedness [does] not appear; and [He says,] anoint [your] eyes with eye-salve, that [you may] see. (KJV)

God is calling on us between now and whenever Christ returns or when we die. He's saying, "I want you to anoint your eyes so that you can see yourself. So you can change. You can become like My Son. You can be clothed in white and I can usher you into My Kingdom."

He says in verse 19:

Revelation 3:19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (KJV)*

Have zeal to repent! And we have this time between now and the Passover here at the end of the Feast and looking forward to the Passover. We need to be zealous. We need to not be afraid to look at ourselves. Ask God to open our minds to see ourselves so that we can repent and we can change. And we can build this shield of faith and we can block the fiery darts of Satan.

You see we have been and increasingly will be tried by these fiery darts. We're going to be tried by them. There is no question, but the good news is we're gaining experience. We're gaining experience to let faith be our shield. And, as we overcome one, God will allow another fiery dart to launch our way. Our spiritual shield comes up. We have faith in God and faith in Christ. We overcome that. Then another one comes our way. We overcome that. We're building faith and we're gaining experience.

Let's go to 1 John chapter 5 and look at verse 18. This is something we can have absolute faith in. 1 John 5:18, notice this.

1 John 5:18. *We know ... (KJV)*

We could say, "Have absolute faith in."

18b) ... that whosoever is born of God [does not sin]; but he that is begotten of God [notice this] [keeps] himself, ... (KJV)

The Greek means *to hold fast*. He doesn't allow his emotions to run wild. He keeps himself by God's holy spirit. He keeps himself:

18 continued) ... and that wicked one [touches] him not. (KJV)

If we have the shield of faith, if we keep ourselves through God's holy spirit, Satan can't touch us. We can have a bad thought. We maybe have an emotional, angry thought come into our heads, but we will control it. We will go to God and deal with it. And the shield of faith helps us do exactly that.

So, let's understand. These fiery darts are real. Far more powerful than a TOW missile. Far more powerful than a Predator. They are spiritual. They are subtle. And, yet, God is looking down on us. And He's watching. He knows. He's watching Satan launch these darts. He's not going to ask us to do something we're incapable of doing. He's not going to ask us to do something that would cause us to lose eternal life. What He's asking us to do is to follow Jesus Christ. He's asking us to have His mind and have the shield of faith and we can eliminate the fiery darts. They will just bounce off.

But you see we can have joy in the following fact. Let's go to 1 John 4:4. This is part of that shield of faith that Paul was talking about. 1 John 4:4, notice what it says.

1 John 4:4. *You are of God, little children, ... (KJV)*

And we're all little kids to God no matter our age.

1 John 4:4. *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: ... (KJV)*

Why?

1 John 4:4b. *...because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (KJV)*

Satan's fiery darts can be stopped through the shield of faith, through the mind of Christ, through the holy spirit of God. So, between now and the Passover, let's develop the shield of faith. Let's develop the mind of Christ. Let's develop and exercise the spirit of God.