



Following the upward call through Philippians ...

## Enemies of the Cross

Satan, the prince of darkness, has from the beginning done everything in his power to drag mankind down to his level. Using all the pull power of fleshly desires, the outcast angel works inside the skulls of people to draw them into sin. "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins," averred the apostle Paul, "in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1,2). When the devil gets enough control of the minds of certain men, then he can use those people to influence others and confuse them with false doctrines. "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith," explained the apostle, "paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron" (1 Timothy 4:1,2). The warnings are there!

- ◆ **Two walks** — Everyone is walking, spiritually speaking, through this life on earth. Those who will follow Paul's example and "walk according to the pattern" of those who are approved by Christ will enter by the narrow gate and tread the path that leads to eternal life. But there are others. "For many walk," warns Paul, "of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18). The gospel, from the first time it was preached on the Day of Pentecost, 30 AD, contains the basic elements of Christ's death on the cross, His bodily resurrection on the third day, His appearances to witnesses over a period of forty days, and His ascension to glory. Those who were "enemies of the cross" were enemies of the whole gospel; by attacking the first point they were attacking all. The apostle was sorry that some men chose to be enemies of the cross, some even coming from the ranks of those who had once been Christians. But they were choosing to walk the wrong direction, and Paul is hopeful that none of the Philippian brethren would be fooled into following in their steps.

*As for these other  
guys and gals,  
their "end is  
destruction."*

- ◆ **Enemy characteristics** — The apostle Paul wants the saints in Philippi, along with the overseers and deacons, to understand clearly those men and women who would choose to be enemies of the cross. Enemies are not content to let someone have their belief system; they are aggressively engaged in destroying their opposition. "The mind set on the flesh," Paul informed the brethren in Rome, "is hostile toward God" (Romans 8:7). The apostle desires that the brethren understand the nature of that hostility so that they are not blind-sided by these enemies' viciousness. Paul had to tell the brethren, "even weeping," of these people, many of whom at one point were Christians. Their "end is destruction," asseverates the apostle, "whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is their shame, who set their minds on earthly things" (Philippians 3:19).

Because these people want what they want — whether it be power, position, or money — they will attempt to destroy what stands in their way. Their "god" is their appetite. Because their minds are set "on earthly things," they cast aside true spiritual values easily, and ignore the omnipresence of God who is aware of any secret meetings or hidden agendas. Whatever glories they receive, whatever accolades are sent in their direction from fawning carnal admirers, are really black marks against their souls when measured by heaven's standards. Regardless, then, of whatever vicious attacks or threats these enemies of the cross make against those who are standard bearers for Christ, the saints are to be encouraged and to continue to "walk according to the pattern" set in motion by the apostle Paul. As for these other guys and gals, their "end is destruction"!!

JAY WILSON