

Satan's Triple Threat To The Early Church

Acts 6:1-8

Introduction:

- A. Jerusalem church grew (cf. 2:47; 4:4; 6:1,7)
 - 1. In spite of external opposition/persecution (5:40)
 - 2. Because of daily evangelism (5:42)
- B. Jerusalem church's greatest threat was not persecution.
 - 1. Persecution strengthened their resolve (4:20; 5:41)
 - 2. Persecution caused wider growth (8:1,4)
- C. Jerusalem church's greatest threat was internal.
 - 1. If not overcome church could have been splintered.
 - 2. If not overcome could have destroyed church's effectiveness.
 - 3. If not overcome energy wasted on internal problem.
- D. Our text describes Satan's triple threat to the early church:

Discussion:

I. Discrimination. (Verse 1).

- A. We must avoid various kinds of discrimination.
 - 1. Ethic. (v. 1; Gal. 2:11-16).
 - 2. Economic. (Jas. 2:1-13).
 - a. Large contributors often have more power.
 - b. Prosperous sometimes use money in subtle way to get own way.
- B. We must practice some kinds of discrimination.
 - 1. Moral and spiritual. (1 Cor. 5) — cf. "Gay" rights.
 - 2. Doctrinal. (Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

II. Discord. (Verse 1)

- A. Discord often caused by *Real grievances*.
 - 1. This seemed to be the case at Jerusalem.
 - 2. This is solved by wise correction. (vv. 3-6). — Note: all had Grecian names.
- B. Discord often caused by *Weak Leadership*.
 - 1. Jerusalem's problem handled wisely and swiftly by strong leadership.
 - 2. At many places problems fester because of weak or non-existent leadership.
- C. Discord often caused by *Honest differences* in judgement.
 - 1. Paul and Barnabas had such differences. (Acts 15:26-41).
 - 2. Brethren often need to agree to disagree on matters of judgment.
- D. Discord often caused by *personality flaws*
 - 1. Overly critical personalities are not very forbearing. (cf. Eph. 4:1-4)
 - 2. Chronically complaining personalities disturb congregational peace.
 - 3. Explosive personalities often cause problems — often hold church hostage.
 - 4. Egotistical personalities disturb churches. (Rom. 12:3, 16).
 - 5. Selfish personalities: Self-willed, self-pity, self-serving, self-promoting.
 - 6. Super-sensitive personalities often generate strife with evil-suspensions. (cf. 1 Tim. 6:4)
- E. Discord often caused by *Doctrinal error* (Rom. 16:17).

III. Diversion. (Verse 2).

- A. Preachers must avoid being diverted from main work to other things.
 - 1. Preachers often, either forced or voluntarily, diverted to "table-serving".
 - 2. Preachers often leave study & teaching for things other could do better.
- B. Churches must avoid being diverted from main work to other things.
 - 1. Do not expect hospitals to do everything needing done in world.
 - 2. Why expect church to do every thing needing done in the world?

Conclusion:

- 1. Let us not fall into any of these satanic traps.
- 2. Let us look at the results of successfully handling such threats. (v. 7)