

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
LXVII. Handling Satanically Influenced Parties
(Psalm 67:1-7)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Reverend Franklin Graham recently claimed “that ‘every demon from hell’ has been ‘turned loose’ in our culture today” (Deirdre Reilly, “Franklin Graham at Christian media convention: Every ‘demon from hell’ has been ‘turned loose’ in society,” May 23, 2023; foxnews.com), and the evidence for such Satanic activity seems to abound:

(a) “Sandra Slack Glover” recently “withdrew” her name as a nominee for the State Supreme Court, for she faced certain rejection by the legislature for signing a letter in 2017 in support of Amy Coney Barret, “the conservative destined to play a pivotal role in ending a woman’s federal right to an abortion.” (Mark Pazniokas, “Glover withdraws as state Supreme Court nominee,” Republican-American, May 20, 2023, p. 1A) Thus, most of our state legislators view any Supreme Court justice who voted to end the federal right to kill babies as a bad person!

(b) The “culture wars in the U.S. over sexual preferences, gender IDs and transgender rights have engulfed politics” and “school campuses,” including some Christian schools: “Houghton University,” a “Christian university in western New York,” fired “two former dorm directors” for attaching “gender identities to their work email signatures” in violation of school policy, and “16 plaintiffs are suing Seattle Pacific University, a Christian liberal arts college, to challenge” its “employment policy barring people in same-sex relationships from full-time jobs.” (“Using ‘he/him,’ ‘she/her’ got 2 dorm directors fired at Christian college,” *Ibid.*, May 22, 2023, p. 5B)

(c) As for the national debt, “Congress and President Biden, like his predecessors, enjoy distributing . . . goodies without having to make current taxpayers pay for them,” the “burden” being placed on “future generations” and “other countries, which the U. S. government pressures to finance this country’s debt.” (*Ibid.*, Powell)

(d) Special Counsel John Durham’s report “destroys . . . legitimacy in the FBI,” and “implicates former President Barak Obama, President Joe Biden, James Clapper, John Brennan and” others “in weaponization of the government to stop . . . Trump.” (Ben Shapiro, “Worst political scandal in U. S. history?” *Ibid.*, May 20, 2023, p. 8A)

(e) “In the 177th session of Congress, 78 of the 535 members violated the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act of 2012 that limits insider trading and requires disclosure of trades by members, spouses and dependent children within 45 days. Members of both parties violate the Act . . . fines are small . . . and attempts to tighten rules have been futile.” (“Did you know that . . .” column, “Congress ignores insider-trading rules,” Bottom Line Personal, May 15, 2023, p. 13, citing Businessinsider.com)

(2) However, six people in our church, each from different families, have recently told of oppression they or others in their family have personally faced, raising the question of Satanically influenced parties at a personal level!

Need: *So, we ask, “Do we face Satanically influenced people today, how do we know, and how can we handle it?!”*

- I. Psalm 67:1-7 asks God to keep blessing Israel that the pagan nations around her that worshipped demons might learn about God and trust in Him that they also “might experience His salvation, justice, and bounty, and so praise Him,” Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftm. to Psalm 67 with Psalm 106:33-41.**
- II. Psalm 67:4, the heart of this psalm, explains HOW God graciously produces this spiritual fulfillment:**
- A. The psalmist noted that the pagan Gentiles who came to believe in the Lord would be glad and sing for joy because (1) God judged them righteously and (2) He “govern[ed]” the nations on earth, Psalm 67:4 KJV.
 - B. The Hebrew word for “govern” is *nahah*, “the conducting of one along the right path,” and used of God in the psalms means “far more than guidance,” but “God be before them showing the way of righteousness.” (B. D. B., A Heb. & Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 634-635; H. A. W., The Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 568-569)
 - C. Thus, God spiritually fulfills even demonically influenced pagans when they trust in Him, for He makes just judgments for them and leads them on the path they need to take to live rightly – that is, He discipled them!

Lesson: *God wanted Israel to live rightly that He might bless her as a witness to even demon-worshipping peoples that they too might trust in Him to be blessed, and God would then justly judge and disciple them in righteousness.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we follow God's leading through Scripture in being discipled by Him for spiritual fulfillment regardless if we might face even Satanically influenced people today.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

Since Scripture is the vehicle that God uses today to disciple us according to 2 Timothy 3:15-17, we view Scripture for God's "*nahah*" discipling of us to discern and handle even Satanically influenced people we might face:

(1) 2 Timothy 3:1 KJV predicted that in the latter days of Church History, "perilous" times would come, and "perilous" translates the Greek word *chalepos*, that here means "hard, difficult, times of stress" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 882). This word is used elsewhere in Scripture **only** at Matthew 8:28 to describe the ferocity of two demon possessed men (Ibid.), and in the wide 2 Timothy 2:20-3:9 context, Paul addressed conflicts that Timothy would face as a pastor even in the local church with people who were under Satan's influence!

(2) James 3:14-15 and 2 Timothy 3:1-9 reveal that people who are influenced by Satan are marked by envy, selfish ambition, love of self, love of money, arrogance, pride, slander, disobedience to parents, ungrateful, being profane, loveless, irreconcilable, blasphemous, lacking self-control, untamed, despising the good, traitorous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasures more than God, having a form of godliness but denying its power, controlling others, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth, and opposing God's messengers by trying to discredit them.

(3) When we identify from this list one who is influenced by Satan, God directs us in 2 Timothy 3:5 KJV to "turn away" from him or her, the Greek verb being *apotrepo*, and meaning "turn away from, avoid," Ibid., p. 101. Since the verb is spelled in the text as *apotrepou*, the present imperative in the **middle** voice (The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 48), the "turning away, avoiding" action is to occur to the degree that one needs to do so for his or her personal mental, emotional and spiritual welfare. (Dana and Mantey, A Man. Gram of the Grk. N. T., 1957, p. 157)

(4) God promises in 2 Timothy 3:9 that the folly of those influenced by Satan will eventually become evident to everyone, for sin, like righteousness, given enough time, makes itself obvious in one's life, cf. 1 Timothy 5:24-25.

(5) However, in "turning away, avoiding" Satanically influenced people, we must heed the call in 2 Timothy 2:22b KJV in the broad 2 Timothy 2:20-3:9 context to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, **with** them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." The word "with" renders the Greek preposition *meta* in the genitive case, meaning we should function "in the company of" others who call on the Lord out of a pure heart! (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 509-511) This action implies spending time in the presence of other godly believers that we might fellowship with them.

(6) However, we must **especially** note that Paul's words in the 2 Timothy 2:20-3:9 context referred to trials that Timothy would face **in the local church** where people opposed his pastoral ministry (2 Timothy 2:24-25). Christ explained the spiritual dynamics of this situation in the Matthew 13:1-43 parables (as follows): (a) In our era, people in churches will respond in various ways to the ministry of God's Word, with some being hardened against the truth (hard ground, Matthew 13:19), others being stony ground (in turning from the truth due to hardships, Matthew 13:20-21), others being weedy ground (in turning from the truth due to the distractions of anxiety or materialism, Matthew 13:22) and others being responsive to the Word to varying degrees based on their degrees of spiritual victory over Satan, the sinful nature and worldliness (Matthew 13:23). (b) Taking advantage of the presence of spiritually weak or carnal believers who do not respond well to the ministry of God's Word, Satan will "plant" unbelievers in the midst of such believers in churches, and such unbelievers will deceptively "fit in" with carnal believers since both groups function by means of their sinful natures. God will not quickly remove the Satanic "plants" lest doing so upset the discipling of new or weak believers, but He will eventually remove Satan's "plants" in the final judgment (Parable of the Weeds, Matthew 13:24-30, 34-42) (c) Local churches impacted by Satan's embedded unbelievers and Satanically influenced, carnal believers will become a huge conglomerate that is inhabited by Satanically influenced people along with godly believers (Parable of the mustard seed, Matthew 13:31-32), and Satanically influenced unbelievers and carnal believers will introduce false teaching from the world in local churches (Parable of the leaven, Matthew 13:33) as Satan thus tries to upset Bible teachers who disciple people there so as to influence them to quit the ministry!

(7) God's **solution** to this extensive problem is for godly Bible teachers and leaders in local churches to understand Satan's work as well as God's plan in the local church, and to realize the huge spiritual stakes involved in discipling people in the church so that they stay faithfully ministering or supporting the ministry of God's Word there regardless of the trials they face in ministry, Matthew 13:44-52. In this passage, Christ directed Bible teachers to invest all of their resources in acquiring priceless Old Testament and New Testament truths to teach to God's people for their discipleship: The buried treasure of Matthew 13:44 is Old Testament (used) truths and the (then) unused, new pearl of great price in the marketplace of Matthew 13:45-46 are New Testament truths (of Christ's day, cf. Matthew 13:51-52). Leaders who remain faithful at this Bible exposition calling amid Satanic opposition through unbelievers and carnal believers who are influenced by Satan so that many people can be discipled through God's Word will be greatly rewarded by the Lord in eternity to come, Matthew 13:43; Daniel 12:3.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we then follow God's lead in Scripture to be discipled in the way of righteousness.