

“Soul Hunters!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. A scene from Bunyan’s *“Pilgrim’s Progress”* portrays Interpreter bringing Christian to a wall where **fire is blazing** from a grate. A man is trying to **douse the fire with water**. Then Interpreter shows Christian the other side of the wall, where another man is **secretly pouring oil on the fire to keep it ablaze**. Interpreter says, *“You saw the man standing behind the wall to maintain the fire, teaching you that it is hard for the tempted to see how **this work of grace** is maintained in the soul.”* **Satan tries to quench faith, but Christ keeps it alive.**
- 1.1.1. We’ll meet those tonight whose desire it was to quench faith.
- 1.1.2. They are called **“soul hunters”!**

2. MALE PROPHETS! (1-16)

- 2.1. Imagine being called to preach against the preachers!
- 2.2. **Why were those prophets so dangerous?**
- 2.2.1. Because they made-up their messages & did not get them from the mouth of God.
- 2.2.1.1. *“They prophecy out of their own heart.”* (2)
- 2.2.1.2. *“They follow their own spirit & have seen nothing (i.e. no vision)”* (3)
- 2.3. Ezekiel uses *two vivid images* to describe the lying prophets.
- 2.4. **JACKALS IN THE DESERT!** (1-7)
- 2.5. (4) **Foxes or Jackals in the desert** – i.e. scavengers.
- 2.5.1. Instead of being shepherds who faithfully led the flock, they were Jackals living on refuse.
- 2.5.2. Spiritually speaking, the false prophets were religious scavengers, living among ruins they had made themselves.
- 2.6. (5) **The false prophets had not gone up to the breaks in the wall to repair it.**
- 2.6.1. Israel’s **moral walls** were ready to collapse, but the false prophets did nothing to help.
- 2.7. **WHITEWASHED WALLS!** (8-16)
- 2.8. (9) **Hand** – is a metaphor that speaks of the strength of God for bringing **blessing on believers & judgment on sinners.**
- 2.9. (10) **Peace! when there is no peace!** – This was also **Jeremiah’s** word of warning.
- 2.9.1. An **example** would have been when the rebellious prophet **Jonah** was able to sleep in a terrible storm (Jonah 1:5).
- 2.9.2. Having confidence in our **feelings** is not the same as having confidence from **God.**¹

¹ Warren Wiersbe; With the Word; pg.541.

- 2.10. **False protection** – No matter how strong the wall “looked”, it would not survive the storm.
- 2.10.1. God wanted to “**wash things white**” (Is.1:18);
The false prophets “**whitewashed things**”!
- 2.10.2. They had failed to repair the breaches in the **spiritual wall** of the nation, so that the **moral wall** was about to collapse.²
- 2.10.3. **Example:** My 71 **Karmann Ghia** convertible. Beautiful **red fleck paint job**...but **body rot** on the inside.
2.10.3.1. *Bondo'd & painted*, to focus my attention away from a *rusty floor board*.
- 2.11. Ever do a **cheap fix** on something at home, that didn't last?
- 2.11.1. Instead of calling Israel's attention to the **serious cracks** in its **moral foundation**(5), these prophets were “dabbing plaster“ to hide the deficiencies.
- 2.11.2. A **white paste**, formed from the **chalk deposits** in Israel, was used to plaster over the rocks that formed the walls of most houses.³
2.11.2.1. This plaster **hid** uneven rocks under a smooth surface.
2.11.2.2. The prophets were compounding Israel's difficulties by **hiding** problems that needed to be **exposed**. **Show Picture!**
- 2.11.3. They were like those who **whitewashed a wall** that was **ready to collapse**.
- 2.11.4. A reference to the impending destruction of Jerusalem.
2.11.4.1. The **wall** of Jerusalem, the **city** itself, & the **prophets** would soon be swept away in judgment by the invading Babylonians.
- 2.12. **Q: Is your peace a cover up?**
- 2.12.1. Examine your walls! **What are your breaches?** (sins)
- 2.12.2. Will you **cover them up** or **deal with them?**

3. **FEMALE SOUL HUNTERS! (17-23)**

- 3.1. **SATAN TRAPS!** (17-19)
- 3.2. The prophetesses of Israel were guilty of practicing witchcraft or magic.
3.2.1. They basically were witches.
3.2.2. This is the only reference to false prophetesses in the OT.
- 3.3. **Magic charms** – used by soothsayers & clairvoyants to deceive gullible victims.
3.3.1. They **sewed magic bands or charms on their wrists**.
3.3.2. This practice probably came from Babylonian magic rituals, in which **magical knots** and **bands** were bound to various parts of the body to ward off evil spirits or to heal diseases.

² Shepherd's Notes; pg.26

³ Knowledge Bible commentary.

- 3.4. **Veils** – some think the different sizes refer to their length, i.e. all the way to the ground, to add mystery (i.e. dressed like witches).
- 3.5. **Hunt souls** – God gave man a **soul** and that makes him an individual. He is able to exercise **his will** and has a **personality**.
- 3.5.1. **There are no 2 persons with the same soul.**
- 3.5.2. The soul belongs to the **spirit**; not to the **body**. That is why, when a person dies, his **spirit** retains the soul which comprises “the will, intellect and emotion.”
- 3.5.3. When a Christians dies, his **physical** body will be discarded and replaced by the **resurrection body**.
- 3.5.3.1. The **soul** will go with the spirit to heaven.
- 3.5.4. Jesus speaking to the importance of the **soul** asked, “**For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?**” Matthew 16:26.
- 3.6. **Handfuls of barley...pieces of bread** – they would pander their perversions for handfuls of barley & scraps of bread.
- 3.7. **Do you have the Symptoms of a Caged Soul?**
- 3.7.1. **Q: Why when we see traps do we want to jump in?** (not rusty coyote trap)
- 3.7.1.1. Because there is something that lures us! (a rat attracted by the cheese not the metal) [or choc kisses]
- 3.8. **Orel Hershiser**, of Dodgers fame, talks about his **2 theories of pitching**.
- 3.8.1. **One** is that you try to convince the batter that **a particular pitch is coming and you throw something different**.
- 3.8.2. **The other theory** is that if the batter **expects a particular pitch, you throw it, but you throw it in a place where he can't hit it**.
- 3.8.2.1. **That is:** Know what a batter wants or expects and throw the ball **almost there**. - If he is a highball hitter, throw it a bit too high. His eagerness will prevent him from laying off it, but it will be hard to hit well.
- 3.8.3. **Isn't that the way the enemy works in our life?** He knows just what kind of pitch that we are a **sucker** for and then throws it our way.
- 3.8.3.1. **But, it is just a little higher or just a little bit more outside than where we like it, and most likely we will bite on it every time**. After all, it **looks so good**. It **feels so right**.
- 3.9. **GOD FREES!** (20-23)
- 3.10. **Satan is all about destroying your soul:** And will use whatever means necessary to accomplish that.
- 3.10.1. **With some** he has been successful with *drugs, alcohol, or immorality*. **With others** he's simply used *selfishness, egotism, or false humility*.
- 3.10.2. **Some need help** to be allured in a direction; **others need no help!**

- 3.11. **Satan is all about traps:** setting them, having others set them, & of course his favorite “*baiting the trap*”.
- 3.12. **God is all about setting us free** from Satan’s, & the world’s, traps!
- 3.12.1. He’s been saying since exodus, “Let my people go!”
- 3.12.2. **Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6**
- 3.12.3. **And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**
- 3.12.4. **If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**
- 3.12.5. **Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**
- 3.12.6. **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**
- 3.13. **God is still into delivering His people out of the enemy’s hand! (23)**
- 3.13.1. **During the Civil War** in the United States, a **farmer** named Blake was drafted as a soldier. He was deeply concerned about leaving his family, because his wife had died and there would be no one to support and take care of his children in his absence. The day before he was to leave for the army, **his neighbor Charlie Durham** came to visit him. “Blake,” he said, “I’ve been thinking. You’re needed here at home, so I’ve decided to go in your place.” The farmer was so overwhelmed that a few moments he was speechless. The offer seemed too good to be true. He grasped the hand of the young man and praised God for this one who was willing to go as his substitute. Charlie went to the front-lines and performed his duties nobly. But sad to say, he was shot and killed in the first battle. When the farmer heard the news, he immediately saddled his horse and rode out to the battlefield. After searching for some time, he found the body of his friend. He arranged to have it buried in the churchyard near the spot where they had often stopped to talk after the services. On a piece of marble he carved an inscription with his own hands. It was roughly done, but with every blow of the hammer on the chisel tears fell from his eyes. He placed the marker on the grave of his devoted substitute. Many villagers wept as they read the brief but touching inscription: **HE DIED FOR ME.**
- 3.14. **End:**
- 3.15. **What is temptation?** Seduction to evil, solicitation to wrong. Its goal is your ruin.
- 3.15.1. **A misnomer that we “fall” into temptation!**
- 3.16. **What is a trial?** It tests. Seeks to discover a man’s moral qualities or character.
- 3.16.1. **The one** means to **undeceive**, **the other** to deceive.
- 3.16.2. **The one** aims at the man’s good, making him conscious of his true moral self; **but the other** at his evil, leading him more or less unconsciously into sin. **[God tests; Satan tempts]**⁴

⁴ Fairbain, quoted in The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, J. D. Pentecost, p. 99

- 3.17. As the Union Pacific Railroad was being constructed, an elaborate trestle bridge was built across a large canyon in the West. Wanting to **test** the bridge, the builder loaded a train with enough extra cars and equipment to double its normal payload. The train was then driven to the middle of the bridge, where it stayed an entire day. One worker asked, “Are you trying to break this bridge?” “No,” the builder replied, “I’m trying to prove that the bridge won’t break.”
- 3.17.1. In the same way, the testing’s we face, weren’t designed to see if we would sin, but to prove that we don’t have to.
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