May 29th, 2016 – Pilgrim's Progress Chapter 31

The question I pose is this; where has the Atheist – the spirit of atheism - subtly lied to you and has got you walking cautiously and in unbelief as a Christian? One might try to breeze over this chapter and think that it was a casual encounter with an atheist, but the message behind this is very serious. He is like a person the devil plants in your Christian walk to mock, scorn and ridicule you, to cunningly imply that Christianity is useless, there is no heaven, you might as well just live for yourself, your own lusts and passions because your pursuit of living eternally in heaven is a lie. The atheist is another flatterer who wants to get you to go down another path, he has his back to God and heaven, and he denies God's existence. He is critical, haughty, full of pride and is a fool. **Psalm 14:1** says; "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good." An atheist wants you to believe that the world you live in is only material, everything is random and scientific, there are no moral standards, restraints or principles, that you rationalize everything, and that there is no absolute truth. He mocks your hope, your faith, and belief in an eternal heaven – the celestial city and says your vain pursuits are only for the feeble-minded. The Bible is clear about heaven, here are a few scriptures; **Hebrews 13:14**; "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." **Hebrews 11:10**; "For he was looking to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." **Hebrews 11:16**; "Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."

Now we know there are atheists in the world and they believe what they believe, but it's a confrontational statement to say that as a Christian you may have thoughts of atheism, isn't it? Another way of saying it may be; as a Christian, what atheistic lies do you believe in? One could give all kinds of illustrations showing how atheism has lied to Christians about the whole truth of God's word! You can't pick and choose what you want from the Bible and think that's ok, it's not ok.

Maybe another word for an atheist is a liar. The devil is the father of lies according to what Jesus says in John 8:43-44; "Why do you not understand My speech: Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." He lies to you about everything! Like Eve in the garden of Eden, the serpent / the devil lied to her and caused her to doubt what God had said. Made in the very image of God, they fellowshipped with Him daily, they had everything they could possibly dream of having...yet the liar, satan, lied to them and they lost fellowship with their creator and were thrown out of Eden.

We can see that this atheist never went through the wicked gate (was never born again), he never went to the house of the Interpreter or frequented the local church. He doesn't have his scroll on him. Like the Flatterer in the last chapter, he meanders meaninglessly on his paths that run parallel which may be close to the straight and narrow path but they are narrow, dark and dangerous lanes that lead to destruction. So a Christian who has tasted of the good things of God, and then listens to and acts on the atheists lies, is like this; II Peter 2:21-22; "For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'" How graphic is that! Your returning to the lies of the past or the lies that the atheist is presently throwing at you, is compared to a dog eating its own vomit! I think you get the picture of how sick it is to turn and pay attention to the atheist with his bombastic and pretentious lies. A little leaven of lies will eventually leaven everything in your life. It's the foxes that nip at the vine that eventually kill it. The devil takes his time at sowing lies into your mind and before you know it, your back is against God.

The core of the atheists mocking is your faith. The essence of Hebrews 11 is the faith walk, our heroes of faith! Many walked by faith without ever seeing or obtaining the substance of it, yet they pressed on and were victorious. Everything a Christian does is to be done by faith. II Corinthians 5:7; "For we walk by faith, not by sight." I John 5:4; "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith." Hebrews 11:6 says; "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarded of those who diligently seek Him." Do you see it? An atheistic spirit mocks faith in God, His Word and His promises. We can't please God apart from faith.

The atheist is blinded by satan. **II Corinthians 4:4** says; "whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." **II Corinthians 6:14** talks about being unequally yoked with wickedness or lawlessness "do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" Lawlessness or wickedness in the Greek is anomia which means disobedience or sin. So, being a Christian, are you yoked with an atheistic mindset is some areas of your spiritual walk? We have to ask ourselves these hard questions. We have to know what and in whom we believe. Romans 3:18-25 I encourage you to hold fast to the Word of God and believe everything it says, if you need to repent of being seduced by the atheist, repent, and you will be forgiven.

