



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: October 2026

by Lee Shipp

WHEN THE SNAKE IS IN THE HOUSE

The Church is under constant attack by Satanic strategies, false teachers, and suspicious movements. These strategies of Satan seek to:

- ISOLATE BELIEVERS.
- UNDERMINE LEADERSHIP.
- DISCOURAGE GIVING.
- CLAIM SECRET TRUTHS OR SPECIAL REVELATIONS (OCCULTIC).
- CLAIM THEIR WAY OF DOING CHURCH IS THE ONLY WAY.

These are not spiritual innovations—they are Satan's attacks. Any movement that separates you from your leadership is intended to make you prey.

Remember: the devil will use Scripture. He will make his lies sound biblical and will make you question your standing and become suspicious of your pastors. But the Word is clear: go to your leadership, follow their faith, respect their calling, and remain in the Body.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:7-9, 17)

As a matter of reference, can you name a time when Jesus instructed any believer to leave one of the churches in Revelation? Some of these churches were awful. Now, I am not suggesting that believers are forbidden to move churches, but I do think we should consider how the Holy Spirit will lead us, so the Body of Christ does not incur damage.

THE PROTECTION OF THE BODY

According to Ephesians 4, deceivers are waiting for you, but the church is there to protect you. This passage reveals that Jesus ascended into heaven and gave the Church the gifts of the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher. The Holy Spirit operates through this divine order to promote the health, maturity, and fruit of the Body of Christ. The world is not a friend to the Body of Christ, and Satan has many strategies to bring havoc upon individual believers as well as the Body as a whole. With vigilance, we must never allow this to happen. By all means, we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

Regarding the protection we personally receive from the Body of Christ and why a believer must humble himself and submit to the Church, consider the exhortation in Ephesians 4: we are not to remain children, "...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ (Ephesians 4:14-15)."

1. When anything disturbs my peace and begins to toss me to and fro, I must turn to leadership. I should not allow confusion to isolate me from those God has appointed to watch over my soul.
2. When any doctrine tries to carry me away—seeking to remove me from my place in the body—I must go to leadership. I must allow that doctrine to be examined in light of Scripture and within the church's safety.
3. When men come to me appearing kind, concerned, and helpful, but their words make me question my soundness in Christ, make me suspicious of the church, or lead me to doubt the leadership God has placed in my life, I must go to leadership.

Deception often masquerades as concern, kindness, or spiritual insight. I must not allow someone's friendly appearance to draw me away from my place in the Body of Christ. God has given the church leadership to protect me from being tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

When the Church faces attacks and members are drawn away without consulting their leaders, you can be certain that Satan is taking them as prey.

I have observed the untold damage inflicted on families, children, and friendships when believers are deceived into movements that tell them they cannot even speak to their pastors—despite what the Scriptures teach about spiritual leadership: **"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation. ... Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."** (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

THE DEVIL WORKS IN CYCLES

Cults of isolation and deception keep reappearing in various forms. These cycles may include teachings on demon possession, distorted house-church movements, or abusive shepherding. Although the names and methods may change, they all lead to devastated lives, families, and children. Many of these movements are driven by women.

Satan is after God's order. When men fail to provide biblical headship in their homes and pastors fail to provide leadership in their churches, a door is opened. Women may then be positioned to lead the men, and the established order of leadership begins to be dismantled.

One of Satan's methods, beginning in the Garden, is to deceive the woman and then manipulate her into destroying the man. This method continues into the last days, as we see in 2 Timothy 3: **"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come ... For ... they ... creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."** (2 Timothy 3:1, 6-7).

When anyone claims to have a secret truth or special revelation—and says I need their book, tape, or teaching to receive it—I run!

Secret meetings, secret gifts, and books that claim to contain an enlightenment you lack—and insist that you need it to become powerful, spiritual, or fulfilled—should be clear warning signs. When these signs appear, you should go straight to your pastor for advice.

Someone may say, "But the book is full of Scripture!" That does not prove it is true. You can make Scripture say almost anything when you take it out of context. When the devil attacks Christians, the primary book he misuses is the Bible. The deceptive books he inspires will also be filled with biblical language and passages. The presence of Scripture alone does not prove that a teaching is sound; Scripture must be interpreted in its proper context and subjected to the discernment and protection God has established within the Church.

SATAN'S ATTACKS ON THE CHURCH ARE NOT NEW. SATAN MUST DO IT.

Satan must attack the church because he fears what God intends to accomplish through it. It is easy to discern what Satan fears most by observing what he attacks, both openly and secretly: THE CHURCH.

The movements we see today that draw people away from the organized Church and from SUBMISSION to God's divine order are devilish attacks. Those who advocate these movements are often deeply immature and undiscerning. As a result, they wreck people's lives and damage friendships and families.

Any movement that isolates itself from THE CHURCH, protests against THE CHURCH, rejects THE CHURCH's biblical doctrine and establishment, divides and criticizes THE CHURCH, or positions itself against THE CHURCH—whether due to abuse, church hurt, discipline, or another offense—is a satanic strategy to divide the Kingdom of God.

Any movement that judges a church that gathers in the name of Jesus, under the authority of His gospel, as illegitimate is a direct attack by Satan on that living organism—that wife Jesus died to have. They are NOT merely attacking the institution of the Church; they are attacking Christ Himself, just as Paul did when he persecuted the Church.

Any movement that directs people not to give—claiming that tithes and offerings are neither biblical nor practiced under the New Covenant—is a false prophet and a false teacher.

Any movement that discourages people in the Body of Christ from giving, providing support, contributing to missions, feeding the poor, promoting the gospel, and sending people into the world to preach the gospel in an organized and orderly manner is a direct attack by Satan. It attacks the generosity and spirit of giving within the Body of Christ, making its members calloused and covetous and closing their hearts and hands to God's work.

Any movement that seeks to separate or divide the Church is a direct effort by Satan to divide the Kingdom of God. Any movement claiming that it alone is the only way is false. Any movement that makes itself the standard for what God accepts is false.

Any movement that separates you from your leadership is a direct effort by Satan to make you his victim.

Whatever enters your life and disrupts God's order—whether it keeps you from approaching your leadership or separates you from the Christian brotherhood—is clearly a Satanic attack intended to isolate, deceive, and bewitch you.

ANY MOVEMENT THAT:

- **SWAYS YOU FROM YOUR STANDING;**
- **CAUSES YOU TO QUESTION YOUR STATE OF BEING IN CHRIST.**
- **UNDERMINES YOUR BELIEFS IN THE LORD;**
- **MAKES YOU UNSTABLE;**
- **CAUSES YOU TO QUESTION WHERE GOD HAS PLACED YOU.**
- **MAKES YOU SUSPICIOUS OF THE CHURCH OR ITS LEADERSHIP; AND**
- **DOES NOT SEND YOU TO YOUR PASTORS AND CHURCH FOR COUNSEL**

IS AN EFFORT BY THE DEVIL TO ISOLATE, DECEIVE, AND TAKE YOU AS HIS VICTIM.

We are commanded to remain connected to the Church and to the pastors who speak the Word of God over us. We are instructed to consider their lives and follow their faith.

Follow their faith. They are not perfect men. They have weaknesses and flaws, but their faith remains worthy of recognition and respect. They may have sins and failures. Their failure to live out what they preach does not corrupt the truth they proclaim. The truth of God's Word does not become false because the person proclaiming it has failed to live up to it perfectly. Moses broke the Law, but his failure did not discredit the Law. In the same way, a leader's personal weakness does not invalidate the Word of God.

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