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TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

June 2022

## FROM US TO YOU

It's not summertime yet, but here on Long Island things are really heating up. The weather is one of the few things that most people can agree on. In this hot political climate of today, there is not much else. America is a house divided. And as Jesus Christ said long ago, “*If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand*” (Mark 3:24-25 NIV). And if a church or a country is divided against itself, it won't last. America is a divided country these days. However, it didn't start out that way. We often watch an old television show called “Wagon Train.” It graphically demonstrates the problems that late nineteenth century settlers had in making this country the richest, most powerful nation in the world. That's why people from all over the planet want to come here to live. We have all the comforts of modern life in America. However, imagine what it must have been like for early settlers traveling across America when there were no planes, no cars, no motels, no microwaves, no air conditioning or central heating, no smartphones or computers, no fast food, no modern cooking facilities, no supermarkets. If you wanted a drink of water these days all you have to do is get a glass and turn on the faucet. Even as late as the 1860's, those wanting clean drinking water had to find a stream, a river, or dig a well. If you wanted something to eat, you had to either kill an animal or plant seeds and grow vegetables. And medical care was rare and painful. They had no anesthesia. They did not even have much for a headache.

There's lots of grumbling of modern life these days. However, look how far we've come in America. Yes, we know, things are going backwards. And many of the blessings we used to have are decaying like rotten fruit. But perhaps there's a metaphor here. For America was blessed so much by God because it started out as a Christian nation and remained that way for many years. Then things began to change around the middle of the twentieth century. That's when the Korean War ended in a stalemate. Then a rebellion crept in around America. We could hear it in the music. “Rock and Roll” became popular, inspired by African tribal culture. Prayer and religious instruction were taken out of public schools. Abortion was made legal, abstract art became fashionable, and the drug culture was thought to be the new trendy thing. Up until then America had won all of its wars, except Korea. God had fought for us just as He had fought for Israel so long ago (Joshua 23:10). Then came the Vietnam War. It was the first war that America lost. God was not fighting for the United States anymore.

Then things got worse. And this once great nation, that prided itself on its Christian heritage, slid deeper down a slippery slope into pornography, gambling casinos, sleazy television shows, televised blasphemy, and live sex acts on stage. Homosexuality is not only condoned in the media, education, and psychiatry, it is sometimes promoted. Now gay marriage has become the law of the land. That is despite God's warning. “*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually*

*immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NIV). Society has become used to the slippery slope toward Hell. It is like the old example of cooking a frog. Put the frog into hot water, and it will immediately jump out. However, put it into cold water and gradually turn up the heat, and you will cook the frog.

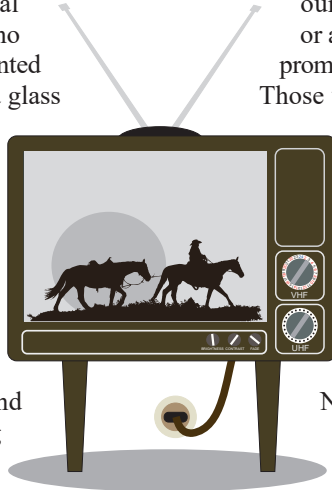
That's Satan's technique! He slowly turns up the heat. For example, compare television shows of the nineteen fifties and sixties to today. Actors never used double beds even when they were supposed to be married. They had single beds. Just a few decades later you not only see them in bed together, but unclothed and embracing. We don't watch modern entertainment shows, so we don't know how bad it has gotten today. But even some of the advertisements turn

our stomachs, especially when they show two gay men or a couple of lesbians kissing each other. It's designed to promote the ideas that such is normal and acceptable behavior.

Those who disagree are treated as fools, and hypocrites. Yet the Bible says, “*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools*” (Romans 1:20-22 NIV).

Therefore, “*in the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them*” (Romans 1:27-32 NIV). Americans are suddenly shocked that conditions have gotten so bad lately. God has been abandoned by America, and many formally Christian nations, and this is the result. Sin is like cancer. It spreads like yeast (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). It's too late for America as a whole. However, you as an individual, can repent of your sins and return to God, through Jesus Christ, God's Son (1 Timothy 2:5-6). And get off of that fast train to Hell before it reaches its destination!

In the Lord's service, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



# The Fisherman, the Mousetrap, and the Devil

By Anne Kaestner

**QUESTION:** What do the fisherman, the mousetrap, and the devil have in common? **ANSWER:** They all use bait! Until we got our adorable little cat, Sasha, we had a mouse problem in the apartment we lived in when we first got married. It's been decades since then and Sasha eventually died. We live in a house these days with two cats, Tiger and Greta. However, we learned, through our first cat, Sasha, that just the smell of a cat seems to keep the rodents away. But, for awhile back in those days, those menacing little creatures were really making my life miserable whenever I was at home. So my husband, Eric, bought some mousetraps. There were basically two types we used. The first type was the traditional form with a spring that snaps back and kills the mouse as soon as it goes for the bait. The second type didn't kill the mouse. It used glue instead. So when the mouse went to nibble at the cheese its feet got caught on the glue, and we found out very fast that we had a mouse caught in the trap! Since the mouse was still alive, it really put up a noisy fight. I never realized the temper tantrum one little mouse could throw once it got caught in a sticky situation, and there was no way out! Both types of traps used one common ingredient, bait!

Now the mouse may have thought for a little while that he was fooling us by finding that big hunk of cheese that we had so conveniently left for him. Perhaps he thought that it was a crumb that had fallen from one of our dinner plates, and we hadn't noticed. Or perhaps he had thought we were kindhearted toward such tiny terrorists as himself, and had left the cheese for him, so he wouldn't go hungry. But that was not our intention either. We had one goal in mind when depositing that bait in the trap, and that was to destroy the mouse!

Have you ever felt like a mouse caught in a trap? That bait was sitting right there, almost within arms reach. All you had to do was lean forward and grab for it. And that bait to you, looked just as mouth watering and tasty as that big hunk of cheese did to the mouse! Perhaps there was an element of danger involved in reaching for that bait, but in some strange way, that only made the whole adventure even more appealing. You were thinking to yourself how much you were going to outsmart the other guy, and come out on top. But it's only a matter of time until that spring snaps down on you, or you get caught red-faced with your feet in the glue and no place to go! What is that pot of gold at the end of your rainbow that you would give anything and everything to have? For the actor or actress it could be a part in a Broadway musical. For the lonely single woman, it may be somebody else's rich husband. For the preacher it could be that big fancy church, and national recognition from his peers. For the athlete it may be the gold at the Olympics. For the businessman, it could be a chance to move up the corporate ladder. Or for the angry youth from the bad urban neighborhood, it may be money, power, and prestige that he feels will only come to him one way, though the use of violence, crime, and drugs!

Some of you will even seem to make it big for awhile. You may start making the money you want so desperately. You even start feeling that you are getting more respect from other people, whether it's brought on through fear and intimidation, or admiration that you have achieved your goals. You may go weeks, months, even years feeling like you're really getting ahead, and the grand prize is just a heartbeat away. And then suddenly your feet get caught in the glue! For others of you, it will be too late. That first grab for the bait could be your last. Just as you're feeling on top of the world, and smarter than the other guy, that spring could come reeling down on you at any time,

and it will be too late. I can even remember one time that one of our annoying little intruders actually managed to get the cheese out of the mousetrap without springing it! He must have really thought of himself as being so wise. But we rebaited the trap and the same mouse was caught dead in it just a couple of days later!

Back in the 1970's there was a lot of publicity surrounding the death of Nelson Rockefeller, a very wealthy, married, political leader, former governor of New York State, and Vice President of the United States. He had suddenly died of a heart attack in the bed of his mistress. The story made front page headlines. I was working for an investment banking and brokerage firm at the time, near Wall Street, and I can remember one of the young associates speaking of the man's death. He was so impressed with the whole episode that he remarked to me, "What a way to go!" But far from feeling any kind of admiration for the man, all I could think of were the words Jesus used in Matthew 16:26 KJV, "*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?*" And what would it profit you if you gain the whole world, and then burn in Hell throughout all eternity? Our time on earth is just like the blink of an eye to God compared with eternity. But once our spirits leave our bodies, and we move out of this dimension into eternity, our destination has already been established forever, and the silver cord (Ecclesiastes 12:6) that connects our soul to our body is cut, there's no turning back. So, if you know your heart isn't right with God, don't wait until it is too late to repent. The Bible says, "*...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Corinthians 6:2 KJV).

Many of you that are reading this article are already true Christians. However, you have been taught the doctrine that once you have been through the Born Again (see John 3:3) experience you are saved forever and no matter what you do after that you will still make it to Heaven. "*For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire*" (Jude 1:4-7 NIV).

Have you been taught that you can sin a little bit every day and still make it to Heaven? The Bible states the contrary, "*Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous*" (1 John 3:6-7 KJV). Do you love the things of this world? Then you are not a follower of Christ, and He does not know you! The Bible says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*" (1 John 2:15-17 KJV).

Jesus has stated, speaking of His followers, "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*" (John 17:16 KJV). Jesus said,



“...My kingdom is not of this world...” (John 18:36 KJV). Who is the god of this world? Satan, that’s who. He is also known as the “...prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2 KJV). If your god is a materialistic god, Satan is the one you are serving. Do you think he has been good to you so far? The Devil’s tactics have not changed since Eve bit into that juicy fruit in the Garden of Eden. It looked so good to her [the lust of the eye]. And when she bit into it, it tasted good as well [the lust of the flesh]. And on top of all of the rest, the devil had even promised her that it would make her wise, like God [the pride of life] (Genesis 3:5)! And nothing happened when Eve took that fruit. God had not given this world system to her. He had given it to her husband Adam! So on the surface it looked like the fruit was going to be good for them. When the fisherman baits his tackle and hurls it into the water, that worm looks so tasty and nourishing to the poor little hungry fish that is swimming by. But when the fish bites into the worm, there’s a hook hidden inside. And instead of the fish having a nice juicy worm for dinner, guess who’s going to be on the fisherman’s dinner plate that night? Eve ate her fruit, but it had a spiritual hook inside. And that fruit was Eve’s bait. But when Eve grabbed for it, she herself became the bait, for her husband Adam! You see, Adam was too smart to fall for the Devil’s lies about the fruit (1 Timothy 2:14). But there was one thing that meant more to Adam than anything else in the world, his wife Eve!

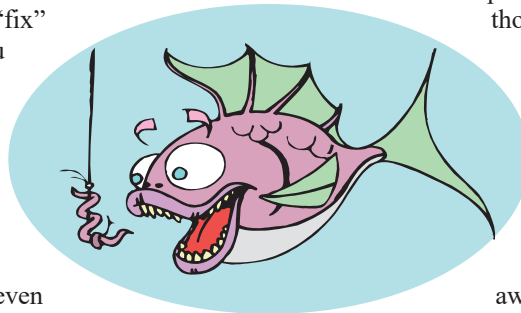
Would you sell your soul to the devil for a piece of fruit? Some people would. He has distorted their value system to the point that young men and women will actually prostitute themselves on the street for enough money for a “fix” of whatever drug they may need. Perhaps you would never do that! But the devil knows what your weakness is, and what it will take to bait his evil hook, and your name is on it! What is there that means more to you than God? Is it your family? Your career? Money? Power or influence in the community? Your spouse? Your health? That last one may sound strange to you, but Satan can even take a wish for something good and turn it around to your own detriment. He’s that shrewd! The blind man may say, “God, if you’ll only give me back my eyesight, I’ll serve you.” The church woman may say, “God I just can’t praise you and serve you until you save my husband.” The single girl may say, “Lord, give me a good Christian husband, and then I promise I’ll live for you as you want.” The drunk may say, “God take away this alcoholism from me, and I’ll do anything you say.” What’s your excuse?

For me, it was not having a baby. I just wanted what other women had. But to no avail. I’d ask the Lord, “What did I do to deserve this? What does it take to get You to love me enough to give me a child?” I spent years begging God for this one thing, pleading before Him, trying to reason with Him, accusing Him, promising Him. I tried everything I could to get Him to yield to my will. I cried enough tears to fill a bathtub. I spent hours praying over and over again. But instead of the situation getting better, it got worse! Everyone was having children but me. And it seemed that the two places that I felt the strongest spiritual attacks were at church, and at my parent’s house! I’d go to church to try to get closer to God, but all I would see were pregnant women and babies. After my one and only pregnancy ended in a miscarriage I was constantly being asked by the other church ladies when I was going to get pregnant again. Each question felt like a knife that was piecing my heart.

Christmas, Easter, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, every family get together that my parents would have, my mother would always invite another young woman to join us who was either pregnant or had her young baby with her. And guess what the main topic of

conversation was at every meal? And right when I thought I’d taken just about all the pain one person could ever experience (not counting the physical pain endured during countless tests at the doctor’s office and hospital), I’d get an invitation in the mail to some other woman’s baby shower, and I was expected to buy a gift and attend. At one point I decided that I just wasn’t going to be a glutton for punishment anymore, and chose not to attend. Later on that day, it was impressed upon me by family members that I had missed out on a wonderful party, and everyone had had such a good time. In fact, they just couldn’t understand why I had not attended! It was strongly hinted at that I was anti-social or snooty toward the other people because I didn’t want to mix in with them.

Not only had Satan found the right bait for his trap as far as I was concerned, but he had also found a way to blame God for all my problems! After all, I was naive enough at that time to believe that if the hurts were being inflicted at me through church people, then they must be coming from God! If most of my pain was encountered in church, which is God’s house, He must be the one who was hurting me, right? Wrong! It was definitely an eye-opening experience to find out that much that goes on in churches and religious institutions today has nothing at all to do with God and salvation. One church even had a beautiful baby contest! For just as it was in the days of Jesus with the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Satan has taken over many of the churches of this nation. And for the true child of God, the two greatest stumbling blocks the devil can use against you are those he used against Jesus Himself; your family, and your house of worship! However, he will only be able to do this when those institutions are in a backslidden state.



What is that bait that the devil has dangling under your nose? Is it resentment that your wife, husband, or children have not received salvation yet? Satan will tell you that God doesn’t really love you at all. If He did, he’d save your spouse, or children. You will grab for that bait filled with bitterness and anger, and it will constantly eat away at your very soul. And yet all the time the

reason that your family has not gotten to know the Lord is maybe due to your bad example! Is it a desire for better health? There’s nothing wrong with that alone. But Satan can even use that desire against you if you put it before God. Do you love Jesus only during the good times, when He’s blessing you? Or do you love Him anyway, during the good times and the bad? That bait that Satan is holding out for you today could be anything and everything he can use that will come between you and the Lord. Grab for those riches, but there’s a hook, and sooner or later, Satan is going to reel you in! Sell your soul for that power and prestige, but you’ll never know when that great big mousetrap is going to slam shut on you, and you will be thrown out with the trash; you and the bait it took to get you! Hang on to that bitterness and anger you feel toward God because he hasn’t been doing your will lately, and you will be like the monkey caught by the trappers in the jungle. He stuck his hand in the cage to grab the banana. But he couldn’t get his hand back out with the banana in it. So instead of letting go of the banana, so that he could be free, that dumb monkey hung onto the banana until the trappers came and got him! He couldn’t eat it. It was making him miserable that he couldn’t get what he wanted. However, he just wouldn’t let go of that one piece of fruit! There could be a bushel of bananas on the next tree. But that monkey would not let go of the one he wanted and free himself to get them. That bitterness, anger, and resentment could be your banana. You may even have your hands right on it. But until you let go of it, you will never be free!

I let go of my own will decades ago, and realized that if I was going to really live for Jesus, He was **(Continued On Page 4)**

## The Fisherman, the Mousetrap, and... (Continued From Page 3)

going to have to be the one who called the shots in my life, not me. I knelt down before Him on my living room floor and prayed, "Not my will, Lord, but thine!" The next day I woke up feeling wonderful! The anger, resentment, and envy was gone. I had given them all to Jesus. What's more, my spiritual eyes were opened, and I could see how far from Christ Christian churches in this country had fallen. I could see the hypocrisy in so much that should be holy. It wasn't long after that we started this ministry. In fact, we started it in the second bedroom of our apartment that I had thought was going to be our nursery. Actually it was a nursery, for little "babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1), God's children, not ours. The letters would come in from prison inmates telling us how much our ministry had meant to them. And I would type as if I was feeding little infants on the milk of the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:20). If I'd had a baby of my own, I never would have realized how backslidden the church was. And we never would have begun this ministry. In fact, if I had my own way about things back then, my husband would never have gotten the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and in our little two-bedroom apartment, which is barely big enough for two people and a cat, we would not have had any room for children anyway. In total, it would have been a complete disaster!

Now I have the joy of looking forward to so much God has promised us for the future, including success for this ministry. Things always turn out for the best when we put the Lord first in our lives. And even when we don't get our own way about things happening exactly when we want them to, in the long run that just turns out to be another reason to praise the Lord! Once I let go of that banana of hurt, anger, and self-pity, I was able to be truly free in Christ. I wouldn't go back in time now and change a thing that has happened to me, even if I could. Because now I have the best kind of fruit of all, the fruit of the Spirit of God, and the promise from Him, that all the other blessings will follow along too, in His Holy, blessed time!

My eyes were also open to another type of bait which had been a trap for me for years. On the surface, movies and television shows may not seem like a bait, but they are a deceptive and subtle one. Remember what God had said about the devil, who had entered the body of a snake to tempt Eve, "...the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made..." (Genesis 3:1 NIV). Jesus said that the devil is a liar. He told the religious hypocrites in His day, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44 NIV). You see ever since mankind rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, God is not running this world, Satan is. All the important industries of the world are run by the devil, not God. Satan started out as a perfect Heavenly angel, named Lucifer. He was created by God to serve Him. God made the angels the same way he made us. He didn't want beings that were programmed to love and serve Him, like robots. He wanted a race of angels who would love and serve Him because He is worthy. Consequently, like humans, they had free choice. After awhile Lucifer was a powerful, wealthy angel, and he became jealous of God. He was able to influence other angels to side with him. "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that

ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (Revelation 12:7-9 NIV).

All the great industries of this world are controlled by him! That includes the media, fashion, politics, medicine, education, the military, government, etc. That's why the world is in the mess it is in right now. When a nation puts Christ first, He overrides the powers of the devil. That's why everything looked so good years ago and America became a great power. God blessed us because many of those who came before us loved and served God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Even those who didn't, had more respect for Him than people have these days. That's why the world, and especial America, is falling apart. People have been giving into the bait dangling before them. When the Jews in biblical times served God, things went well for them and God fought for them (Deuteronomy 1:30) to defeat their enemies. But when they took Satan's bait and befriended idol worshiping nations He rejected them. Instead of turning to God, people then, like today, were turning to the occult instead. And it makes the Lord very angry. He said, "Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have labored at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause terror. All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by. That is all they can do for you—these you have labored with and trafficked with since childhood. Each of them goes on in his error; there is not one that can save you" (Isaiah 47:12-15 NIV).

Frankly, I'm convinced that it is too late for most nations in this world to return to God. Time is too short. We are living in the last of the last days. Only Israel will return to Christ at the end after the devil tries to destroy it. And only then, one third of the Jews will survive. And they will call out to God, in desperation. And Jesus will return to them. "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands?"

Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends" (Zechariah 13:6 KJV). Worldly nations may not return to God, but individuals can. Resist the bait of the devil and, if you haven't already done so, repent of your sins and turn to Christ before it is too late. "'Come now, let us reason together,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.' For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her—but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them" (Isaiah 1:18-23 NIV).

The love of this world (see 1 John 2:15-16) is like the Titanic. Don't go down with the ship! Jesus is reaching to you with His nail scarred hand. He is saying, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV).

