

Flip Wilson was a famous comedian from the 1960s to 1980s. He hosted the second highest-rated show on network television for a time. One of his famous quotes, “The Devil Made Me Do It!” became commonly repeated among American viewers. We all laughed at the impish and devious statement that excused or attempted to downplay the effect of certain behaviors. This phrase became a cynical escape from the reality of mistakes and offenses.

Was it a coincidence that this phrase made headlines in an age where morality took a nose dive? Hippies promoted many controversial things, such as free sex (*Make Love not War*), drugs (*Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*), and rebellion to authority (*Vietnam war, employers, parents*).

Cigarette companies spent billions to ensure that people kept buying their harmful products, paying off politicians who claimed there was no evidence of harm. The rights of the unborn were terminated so that women could claim that the life within them was part of their bodies, taking upon themselves the right to choose what to do with that “tissue,” making themselves like a god. Prayer in public schools was banned. Even talking about God and the Bible was prohibited despite being the foundation of American education.

Most Americans appreciated the music of the times (the Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Kiss, Billy Joel, Bruce Springsteen, and a thousand more entertainers). There was a common thread among all the revered and even worshipped musicians and performers: divorce, drugs, alcoholism, and hiding reality. Queen’s Freddie Mercury changed from pursuing a heterosexual relationship with his best friend to a homosexual binge that fostered his career, separating from his colleagues who still supported him throughout his meteoric rise to fame. Eventually he died of AIDS & possibly a broken heart. The King, Elvis Presley, one of the most worshipped icons of our society, died at age 42, again succumbing to drugs, alcohol, and alienating the family he loved so dearly.

Today, we see what was formerly unthinkable being accepted as normal. Parents lost their right to prevent their minor children from an abortion or gender change. Divorce is not only an option, but marriage is exchanged for cohabitation and prenuptial agreements. Weddings are an expensive performance and entertainment venue rather than a solemn ceremony, promising a life-long commitment (“*Til death do us part*”). So-called experts encourage transgender operations using synthetic drugs which are produced to replace substances that are banned from sports and daily life (unless there is a health risk). The side effects are enormously detrimental. Immigration was once a bipartisan concern to protect our borders and promote quality citizenship. It has become a polarizing issue where some allow criminals sanctuary and protection despite their murder, theft, and human trafficking! Some politicians fight for these criminals’ rights without any consolation to the victims devastated by their actions.

Recently there have been multiple shootings nationwide, many with assailants associated with transgender. A famous conservative activist was assassinated, and a significant portion of society cheered, mocked, or blamed the victim and his peers. This victim promoted free speech and solicited conversation with those who vehemently opposed his ideologies. He welcomed opposing viewpoints, encouraging his opponents to speak their minds and give the rationale for their strong beliefs. After the murder, even some of the victim’s opponents admitted that the man took the proper approach to solving the discord and rift that exists among Americans.

How did America come to the point that when one man speaks, his opponents automatically take the opposite viewpoint. How did our society come to the point where violence is not only accepted but promoted when opposing views and actions arise. Just a few years ago, a man who abandoned his wife and kids was caught in the act of another crime. He allegedly died at the hands of a policeman, but it was proven that he had overdosed on drugs. He was given three

national memorial services by the government at the time, and this became the springboard for a movement that raised billions of dollars which was squandered by homosexual and transgender people opposing heterosexual marriage and norms. The rhetoric was so strong that it became almost a travesty to be a white American, and America itself was branded an evil nation that has never done good in the world. Those supporting these things allowed billions of dollars of violent damage throughout the country. Recently we saw Tesla Dealerships destroyed, and law enforcement officers attacked. There are many more examples.

Possibly you are angry that I bring these matters to the surface, but I ask you to consider the huge turn of events over the past 60 years. America is on the brink of civil war again with one side condoning and using violence, slander, name-calling, and bullying. They accuse their opponents of the very actions that they themselves perform (Romans 2:1-2). They claim their right to “free speech” to say whatever they want no matter how one sided or unsupported by facts, ignoring the repercussions to those they attack. At the same time, they accuse their opponents of “hate speech” based on disagreeing with them.

Frankly, I believe the Devil (and his minions) made them do it! Unfortunately, this is not a joke or a comedic reprieve. The sharp and rapid degradation of American morality and the violent methods promoted and utilized go far beyond “right and wrong.” It is a spiritual battle raging among us<sup>1</sup> which is spearheaded and driven by the devil. The devil is a spiritual being and the word, devil, comes from “diabolos,” meaning accuser<sup>2</sup>. The devil’s name is Satan, which means adversary. He is the prince of the world<sup>3</sup>, the god of this age<sup>4</sup>, and he walks around as a roaring lion seeking people to devour<sup>5</sup>. His primary goal is to steal, kill, and destroy<sup>6</sup>. His greatest weapon is deceit<sup>7</sup>, because he is a liar, even the father of lies,<sup>8</sup> making it difficult to discern what is true versus counterfeit and false. Disobedience<sup>9</sup>, betrayal<sup>10</sup>, and hatred<sup>8</sup> are his trademarks.

The devil will use any means necessary to hinder or destroy God’s purpose on this earth. He even has the power of death<sup>11</sup>. Why? Satan desires to be worshipped as God. He began as an angel of light (“Lucifer”) before God, the Almighty, but was not satisfied with submission and needed to rule over others<sup>12</sup>. His nature was injected into all of us. Do you recognize the satanic nature within? Dishonoring parents, sexual immorality, impurity, homosexuality, drunkenness, debauchery, greed, idolatry, extortion, witchcraft, human trafficking, anger, hatred, rage, malice, murder, jealousy, envy, discord, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, slander, perjury, profanity, and covetousness to name a few characteristics within us<sup>13</sup>.

Truthfully, looking at the outward condition of the world can be overwhelming and depressing. But there is hope! Jesus Christ lived 2000+ years ago as God and man. He died for our sins, and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), defeating Satan<sup>14</sup>. Jesus said, “I beheld Satan as lightning falling out of heaven”<sup>15</sup>. Jesus, being God, was the only Person in whom Satan had no power<sup>16</sup>. In fact, the Messiah, Christ, not only came to redeem all people who believe on Him, but also to judge sin and its author, Satan<sup>17</sup>.

The good news, the gospel, we preach is that Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, came to open our eyes, that we may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that we may receive remission of sins and inheritance among those that are sanctified by faith in Him (Act 26:18). God’s purpose is to conform us to His image and likeness (Romans 8:29). If God is speaking to you, if you hear His voice, you must repent and turn your heart to Him (Acts 3:19).

<sup>1</sup>Ephesians 6:12; <sup>2</sup>Revelation 12:9-10; <sup>3</sup>John 12:31; <sup>4</sup>2 Corinthians 4:4; <sup>5</sup>1 Peter 5:8; <sup>6</sup>John 10:10; <sup>7</sup>John 8:44; <sup>8</sup>Ephesians 5:12-13; <sup>9</sup>Ephesians 2:2; <sup>10</sup>John 13:27; <sup>11</sup>Matthew 10:28, Isaiah 14:12-17; <sup>12</sup>Matthew 4:8-9; <sup>13</sup>Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:5-8; 1 Timothy 1:10; <sup>14</sup>John 12:31; <sup>15</sup>Luke 10:18; <sup>16</sup>John 14:30; <sup>17</sup>John 14:7.