

## *The Holy War* Study Guide – Week 2

### ***Diabolus Secures His Place and Pervades Mansoul with His Influence***

What primary Bible passages come to your mind as you read this assignment?

To what degree does the story accurately reflect Bible teaching?

Diabolus immediately attempts to strengthen his hold on Mansoul. He wants fallen man to be all his and beyond hope of restoration, and therefore, aims to transform men's passing acquaintance with him and fond affections for him into a permanent relationship that will actively resist any recovery effort by Shaddai. Paul refers to such encroachments as "strongholds" that believers need to pull down (2 Corinthians 10:4).

Some of his subtle strategies appear in the opening paragraphs of the chapter. What early steps does Diabolus take to strengthen his position with the citizens of Mansoul, effectively rendering them dead to Shaddai's things (Ephesians 2:1-4)?

Though Mr. Understanding had initially assented to the invitation for Diabolus to enter, Diabolus seeks to undermine Mr. Understanding's credibility within Mansoul. What is it that perturbs Diabolus about Mr. Understanding?

How does Diabolus go about "darkening" Mr. Understanding?

Mr. Recorder (Conscience) had also assented to Diabolus' intrusion. In what ways does Bunyan describe the character and function of the conscience?

What Bible passage defines the role of the conscience, even in unbelieving men?

How does Diabolus discredit the work of Mr. Conscience?

Diabolus effectively silences or discredits the work of Mr. Conscience so that the town received his rumblings with only minimal impact – “slight, neglect, and despise.” He was able to get Mr. Conscience to discredit himself by unsaying and denying what he had earlier affirmed (“uneven was he now in his doings”).

Another strategy of Diabolus was to place doubts in the citizens’ minds about Shaddai Himself. What specific accusations against Shaddai does he make that would naturally raise questions about Him?

Notice also how immediately after accusing Shaddai of the worst of intentions and concessions, Diabolus hushes the citizens by spinning his own intentions for the populace as the most noble and charitable.

In the first chapter, we met Mr. Will-be-will as one of the delegation that had met to hear Diabolus at Ear-gate. At this point, Bunyan introduces us to him more thoroughly. Mr. Will-be-will represents man’s will, and he is a unique man of high-standing in the town. The will of man is the governing seat of choice – the seat from which man deliberates, chooses, and makes determinations. In fact, Lord Will-be-will was among the first to consent to Diabolus’ initial appeal. Notice how distorted and entrenched the will of fallen man is: “In fallen man, the will is not subject to the law of God, but [is] obstinately opposed to it, and [is] therefore a fit deputy for the devil” (*The Holy War*, illustrated with notes by George Burder, Reiner edition, 49).

Mr. Lord Will-be-will’s clerk, Mr. Mind, and his deputy, Mr. Vile-Affection, headline an impressive list of characters that rise to prominence in Mansoul to do Diabolus’ bidding. The remaining pages of the chapter remind one of the more than two-dozen lists in Paul’s epistles that delineate the works of the flesh with graphic specificity.

Compile a list of some or all of these characters and attempt to match each with either a Bible character or a specific Bible verse identifying it as sin.

The magnitude, diversity, and pervasiveness of sinful characters represents the total overthrow of the fallen man. Everything about him has been corrupted by the fall. How should Shaddai respond to such a radical ruin of what He had made so beautiful? (rhetorical question)

At the conclusion of the longer list of city officials, why do you think Bunyan takes a moment to describe Mr. Incredulity as the eldest, and Mr. Atheism as the youngest of the company?

Diabolus' three seemingly impregnable, strategically-located strongholds offer interesting spiritual insight. The strongholds reflect attitudes that disable the ministry of the Word in the soul. What connections might one observe between the intent of the stronghold, their locations, and their governors?

- Defiance - Governor Spite-God – “close by the Eye-gate”
- Midnight-hold - Governor Love-no-light – “hard by the old castle”
- Sweet-sin-hold - Governor Love-flesh – “in the market place”

Mr. No-truth performed the diabolical task of defacing the image of Shaddai in Mansoul – the best representation of Shaddai that existed anywhere in the world. What result of the fall is being illustrated by this account?