

The Devices of the Devil

2 Corinthians 2:11

*Lest Satan should take advantage of us;
for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

We are charged with knowing our adversary and the devices or schemes used to divest us of eternal life. This means that we need to know him and know what ways he will attack us.

The purpose of this study is to consider the various means that we are approached or influenced by our adversary and his tools, and how we need to resist or overcome them.

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Class 1. Our Adversary the Devil

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

WHO IS OUR ADVERSARY

What do we know about Satan? In the Bible there is a spiritual being with personality who is in opposition to our salvation. There are multiple names that he uses. In Revelation 20:2 he is identified as Satan, the devil, the dragon, and the serpent of old. The name "Satan" is a Hebrew word that means "Opponent", while in the New Testament he is also called the Devil, which means in Greek "false accuser". The dragon and serpent of old takes us back to Genesis 3 and the Garden.

There are additional references in the Bible to a spiritual opponent that we regard as Satan. In the Old Testament, the name "Belial" refers to destruction or perdition, and is an offhand reference to Satan used to describe men who do evil. In the New Testament, we read about the prince of this world in John 12:31, the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians 2:2, and the god of this age in 2 Corinthians 4:4. One reference (found in Isaiah 14:12 in the KJV only) to the king of Babylon as "Lucifer" is mistakenly identified as Satan.

WHAT IS HIS POWER

The Bible speaks of the power of Satan succinctly in Hebrews 2:14b: (Jesus) *Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.* Satan's power of death is because of sin (The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law 1 Corinthians 15:56). Thus all who are slaves of sin are the possessions of Satan (1 John 5:19). He is the strong man whom Jesus bound; we are the possessions Jesus took from him (Matthew 12:29).

Satan's other power is the power of accusation. He is called the accuser of brethren in Revelation 12:10. We see him making accusation against Job in Job 1-2, against Joshua in Zechariah 3:1, and against Peter in Luke 22:31.

QUESTIONS

What are the four times/books Satan appears in the Old Testament?

Where does Satan appear in the New Testament?

What are some false ideas about Satan?

What power did Jesus have that He said demonstrated His authority over Satan (Matthew 12:26-28)?

What accusations does Satan make?

Class 2. The Serpent in the Garden

Genesis 3:1a *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.*

THE FOUR PART ASSAULT

When Satan deceived Eve (1 Tim. 2:14) he used a series of tactics that undermined and inverted the morality of the day. Consider that at the beginning of the day that Adam and Eve sinned, it was evil to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Yet when Satan finished, that morality had changed in the eyes of Adam and Eve.

First, He made what was clearly evil seem less evil. By suggesting that the It is still wrong, but is it really that wrong? (2 Corinthians 11:12-15, Romans 1:25-27). Satan suggests that they would surely not die; perhaps meaning that they would not physically die, the sin was not that bad.

Second, He made what sounded evil sound less evil by changing the impact of the word death, and substituting the term “wise” for sin. By changing the terms of understanding, he was able to change understanding itself.

Third, He changed the minds and hearts of Adam and of Eve in the identification of their adversary. Satan was able to convince them that God was in the wrong for wanting to keep wisdom from them.

It is at this point that Eve considered Satan’s points, and then the power of the world kicked in. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life pushed Eve to sin, and subsequently Adam as will. We might consider that Satan solidified this victory by getting Adam, Eve, and all of their descendants to believe that this was normal, and thereby to live with sin.

We can see this scheme used today to change morality in the world around us. Consider how it could be applied to abortion, promiscuity, homosexuality, pornography, atheism, or drinking.

QUESTIONS

What does it mean that Satan appeared in the form of the serpent?

Did Adam and Eve die when they ate the fruit?

What did it mean to become wise?

Is death a natural part of God’s creation?

Class 3. Jesus, Satan and the World

Matthew 4:1 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

LED INTO THE WILDERNESS

The Bible says that God cannot be tempted (James 1:13). Yet when God became flesh, He was tempted in that flesh by Satan. Luke 4:1-13 tells us that Satan tempted Jesus with three temptations: turning stones into bread; showing Him the world and offering it if He would bow down to Satan; and suggesting that He step down from the temple peak and be carried by the angels.

TEMPTED IN ALL WAYS AS WE ARE

It is important to see that these three temptations are parallel to what occurred to Eve in the Garden. In 1 John 2 we are told that all that is of the world is the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Consider how these statements parallel what Jesus and Eve experienced:

1 JOHN 2:16	EVE	JESUS
<i>LUST OF THE FLESH</i>	<i>the woman saw that the tree was good for food</i>	(Satan said) <i>"command this stone to become bread"</i>
<i>LUST OF THE EYES</i>	<i>it was pleasant to the eyes</i>	(Satan) <i>showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory"</i>
<i>PRIDE OF LIFE</i>	<i>a tree desirable to make one wise</i>	(Satan said) <i>"throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you'"</i>

It is of the greatest important that we understand that this is the manner in which Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet was without sin (Heb. 4:15). Paul states that Jesus is God manifested in the flesh, and that He was justified in the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:16). This temptation speaks to that justification.

QUESTIONS

What made each of the things offered by Satan a true temptation? Meaning, what about them was tempting to Christ?

How did Jesus overcome temptation in each case?

What can we learn about overcoming temptation from Jesus?

Did Satan tempt Jesus on other occasions?

Class 4. The Lust of the Flesh

Galatians 5:16 *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

THE FLESH

What does the Bible mean when it speaks about the flesh? Often times the word “flesh” (GR. *Sarx*) is translated as “carnal”; carnal things are sometimes called worldly or natural as well (1 Cor. 2:14-3:1). Being made in the image of God we possess a nature that is not singular; we have a soul, spirit and flesh (1 Thes. 5:23). It is often that our spiritual self is battling against our fleshly self (Matt. 26:4).

Flesh has desire. Things that feel good; things that make us happy. This desire can be seen in the flesh of the animal, which lacks a soul, and is not made in the image of God. The beast merely acts on its fleshly desire. When people only seek to satisfy their flesh, they too are called beasts (2 Pet. 2:12, Jude 10). Jesus, as God in the flesh, was also subject to the desires of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). Yet Jesus was able to exercise control over His desires, and thereby did not sin. His ability to do so is seen in Luke 4:3-4, and it is revealed there that He overcame temptation by Spiritual means. Jesus walked in the Spirit, and did not give in to the lusts of the flesh.

The lust of the flesh is profoundly powerful. Everyone has it. Sins such as promiscuity, adultery, drunkenness, and outbursts of wrath are just a few of the struggles mentioned in Galatians 5:19-20. What are some of the practical ways that we can resist the lust of the flesh? First, we can leave no provision for the desire of the flesh in our life (Rom. 13:14). There is a great temptation to pretend we are not tempted by the lust of the flesh; this is part of the devil’s deception. Second, we can behave in a way that the Spirit of God leads us; by walking in faith (Rom. 8:4, 2 Cor. 5:7).

QUESTIONS

What actions in His life demonstrated that Jesus walked in the Spirit?

What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?

What does it mean to make no provision for the flesh?

How do we “crucify the flesh” as Paul mentions in Galatians 5:24?

Why do we often deceive ourselves and say that we are not tempted by fleshly desires?

Class 5. The Lust of the Eyes

Jeremiah 22:17 *"Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness,*

THE EYE

What is the lust of the eyes? At first it might sound like lust of the flesh. But we need to understand the concept of the eye in the Bible. In Matthew 6:22 Jesus said that *"the lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light"*. The term "evil eye" is used by Jesus multiple times to describe our attitude towards the world. We might then describe the lust of the eye as being our desires for things that are not merely our flesh. The lust of the eye is the desire for the world itself.

Satan took Jesus to a high mountain, and showed Him the kingdoms of the world. These could be His. Eve looked at the fruit, and it was pleasant to the eyes. This was an appeal to the lust of the eyes; a desire for something that we would possess or have as our own. Wanting money, possessions, or to accumulate something is a manifestation of this desire. Our physical flesh is not pleased with a fancy car for example; our "eye" (heart) is. This is also known in Scripture as covetousness.

COVETOUSNESS

What does it mean to covet? It is difficult sometimes to discern between coveting and merely wanting. Coveting could reach the idea of the overwhelming need to possess, especially when it is not ours to possess. Covetousness is identified as idolatry in Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5. Jesus warned us that at the root of covetousness is the desire for possessions (Luke 12:15). We must be careful that our possessions do not possess us, as did the rich young ruler of Mark 10:22.

How can we "put to death" covetousness (Col. 3:5)? First, we need to learn to be content with what we have (Heb. 13:5). Second, we need to learn to despise covetousness (Prov. 28:16). Finally, we are told that generosity is another cure for covetousness (Prov. 21:26, Acts 4:32).

QUESTIONS

How is our eye a lamp for our heart?

What might have tempted Jesus about the offer of the kingdoms of men?

What is a difference between lusts of the flesh and lusts of the eye?

What are commonly coveted things?

How can we know when we are deceived by covetousness?

What are some sins in the Bible that progressed from covetousness?

Class 6. The Pride of Life

1 Timothy 3:6 *not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.*

ARROGANT SELF-CONFIDENCE

What is the *Pride of Life*? When Jesus was tempted, it was manifested in the temptation to descend from the Temple carried by the angels. This would have given Jesus a glorious revelation contrary to the one of prophecy. Eve saw that the fruit was desirable to make her wise. This is the pride of life; the characteristic of an energized self-esteem.

God has said many times and many ways that He hates pride (*the fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate* - Proverbs 8:13). Some might suggest that the pride of life is to see ourselves in place of God. There are many times where men are accused of having aspired to divine purposes (2 Thes. 2:4, Isaiah 14:3, etc.). Pride is dangerous; we are told repeatedly that God resists those who are proud (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5).

Pride is often found in behaviors we may not see as prideful. Admiring our accomplishments as Nebuchadnezzar did in Daniel 4:30-32, or as the rich man did in Luke 12:19 would be an example of this manifestation of pride. Trusting in ourselves and our own abilities is a form of pride. Too often we overestimate our ability to resist sin, and stumble and fall because of pride.

Perhaps the most common type of pride is the inability to accept fault. Sometimes we won't admit we are wrong, and thereby deny us of an opportunity to repent. Other times we choose to blame our circumstances or others for our sins instead of accepting responsibility (Adam, Aaron, Saul). Pride keeps many people from the forgiveness of God.

QUESTIONS

How are we often deceived by our pride?

What does it mean when Scriptures say "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"?

What kind of man struggles with pride in 1 Timothy 6:3-4?

Why is it that refusing to ask for help or to confess our sins is a form of pride?

What could it mean that pride goes before the fall?

What are some other sins that people commit because of pride?

Class 7. The Deceitfulness of Riches

Mark 4:19 *"and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

CARES OF THE WORLD

When Jesus gave us the parable of the soils, He told us that many would fall away because of the "thorns" that were in the way. He then went on to explain that the thorns were the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. Perhaps we might consider these as synonyms for each other.

One important idea is that the worries of the world are themselves deceitful. We worry about many things that the Scriptures tell us not to worry over (Matthew 6:31-34). Thus a great many blessings are lost to us because of needless worry. We worry about things that we have no control over; we worry about things that we are told are in God's hand.

DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

We are warned about riches and possessions perhaps more than almost any temptation or device of the devil. We are told in 1 Timothy 6:8-17 that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and that many are lost to it. But those who are lost may not even realize that they have been led astray for money. How does wealth deceive us?

First, consider that wealth is something that never satisfies. The wealthiest man who lived told us this in Ecclesiastes 5:10. Second, consider that wealth can be elusive, promising us success in the future when there is no promise (James 4:13-16). Third, wealth conveys a false sense of security and power, as seen in the rich man of Luke 12:16-20. This boasting was condemned in Psalm 49:6-8. Finally, riches cause our hearts to harden, either becoming unsympathetic to others or to turn away from God.

Riches promise happiness, but the Word warns us "some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

QUESTIONS

What is lost to us when we needlessly worry?

Are there things that we can or should worry or care about?

What is the lie of "having enough" when it comes to riches?

Why is it arrogant to boast of making a profit in the future?

How does God view those who boast of their wealth and success and trust in it?

How do many young people lose their reward because of the love of money?

How do many older saints lose their reward because of the love of money?

Class 8. The Ministers of Satan

2 Corinthians 11:15 *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

SATAN'S SERVANTS

In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul warned us that there are those who are ministers of Satan that seek to cause us to stumble. Who are these servants? We are not speaking about demons, nor are we discussing those who are mindfully serving Satan. Fundamentally, when people serve themselves, the flesh, or the world, they are serving Satan (James 3:15). When Peter was mindful of "the things of men", Jesus called him a Satan (a servant of Satan) in Matthew 16:23.

John mentioned on several occasions his concern over false teachers and false prophets, whom he called "antichrists" in 2 John 7. He stated that these men sought to deceive believers. Peter also mentions his concern about these people in 2 Peter 2. There he tells us that these false teachers will turn many of us away.

How do Satan's servants operate? First of all, they "*secretly bring in destructive heresies*", ideas that seem innocuous but are ultimately another Gospel. Others appeal to the flesh, encouraging people that immoral behavior is acceptable, as the "Jezebel" of Revelation 2:20 did. These false teachers appeal to us because (1) they have a form of godliness (2 Timothy 3:5) and (2) they "tickle our ears" with ideas we desire to hear (2 Timothy 4:3).

But often people operate as Satan's servants without intention. When we offer a stumbling block to others, we are doing the work of Satan. Many times we present a stumbling block (as Peter did to Jesus) with good intentions and a clear conscience. Being a stumbling block means that we are enabling or encouraging someone else to sin.

QUESTIONS

Why are we not concerned about demons today?

Peter was identified with Satan. What other disciple was identified as a servant of Satan?

What is an antichrist?

Is there a difference between a false teacher, a false prophet, and a false Christ?

What is a heresy?

What was the "another Gospel" Paul mentioned in Galatians 1:6-9?

What are some common stumbling blocks we put before our brethren? The world?