

24-11-17-satan's-subtlety

Gen 3:1 ¶ Now the serpent was more **subtil** than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Last week we saw how Satan's subtlety wasn't that he was a serpent, but that he was tempting Eve with being as wise as the gods. The gods were the angelic host that was in the Garden o God.

This week we are going to delve into the characteristics of Satan. Who is he and what is he.

His first characteristic is subtlety. But if you look at how he responds to Eve, it doesn't seem so subtle.

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

It doesn't seem too subtle to directly contradict what God said. But first, look at what he does. Eve said that they couldn't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest they die. Satan actually corrects her. God had said: "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Eve changed that to 'lest we die.'

What Eve was saying is that we shouldn't eat of it, for fear that we'll die. Satan corrected that language back to what God had originally said, which would seem to give him some credence to his contradiction of God. This guy knows what he's talking about.

Then we aren't told of Satan's tone of voice as he contradicted what God had said. If one imagines that Satan is speaking conspiratorially, it isn't hard to see the subtleness that he is employing. "God just wants you to stay innocent – he doesn't want you to be wise like us."

Here now is an example of Satan's subtlety:

English Standard Version

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

New International Version

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

These don't, on the surface, seem to be bad translations. But consider this:

2Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

English Standard Version

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and **pure devotion to Christ**.

New International Version

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and **pure devotion to Christ**.

Cunning: Wrought with skill; curious; ingenious. Artful; shrewd; sly; crafty; astute; designing; as a *cunning* fellow.

Crafty: Cunning; artful; skillful in devising and pursuing a scheme, by deceiving others, or by taking advantage of their ignorance; wily; sly; fraudulent.

Subtle: Sly; artful; cunning; crafty; insinuating; as a *subtil* person; a *subtil* adversary.

Subtle has cunning and crafty in its' definition, but neither crafty nor cunning has subtle in their definition: Do you see the subtle difference?

Notice that the ESV and the NIV subtly change the simplicity that is in Christ to sincere and pure devotion to Christ. They change the simplicity of God's grace in Christ to your devotion. They replace grace with works.

That is the subtlety of Satan on display right there, using the verse Paul uses to describe Satan's subtlety.

This brings up Satan's next two characteristics:

John 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a **murderer from the beginning**, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar, and the father of it**.

He is a murderer and a liar. So let's take liar first, since we just looked at an example of his subtlety.

Prov 30:5-6 Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him. **6 Add thou not unto his words**, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

By that verse you can write Deut. 4:2; 12:32, and Rev. 22:18-19. Changing God's Word makes you a liar. It doesn't matter if you have good intentions.

Does the verse say the father of it or the father of lies? Is it singular or plural? This is supplying what someone thinks the verse means instead of simply translating it. It changes the meaning.

The verse says that he is a liar and the father of it. What? The lie. The one big lie that is found throughout scripture:

Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator is the lie that Satan is the Father of. What did he say that caused him to fall?

I will be like the Most High. He is a creature – a created thing – and he wanted worship for himself. Ever since then, the creature has sought to worship itself in some way. Go back to

2 Corinthians 11:3 – the lie is changing the grace of God into your sincere and pure devotion. The lie is chopping down the cross to add your own merits to it.

New International Version

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. 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**.

English Standard Version

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar **and the father of lies**.

The father of lies – is lies singular or plural?

The father of it – is it singular or plural?

Subtle: It seems that understanding that there is one overarching lie is important.

He is also a murderer. How so? Who did Satan ever murder? Well, the entire human race, for starters. Why would we need a Savior if we hadn't been murdered by Satan's subtlety?

The verse says that he was a murderer from the beginning. If you don't want to look at spiritual death, but instead look to the beginning to find his first murder, look no further than Cain.

Gen 4:3-8 ¶ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. **4** And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: **5** But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. **6** ¶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? **7** If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. **8** ¶ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

How can we say that Satan was a murderer when Cain is the one who slew his brother? Hold Genesis 4 and look at:

1Jo 3:11-12 ¶ For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. **12** Not as Cain, **who was of that wicked one**, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Cain was of that wicked one because he was following the lie that worships the creature more than the Creator. Look at how Gen. 4:3 starts: "And in process of time it came to pass." This wasn't the first sacrifice that had been offered. It wasn't a new thing. Cain knew

that Jehovah required a blood sacrifice. But he trusted in the Satanic lie that I can give God something better through my own works.

Satan was complicit in that first murder – he was an accomplice, a co-conspirator, and actually the instigator of it. In a court of law, Satan would say that he never told Cain to kill his brother. But it was his policies that led to the murder, making him just as guilty as if he actually personally slew Cain.

At the Nurenberg trials after the 2nd World War, those executed most likely hadn't murdered a single Jew – but they were deemed the chief murderers because it under their supervision that all those murders took place.

So now we have two characteristics of Satan: A liar and a murderer. These are two of the things that God hates.

Prov 6:16-19 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: **17** A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, **18** An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, **19** A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

New International Version

16 There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: **17** haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, **18** a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, **19** a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

English Standard Version

16 There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: **17** haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, **18** a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, **19** a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Again – subtle. Which makes more sense: haughty eyes or a proud look? Are they the same thing?

We already have two of the three listed in verse 17. What about a proud look: pride, arrogance and so on.

Eze 28:13-15 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. **14** Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. **15** Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

What exactly was that iniquity?

Eze 28:17 **Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness:** I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Very simply, Lucifer became proud of what he was. Even though he was created that way and his looks and position were all given to him by God, his heart was lifted up because of these wonderful attributes.

He was cast out of God's city, and he devolved to the point that he was compared to a crooked serpent and a dragon.

Isa 27:1 ¶ In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish **leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent;** and he shall slay the dragon that *is* in the sea.

And what is leviathan the king of?

Job 41:34 He beholdeth all high *things*: **he is a king over all the children of pride.**

So Satan is the original liar, a murderer from the beginning and the king over all the children of pride.

New International Version

Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. **So I threw you to the earth;** I made a spectacle of you before kings.

English Standard Version

Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. **I cast you to the ground;** I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

When does Lucifer get cast to the ground and laid before kings? Again, subtle.

An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations:

Dan 7:24-26 And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. **25** And **he shall speak great words against the most High,** and shall wear out the saints of the most High, **and think to change times and laws;** and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. **26** But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* unto the end.

2Thess 2:8-10 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: **9** *Even him,* whose coming is after the working of Satan with **all power and signs and lying wonders,** **10** And with **all deceivableness of unrighteousness** in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

He is going to enter into the son of perdition and speak great words against the Most High, seek to change times and seasons with all power and signs and lying wonders.

Does that qualify for a heart that devises wicked imaginations?

New International Version

and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because **they refused to love the truth** and so be saved.

English Standard Version

and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because **they refused to love the truth** and so be saved

They received not the love of the truth. What did they refuse to receive? Whose love and whose truth?

Rom 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because **the love of God is shed abroad** in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Subtle differences.

Feet that be swift in running to mischief:

1Pet 5:8-9 ¶ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, **walketh about, seeking whom he may devour**: **9** Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Job 1:6-11 ¶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. **7** And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and **from walking up and down in it**. **8** And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? **9** Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? **10** Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. **11** But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and **he will curse thee to thy face**.

I would say that Satan's feet not only run to mischief, but they seek to create mischief.

New International Version

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion **looking for someone to devour**. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that **the family of believers** throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings

English Standard Version

8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, **seeking someone to devour**. **9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by **your brotherhood** throughout the world.

Looks the same, right? The word someone implies that he is looking for anyone. Seeking whom keeps it contextual – showing that Satan is seeking those in the Jewish church – elders and younger men.

If you put the NIV's family of believers with the ESV's brotherhood, it would be correct. Brethren shows that he is specifically speaking of Jewish believers in the kingdom church during the time of Jacob's trouble.

Subtle differences.

A false witness *that* speaketh lies:

2Cor 11:13-15 For such *are* **false apostles, deceitful workers**, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. **14** And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**. **15** Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Satan and his ministers are false and deceitful workers of darkness pretending to be light. The false witness they bring is against Jesus Christ himself. That finds its' fruition in the passage we read in **2Thess 2:4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

New International Version

13For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. **14**And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. **15**It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

English Standard Version

13For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. **14**And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. **15**So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Is there a difference between masquerading / disguising themselves and transforming and is transformed? One is doing it deceitfully; the other is doing it with conviction. A fake is easily caught unless he is a very good con man – few are. But a sincere believer in a lie is more difficult to unmask because he believes it.

Subtle. Here's one that I saw that isn't subtle, but is kind of funny:

New International Version

I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."

English Standard Version

Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.

He that soweth discord among brethren:

The context of 2 Cor. 11:13-15 that we just read has to do with those who come in preaching another Jesus or another gospel. These were similar to those Jews who went into Galatia to tell them to be circumcised. (20) They were Jews who were seeking to preach

Jesus under the law and a gospel that put them back in bondage (22-23). And they were doing it for financial gain (20).

It is the passage we looked in the beginning concerning the serpent beguiling Eve (3). These are ministers of Satan sowing discord among the brethren.

As we've gone over the characteristics of Satan, one thing stands out: The first of Satan's devices:

2Cor 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Gen 3:1 ¶ Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, hath God said**

If you don't have a Bible that you can trust, you don't have what God said.