

24-12-1 Executing Satan's Devices

Last week we began to look at some of Satan's devices.

Device means an invented scheme or strategy. It is something that is designed for good or evil purposes, but mostly used with negative or bad intentions. In Satan's case, his purposes were to be like the Most High God, but that scheme was forever crushed when Christ rose from the dead.

Col 2:15 *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

Now Satan desires to hold on to what he has, and many devices are aimed at that goal.

2Cor 2:10-11 *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

From where Paul says that we aren't ignorant of Satan's devices, we saw that there were actually two devices that Satan uses involved in that passage.

- To Separate grace from truth and
- To judge others by our own standards and not by God's Word rightly divided.

Then continuing in 2 Corinthians 2 at the end of the chapter in verse 17 there is perhaps one of the three most important devices that Satan uses today: corrupting the Word of God.

Next in II Corinthians 3 is a sub-device: ministering the letter of the New Testament rather than the spirit. This is a one of the ways that he foils rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

*Seeking to subvert the right division of the scriptures is his second main device today.

Then in chapter 4 is the third main device that Satan uses today to try to foil God's plan. That is handling the word of God deceitfully.

One thing I failed to mention on that point last week: one can handle the Word of God deceitfully without meaning to deceive. In other words, one can actually preach or teach what they believe to be true, but it is deceitful.

2Tim 3:13 *But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, **and being deceived.***

There are many instances where sincere Christians go to certain Bible colleges and become deceived by academics about a whole range of issues. They then go out and teach what they've learned, earnestly believing it.

Then we came to a verse that can often cause a lot of confusion.

2Cor 4:3-4 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

So far we've been dealing with WHAT are Satan's devices. This verse, however, begs the question: HOW does he go about executing those devices. If he is blinding minds, how does he do that?

First, we have to understand that Satan's desire is to be like the Most High God. Just as God has changed the way He interacts with the human race over the course of time, so has Satan.

Before the law, from Adam to Moses, God dealt with man in with promises and with punishments and threats of punishments. Satan dealt with man to foil those promises and imitate those punishments.

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Satan also imitated what God was doing and created false religions that would oppose what God was doing. This is described in Romans 1:21-28.

This pattern continued through the years of the Law and into Christ's earthly ministry. We may look at this more in depth later on.

One thing that seems to be true is that God limits Satan in what he is permitted to do.

Job 1:6-12 ¶ 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. **12** And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

God limited what Satan can do by putting a hedge around the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Job was Issachar's son and a righteous, upstanding man, so God put a special hedge around him.

The other thing that is interesting is that when God allows Satan to go beyond what he has been limited to, God takes responsibility for those actions.

Job 2:1-3 ¶ Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. **2** And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. **3** 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?

and still he holdeth fast his integrity, **although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.**

God had put Job's livelihood in Satan's hands. Satan destroyed that livelihood, but God took responsibility for Satan's actions because He permitted it.

We see this in another situation that is often used to show that the scripture contradicts itself:

1Ch 21:1 ¶ And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2Sa 24:1 ¶ And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

Here Satan is allowed to intervene in the affairs of Israel, but God takes responsibility for it. That is because of the hedge that God put around the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God eventually removes that hedge to some degree, but not until further down the line after David and Solomon and even beyond that. He removes it because of Israel's disobedience, but here that hedge is still up.

Even as God takes accountability for the actions of Satan when He allows him to step over his boundaries, He makes Satan liable for the actions that he has done. Because Satan was the cause of the fall of mankind, he is now responsible for the course of this world.

Eph 2:1-3 ¶ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to **the course of this world**, according to **the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Satan is the god of this world because he is responsible for the state of this world. The course of this world is the natural consequence of Satan's activities. So when we read a verse like this:

John 13:2 And supper being ended, **the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot**, Simon's son, to betray him;

We cannot immediately assume that the devil somehow entered Judas' thoughts and forced him to betray him.

John 12:4-6 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, **5** Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? **6** This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but **because he was a thief**, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Judas was a thief. He was a man who was covetous of financial gain. Satan was also covetous.

Eze 28:15-16 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. **16** By **the multitude of thy merchandise** they have filled the

midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Satan's merchandise wasn't money, it was power and authority, but the covetousness is still the same. Satan put it into the heart of Judas because Judas was of his father, the devil. The incident that Judas was complaining about in John 12 is when the woman at Bethany took the expensive ointment and washed Jesus' feet with it. That so enraged Judas, that he lost out on stealing some of the value of that ointment, that he decided he would make more money by betraying Jesus.

In Matthew, describing the same incident, we see that is exactly the point that Judas decided to see what he could get by betraying Jesus. Matt. 26:6-13 gives us that event, then in verse 14 we read:

Matt 26:14-16 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, **15** And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. **16** And **from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.**

You find the same account in Mark 14:1-11. That incident isn't recorded in Luke, but look what Luke says happened in that time-frame:

Luke 22:1-3 ¶ Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. **2** And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. **3** **Then entered Satan into Judas** surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

But wait, didn't Satan enter into Judas at the Passover supper? Did Satan enter into him twice? Not at all. That is simply the point at which Judas decided to fully follow the course of this world. That is when Satan put into his heart to betray him. Not because Satan possessed him at that point. It was because of Judas' natural covetousness, which he inherited from the devil. He saw that he lost a huge opportunity to get some financial gain, and that covetousness, added to the public rebuke that he suffered by how Jesus replied to him, caused him to decide to get revenge on Jesus and get the financial gain that he believed he lost out on. He decided he might get more financial gain by betraying Jesus than being one of his followers. At that point, Satan – the course of this world – took him over.

Now when we go to II Corinthians 4 and read this:

2Cor 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: **4** In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

That has nothing to do with Satan entering every individual lost person to blind their minds. Or even sending devils out to do that. When we compare some verses we can see that.

Eph 4:17-19 ¶ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in **the vanity of their mind**, **18** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance **that is in them**, because of **the blindness of their heart**: **19** Who being past feeling have **given themselves** over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Where is the vanity? Where is the ignorance? Where is the blindness? Who has given them over to lasciviousness?

The god of this world has blinded them through the course of this world, which he is responsible for. So just as God takes responsibility for His actions, He makes the devil responsible for the devil's actions.

This is made very clear in:

Acts 5:1-4 ¶ But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, **2** And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. **3** But Peter said, Ananias, **why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost**, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? **4** Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? **why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?** thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

Who filled Ananias' heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Who conceived it in their own heart? Again, it was the course of this world and the covetousness of Ananias that caused him to lie to Peter.

Satan as the prince of the power of the air blinds people to the gospel through the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. But when we look at the verses in Ephesians closely, we will discover something:

Eph 2:1-3 ¶ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past **in the lusts of our flesh**, fulfilling **the desires of the flesh and of the mind**; and were **by nature** the children of wrath, even as others.

Verse two blames Satan for verse one. But then verse three points out why Satan is to blame. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of **WHOSE** flesh? And why were we the children of wrath? By our nature, which is the nature of Adam which is the nature of Satan.

When we compare these verses with the companion verse in Colossians, it becomes obvious:

Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies **in your mind** by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

Now one point I'd like to make is concerning the limitations of Satan. Satan is wiser than humanity and more powerful than humanity and could deceive almost any human alive one-on-one. But Satan is one being. He can only be in one place at one time. He has the power to kill and the power to cause sickness, but that power is limited by God. He can't read your mind. He can't plant thoughts in your head.

For example, when God gave Satan the chance to move against Israel and have David number the people, he didn't enter David's thoughts to do so.

1Ch 21:1 ¶ And Satan stood up against Israel, and **provoked** David to number Israel.

He didn't enter David's mind to number Israel: he provoked him. We aren't told how he did this, but we can see what provoke means in God's Word.

Luke 11:53-54 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began **to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him** to speak of many things: **54** Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Somehow the devil was able to vehemently urge David to number Israel. But provoking or urging didn't cause David to do that: David's pride caused him to do that.

Finally, we can see the nature of God juxtaposed with the nature of Satan in:

2Tim 2:24-26 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth; **26** And *that* they may recover themselves out of **the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will**.

Now when you just casually read these verses, it looks like God may use supernatural power in verse 25 and the devil may be using supernatural power in verse 26. This is probably the way a Calvinist would understand these verses.

But does God supernaturally cause people to repent? God has already reconciled the world unto Himself through the blood of the cross. Those that oppose themselves only have to acknowledge and accept that truth to repent. If Paul is speaking to believers that oppose themselves, they can repent by believing the Word of Truth rightly divided as Paul lays out in his ministry.

By the same token, does Satan really take people captive? Satan doesn't have to take people captive because unbelievers are already captive to him. They are already of their father, the devil.

But what about believers? Can we oppose ourselves and be caught in the snare of the devil? In I Timothy when Paul is laying out the character that a bishop must have, he says this:

1Tim 3:6-7 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into **the condemnation of the devil**. **7** Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and **the snare of the devil**.

The snare of the devil is simply one acting in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life. Satan doesn't have to be involved for that to happen, but the course of this world does. How does Satan take one captive?

2Tim 3:5-7 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. **6** For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and **lead captive** silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, **7** Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The power of godliness that is denied is the gospel, to which the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers. The knowledge of the truth is the Word of God, rightly divided, which academics constantly study but never understand.

So how does the devil work out his devices? Mostly through religion that denies the gospel or refuses to rightly divide the word of truth.

Next week we'll talk about devils, and continue with more of Satan's devices.

Now I am not totally discounting the idea that there are devils at work in this world. Paul mentions devils (plural) in only three verses of his letters. Two of those verses mention devils four times and are back-to-back verses.

1Cor 10:20-21 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, **they sacrifice to devils**, and not to God: and I would not that **ye should have fellowship with devils**. **21** Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and **the cup of devils**: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of **the table of devils**.

So devils are a real thing. Whether or not they continue to work in this dispensation would be a matter of opinion, is my opinion.

The only other verse where devils are mentioned concerns the end of this dispensation.

1Tim 4:1 ¶ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

These devils have doctrines. Those doctrine are communicated somehow. I'm not going to speculate. Many believers do speculate, especially when it comes to the corruption of God's Word. I'm not going to do that because I don't want to slander men who may not have been as evil as we think they were.