

SATAN'S DEVICES

In the book of II Corinthians 2:11 we read “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” By way of introduction I want look at this verse in its context, . In the book of I Corinthians Paul wrote to the Corinthian church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, because the church was in a mess. The church was a gifted church. Verse 7 of chapter 1 tells us that they did not come behind the other churches in spiritual gifts, but at the same time it was a church that was affected with a? spirit. Verse 12 of chapter 1 tells us that some were saying, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos (who was an evangelist), I am of Cephus (Peter). Some of the others being pious dissenters said, “Well, we are just of Christ”. As a result, it was a church that was split. For example, one would stand up and give a prophecy and another would cut him off and start speaking in tongues. It was a disorganized church.

In the midst of all this pride, a false view of Christian liberty crept in. They had a man in their midst that had taken his father’s wife. Instead of being disturbed by it, they were puffed up and did not want to deal with these issues and in II Corinthians we find that the church has dealt accordingly. Paul writes back in particular about this man in the passage we just read, telling the church to forgive him because he has repented and turned from his sins. Then he writes verse 11 warning them of the dangers of an unforgiving spirit. He said that if we have an unforgiving spirit, Satan is going to get an advantage on us. This word advantage is getting more than your share. In other words, Satan is going to get an advantage over us that he is not entitled to and should not have.

Peter makes an interesting statement here “...for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (II Cor. 2:11). The Holy Spirit brought this passage to mind and especially that little phrase “for we are not ignorant of his devices”. I went through the Bible looking to see where there were some of Satan’s

devices that I was ignorant of. I found some when I was going through the Bible, although it will not be a conclusive list. I will put down fifteen of them that Satan uses against us as believers. In this case he was using them against a body as a whole to prevent that body from functioning in Corinth, which was a wicked city. It was every bit as morally bad as Sin City (Las Vegas), Nevada in our day. Let us look at these 15 things that God brought to my attention that He lists in the Word of God as being devices of Satan.

The first device that came to mind as I was studying was the fact that Satan likes to question the Word of God. In Gen. 3:1 we find Adam and Eve in the Garden. We have a perfect man and a perfect woman in a perfect environment. Some people tell us if you were to do that with mankind today everything would be perfect, but we find that that is not the case. In verse 1 we find Satan coming on the scene, it says, "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?" Now I want you to pay close attention to that little expression, "Yea hath God said". Satan is using that on believers and on churches today with devastating consequences. When the number one TV network in the United States is comfortable with going on the air and saying when people go to church they expect to see a rock band, we know that Satan has been very effective in questioning the Word of God. He has managed to redefine what Christianity is. He has managed to redefine who God is. He has managed to redefine what salvation is. He has managed to redefine **what the church is**. So, we see that Satan has been effective at questioning the Word of God.

I can think of ministers who at one time felt that the Word of God said certain things were wrong. Those things are still taught as being wrong according to the Word of God, but those preachers no longer mention it or teach against it. In fact, you can find them on websites or on the radio

making comments against Scripture. They are not afraid to question the Word of God. It is the Laodicean age where people do that which is right in their own eyes.

Not only does Satan question the Word of God, he provokes us. Have you ever had him put you into a situation on your job, or maybe in the church dealing with somebody, where he just applies pressure on you to try to get you to snap and lose your temper? That is one of the devices he uses against us as believers, because in five seconds we can destroy a testimony that we spent 15 years or more developing.

Certainly, we saw that with Peter as he stood and denied Christ three times because he was put in a certain awkward position. Remember Jesus had told him in Luke 22:31b-32a, "... Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee,..." Satan applied that pressure to Peter. Peter who pulled his sword out and was willing to die with Jesus, then also denied his Lord three times. Before you are too hard on him, remember that this is a device that Satan can use against us today as well. We need to pray and watch so that we do not fall into that temptation.

We see that he provokes us, but he also accuses us. In Job 1:8 Satan has walked up and down the earth, and appears before God and God asks him "Hast thou considered my servant Job, ...". Verse 9 continues, "Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?" That expression "Doth Job fear God for nought?" is an accusation of Satan. There is no reason for us to believe that Satan does not accuse us. How many times has God brought us to Satan's attention and said, "Have you considered my servant... (your name)? Satan is going to be very quick to respond, "Oh he's just in it for what he can get, she's just in it for what she can get, she's just in it for name recognition and for selfish reasons." Satan does not understand how the believer loves Christ enough that he is willing to give up everything. As a result, he accuses us to God and

he does not just accuse us to God, but he accuses God to us. Even though that is not found in this verse, we find in the context that when Job's friends came and his wife said, "Curse God and die" he said, "Look, you are one of the foolish women."

Satan accuses God to us. He tries every time we get into a difficult situation to get us to see God through that situation, not the situation through God.

Then he accuses us to one another. How many times have you felt like somebody in the church had it in for you and then found out there was nothing to it? It was just the accuser of the brethren trying to cause trouble, trying to stir things up. Sometimes the things he points out about our brothers and sisters are legitimate, but they are not legitimate to the point where we need to develop an angry attitude toward them. We need to pray for them instead. He accuses us to one another and that is another device he loves to use against us.

Then fourthly we see he resists our repentance. Look at Zechariah 3:1. Here Zechariah has a vision and he said, "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord," and then the quote I want you to notice, "and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." As the high priest, Joshua's responsibility was to go in on the Day of Atonement and make atonement for the nation of Israel. While he is ready to make to make atonement, here is Satan, standing there on the right hand as the accuser to accuse the nation of Israel before God, to hinder their repentance. How many times have you gone and repented before God and had Satan jump on your shoulder and say, "Why should God forgive you, you've done this before? You should have known better." He attempts to come between us and God and discourages us from repentance, true repentance, to God. So we see that he resists our repentance.

Then number five we see that he uses temptation. Matthew 4:1 "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit

into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”

There are two things I think we ought to point out here. Jesus is being led by the Spirit, but the Spirit is not tempting, it is the devil. God will test us but He does not tempt us. In fact, the book of James makes that quite plain that He cannot be tempted with sin, so He does not tempt any man.

We see here the Spirit leading Him into the wilderness and the devil using temptation against Jesus Christ. As we consider this thought of temptation we need to remember James 1:13-14 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted,”. The thing Satan appeals to is something within our own heart. Jesus told us to guard our heart because of adultery, the sins that he mentioned, comes forth from the heart. So that is where Satan attacks.

Here, we notice that Jesus went through this temptation to give us an object lesson for how to handle temptations. Jesus did not pull rank on Satan, He did not say “I’m the Son of God, Satan, get hence, you have no business tempting me”. Instead He answered him with Scripture from the Word of God. He refuted every one of Satan’s temptations with Scripture.

The message to us is not that we need to be acutely aware of what the Word of God says so that we can respond with Scripture. On the subject of lust, it said it is by our own lust that we are enticed. I John 2:16 “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” If you read this passage here in Matthew 4 you find these are the three areas that he used to attack Jesus when he tempted Him.

These are the three areas he is going to use to tempt and to attack us. These are going to be his devices that he uses against us. God had already told us in His Word where Satan is coming from and what he is going to use. So it behooves us, like the Corinthians that Paul gives this warning to, to be read up and studied up on the Word of

God so that we will know how to respond when the attack comes.

Number six, he uses carnal mindedness. In Matthew 16:23 we find Peter, after his great confession, going from a spiritual highlight to a spiritual lowlight. This is for one simple reason, his carnal mindedness. “But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me,” that means a stumbling block, “for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Jesus is not only speaking to Peter here. He is also addressing the person that has prompted Peter to say that. If you notice the way the King James translators have this laid out, He said, “Get thee behind me” coma, and then “Satan” and a colon. This is what he is addressing, “thou art an offense unto me for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men.” (Matt. 16:23). So here we see Him rebuking Peter’s carnal mindedness and at the same time pointing out that this is a device of Satan. This is a device that Satan has put in your heart to do. Satan put it into Judas’ heart to betray Jesus and he did it. God has prayed for Peter and Peter even after denying Christ thrice, goes on and becomes a fervent and effective apostle of Jesus Christ. That gives us confidence to know that even though we do not always do the right thing, like Peter getting in the flesh sometimes, if we will repent and come back to Christ then we can go out and do the work that He has called us to do.

Certainly, he uses carnal mindedness in churches today. We all know the devastating effect that it has when people become more interested in possessions and money. How many times have you known someone who was in your congregation who moved to a different town because they could get a job that paid more? They did not even stop and think, “Is there a church for me to go to there?”. I am going to tell you, there are places in the United States where there is not a good church to go to.

I will never forget when I was sent by my

company to Wisconsin for a week. When I arrived there, I looked all week for a church to go to on a Wednesday night and I did not find anything but Catholic churches. It is important that if you are going somewhere else that you make sure God sent you there and that you look ahead and try to find a church to go to. I know for years my dad drove us a little over an hour just so we could be in church and under the Word of God, because he felt like that was the closest church that God wanted us in. We see that he uses carnal mindedness to destroy believers. He gets them chasing the things of the world that they think they so desperately need that they are willing to push off the spiritual things, the things God wants them to focus on and as a result it ends in disaster for them.

In Mark 4:15 we find number seven, he takes away the preaching of the Word. Here we have the parable of the sower. "And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown;...". This is where Jesus was giving an explanation to the disciples. The verse continues, "...but when they have heard," here is what I want you to notice, "Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." The primary interpretation of this is to the unbeliever. There is also an application for the believer. There are particular times, like at camp meeting when you start to get fatigued toward the end of the week. You are listening, but you are not really listening. You are looking at the preacher, nodding your head at the right time, but not really taking it in. Satan is only too glad to take that truth and snatch it away. So, one of the things he uses against us is taking away the preaching of the Word. How many times have we not followed what we heard in the message and allowed Satan to take that truth away from us?

Not only does he take away the preaching of the Word, he afflicts us physically. Here in Luke 13:16, Jesus has healed the woman with the issue of blood and He makes a statement to the Pharisees when they questioned why he had done

this on the Sabbath day. He said, "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham," and this is what I want you to notice, "whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?". Satan had bound this woman, you might say "Well, she was probably an unbeliever, that is why Satan had bound her". Well what about the apostle Paul? Does he qualify as a Christian? II Corinthians 12:7, Paul writes, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Paul refers to this infirmity in verse 9, this has to be a physical affliction that he is speaking of here. Some people say, maybe it was his eyesight, maybe the way he speaks. Whatever it was, it was the messenger of Satan and Paul knew where it came from. He afflicts us physically. Sometimes when we have weird physical ailments, instead of running off to the doctor maybe we should spend some time in prayer. Satan likes to afflict us physically, particularly when it hinders mission work, the preaching of the gospel, and service for Christ. Then number nine we see he seeks to overthrow the Christian's faith. Here Christ is speaking to Peter and Peter has pronounced boldly that he is ready to go to the death, "don't worry about it if everybody else runs off and leaves you Jesus, I am not going to leave you". How many times have we felt like that and felt cocky thinking we were doing it on our own when we were not? Luke 22:31 says, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Satan was going to seek and attempt to use Peter's denial of Christ three times to destroy Peter's faith. Satan seeks to do the same with us. It seems to be mostly with younger Christians, but he has been known to attack the assurance of older believers. He also seeks to overthrow our faith. He gets us

where we fail God, takes our failure and continuously throws it up in our face. If we are not aware of this device we will not tell him, “Look I have repented of that Satan, that’s under the blood it’s been dealt with. God doesn’t remember that anymore.” He will drive us to despair and seek to overthrow our faith as one of his devices.

Number ten, Satan uses lying. Here we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:3. “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?”. I do not believe if Ananias and Sapphira had been unbelievers that God would have killed them. I think the reason He dealt with them and dealt with them so severely was because they were believers. How many times have you been put in a situation and Satan hops on your shoulder and says, “Now if you just tell this little white lie you can get out of this situation and you won’t have to explain the situation?”. When we think, you know what, I have been a believer for a while, surely I am done lying, here he comes and he tempts you with it, and says, “Why don’t you just lie and get yourself out of this situation?”. He did this to Ananias and Sapphira and it cost them their lives. God used them as object lessons to the church about the importance of honesty and the importance of being obedient to the Holy Spirit and not lying to the Holy Spirit.

Then number eleven we see Satan uses an unforgiving spirit. II Corinthians 2:10-11 “To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” How many times have we been hurt in a church dispute or by another brother or sister in Christ or by an organization, and instead of having a forgiving spirit, we hung on to that? That did not hurt the other person and it did not help us. An unforgiving spirit will knock you out spiritually in

your service to Christ quicker than anything. Christ has forgiven our sins, he suffered the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. Who are we to hold a grudge against another human being?

We see that he not only uses an unforgiving spirit but he uses false prophets. II Corinthians

11:13-15 “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

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.” We say, “Well a false prophet, as a believer we ought to be able to recognize that”. Not necessarily, Satan does a good job disguising them. Over time they will be recognized because their works will be made manifest, but they know how to disguise themselves, speak the lingo, and look right.

Sometimes they will come up to you and say God wants you to do this, when really God is not in it.

You might ask, “Can you give me Scripture for that?”. Yes, I can. I Kings 13:14. We have the story of where God has sent a prophet into the northern 10 tribes. They had built 2 false golden calves and the king attempted to have them arrested, but of course God smote the king’s hand.

God allowed the young prophet to heal the king, but when the prophet was met by this older prophet, the older prophet said, “I’m a prophet too”. Listen to what he said to him in I Kings 13:18, “...I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.” We have false prophets in our day that claim to have a special relationship with God.

They claim to be able to tell you what God’s will is for your life and that you can ignore Scripture if you want to. We have a whole movement, the charismatic movement that is based on that. We see here the old prophet had done that to this young prophet and of course God sent word to the

old prophet and he tells the young prophet, "You're going to die because you disobeyed the Word of the Lord". He got on his donkey and went back and sure enough a lion killed him, but he does not eat him, he stood there, and did not bother him at all, which was to show the people there, that this was God's doing.

When God gives you something to do, do not let another prophet or minister talk you out of it. He may be a false prophet that Satan has sent to keep you from doing the will of God and if you listen to him, it is going to have consequences just like it did for this young prophet.

Not only does he use false prophets, he uses pride. In I Timothy 3:6 they were warned against ordaining novices. "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Pride is the number one thing Satan uses on young preachers. He will get you thinking, "Look at me, I preached a good message." You do not have anything that God did not give you and if anybody receives help, spiritual help, it is because the Holy Spirit did something, not because of you. He uses pride to destroy our ministries and to bring us down. How many ministries have gotten involved in immorality because they got full of themselves? They were proud, thinking they were doing it, instead God was doing it and it had tragic consequences for them.

Number fourteen, he uses a spirit of fear. II Timothy 1:7. "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Now we look at this verse and it doesn't say specifically that Satan has given us the spirit of fear, but it does mention that there is a spirit of fear and it says that God did not give it to us, by default, that leaves only one other person.

Romans 8:15 clarifies it a bit. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." How many times have you had Satan put that spirit of fear on you? Maybe you are having to deal with something in the

church and Satan says, "You know what, if you do that you're going to split this church, your name is going to be mud around this community and nobody is going to want anything to do with you." He has used that spirit of fear to keep us from doing what we ought to do. Or maybe God has urged you to witness to somebody and Satan puts that spirit of fear into you "that they aren't going to accept it". Maybe your company has a solicitation policy. You might think, "You will lose your job if you witness to that person and are turned in." It is not God who has given you that spirit of fear. If God told you to witness to that person, He is going to look after you. If you lose your job, He will have another one for you. Our missionaries have to confront this spirit of fear on a daily basis. They live in dangerous situations. I really hope we remember our brothers and sisters in the Middle East because this is what they are going through right now. It is just as bad as what the first church went through and I hope we remember them on a daily basis as instructed in the Bible. We see that Satan uses a spirit of fear. Then number fifteen, he hinders our service for Christ. I Thessalonians 2:18 "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." How many times have our missionaries tried to go into a different village or area and Satan blocks them? Maybe they invent some new law overnight to keep them from going in there, or some new visa requirement. Satan is constantly trying to hinder our service for Christ. When we see Satan hindering our service for Christ we need to stop and pray till God removes that hindrance from out of our way. When we as believers hear of another believer being hindered we need to pray for them. Sometimes God will bring another believer to mind and have us pray for them. We may not understand why we were praying for them, but then we find out later they were facing difficult situations, a hindrance of Satan, and God let us be a part of the deliverance by giving us the privilege to pray for them.

Then number sixteen we see Satan uses persecution. Revelation 2:10, John writes “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” He uses the threat of imprisonment. This is primarily used against our missionaries right now. In our country there is not a big threat, but there is a growing one. Our missionaries face the threat that they could be put in jail for preaching the Gospel. How would you like to be a missionary in China right now? All those communists have to do is decide that what you are teaching is a threat and they will throw you in jail. I recently saw a special on public television about the Chinese Christians and it was shocking. I could not believe they were that honest to admit that there were Christians being persecuted in China. It was unreal what the pastors they talked to had to deal with just to have a church service. They had people in the building who had been paid off by the Communist party to watch them and to find out when they were going in to church and when they were meeting and then reporting them. While they had the cameraman there, they saw one of them that was an informant watching them and sure enough the police showed up. Those brothers and sisters had been put in jail numerous times. Some of them had been beaten, but they were still worshipping and the government was still trying to stamp them out. That is what our missionaries face when they go overseas. They face the threat of persecution. In our day we may one day face persecution if we speak out against homosexuality. The government may declare that preaching against sin is an act of intolerance. We are watching as so many churches are starting to cave in on these things. There is a church, just up the road, that openly welcomes homosexuals and I know a couple practicing homosexuals that attend that church. But there is good news to this about Satan’s devices. While we see that his devices are many,

varied, cleverly contrived, and thought out, we see that he is going to come to an end one day, along with his devices. Revelation 12:9-11 “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:”. I want you to notice this “...for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” When we come up against these devices of Satan we are never going to be able to get victory over them based on how much we know about the Bible, or what a holy life we live, or how many years we serve God. The only victory we have over Satan and his devices is through our relationship with Jesus Christ and through the power of His blood.