

## The Devices Of Satan

“That no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11).

In vv. 6-11 of this chapter Paul admonished the Corinthian Christians to forgive the offending brother who was present with them. He feared that should they not do that and thereby confirm their love toward him, he might be swallowed up by his overmuch sorrow. He urges that such forgiveness be manifested and offered the brother that Satan might not gain an advantage over him.

In this passage is mentioned the “devices” of Satan. Vine defines device as “denotes thought, that which is thought out ... hence a purpose, device” (W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 307). A synonym for “device” would be “scheme”. While both “device” and “scheme” may be used in a proper and good sense, it is more often the words convey an idea of evil purposes. Certainly in the passage from 2 Corinthians the word describes a bad sense. Peter said it well: “Be sober, be watchful, your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

Foolish is the man who discounts the devices of Satan. Satan is pictured in Revelation as a great red dragon who lashes and thrashes about, and is so fearsome that with a might swoop of his tail he catches a third of the stars of the heavens and casts them to the earth (Rev. 12:3f). He has a great arsenal of weapons at his command and we should respect him in the sense that we recognize the danger of his potential injury to bring a flood of wickedness upon our world as well as to bring injury on us, personally. Consider some of his devices:

Deception. Satan is a master of deception. Little wonder in this because Jesus identified him as a liar and father thereof (Jn. 8:44). He used deception when he approached Eve in the very beginning of man's existence on this earth. Although God had warned Adam that the first couple were not to eat of the tree which stood in the midst of the garden, clearly stating that in the day they did so, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17), Satan brazenly disputed God's word. He approached Eve saying, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1). When Eve responded that God had indeed forbidden them to eat of the tree in the garden's midst (thus showing she did understand God's instructions); Satan responded, “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4b-5). Eve believed Satan's lie; she was deluded, deceived, beguiled (1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Cor. 11:3). He focused her attention on the fruit: it was good to eat, lovely to look at, and it was to be desired because it would make her wise as God. Satan, by thus directing her attention to these “desirable” items, tempted her through the three avenues he uses in bringing about man's fall into sin: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life (1 John. 2:15-16).

Snares. Snares are traps set to entangle a victim. Snares take various forms, and there is usually a “bait” to entice the would-be captive. Paul urged the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles (snares) of the devil (Eph. 6:11). In a list of qualifications for prospective elders, Paul commanded that one who was a novice was not to be considered lest he be “puffed up and he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (2 Tim. 3:6). In 2 Timothy, he warns against pride so that men might repent and recover themselves out of the devil's snare (2 Tim. 2:25f).

Sickness, disease, and misfortune. When Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath, a woman came in who had for 18 years been bowed together so that she could not lift herself up (Lk. 13:10-11). Jesus' opponents watched to see whether Jesus would heal the woman so that they might have something to condemn Him for, but in His answer to them, He put them to shame. He reminded them they would loose their ox or ass from a stall on the Sabbath Day that they might feed and water the animal, then He concluded, “Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years be unloosed from her bond on the day of the Sabbath?” (Lk. 13:16). Sickness, disease, and calamities are devices Satan uses to make us despair and curse God (as he attempted to do in the case of Job).

Doubt. Paul warned that we need the armor of God so we might be shielded from the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:6). Satan is an expert in creating doubt and when we doubt God we are liable to fall. Guard against doubting by calling to mind all the evidences of both God's existence and His care for us.

The Corinthians needed to forgive the erring brother who sought their forgiveness. If they did not, they would give Satan an advantage to further entangle this brother so recently recovered from immorality. Put on the whole armor of God that we might be able to withstand the guiles and snare of our adversary.

Jim McDonald