

## Transformation Of The Devil

2 Corinthians 11:5-14

**In the course of our studies we now come to words of Paul which I cannot possibly pass by.** They are almost terrifying as well as tremendously challenging. When seen in the context of the whole teaching of the Word of God and in the light of current events, these expose the true nature of the battle in which you and I are engaged: "...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Therefore, instead of looking at the chapter itself, I want you to look with me as we study the devices of Satan in our society.

**There is no need for me to argue for the existence of Satan, or his personality, not simply as an influence or as an evil thing, but as a person who is just as real as Jesus Christ Himself.** Indeed, if we accept the personality of Christ upon the revelation of the Word of God (and that is how we do accept it), we must also accept the personality of the devil upon the same evidence.

In Isaiah 14 he is revealed as one of God's heavenly host long before the existence of civilization on this planet, who set himself against the will of God and said, "I will ascend into heaven, and I will exalt my throne above the stars of God..." Before there was rebellion on earth, there was revolt in heaven.

**Satan stepped into the record of human history as the serpent seeking to ally the human race in his purpose to become self-centered, self-sufficient, and independent of God (Genesis 3).** He was 100% successful, and ever since then submission to that principle, as he calls it, has become the very nature of the human race as we know it, transmitted down from the Garden of Eden until now.

**I want you to understand that it is perfectly plain from the teaching of Scripture that it is *not* the aim of the devil to destroy humanity.** That may surprise you, but his plan rather is to realize

his ambition for world dominion through men yielded to him. To his followers Satan promises that they shall know good and evil. **One the other hand, God, the Lord of all glory, power and authority, declares that to follow Satan is to follow a path of destruction.** Satan says it will not. God says it will. God says one thing, but Satan says another thing. Satan says, "Believe me, yield to me, accept the principle of self-existence, self-sufficiency, independence of God, and I will show you life." God says, "Believe the devil and you will die, but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." The whole of your life here and your destiny in eternity depends upon whom you believe!

In spite of the fact that God is a God of love and grace, and in spite of the fact that human misery records that truth of God's Word, Satan still successfully blinds the minds of them who do not believe.

**The Word of God teaches us that Satan has the *world* blinded by his devilish system, but the focal point of his attack is upon the *church*.** Therefore, the Bible makes it clear that he attacks the church in three ways.

**First, in the realm of the spirit by *false teaching*.** Paul deals with that issue as he gives us this warning in verse 9, "...if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." And in verse 13 he says, "...such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." In other words, the first basic attack of the enemy upon the church of Jesus Christ is in the realm of our souls by *false teaching*.

**There is no doctrine of the church that is free from abuse.** When Satan attacked the Lord Jesus Christ, you will recall, he turned himself into a preacher with a text from the Bible (Psalm 91)

and dared to use the Word of God to attack the Lord of glory. Satan is adept at preaching a form of religion based on Scripture texts, and incorporating many of the doctrines of the Christian faith; indeed every doctrine of the faith except one. There is one he is afraid of, because he knows it is this one that will defeat him.

We read in Revelation 12:11, as the whole of this universe celebrates the triumph of our risen and returning Lord Jesus, "...they overcame him, that is the devil, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." If there is one doctrine that Satan cringes before, it is redemption by blood. It is justification by faith and not by works. It is atonement by the blood of Jesus. It is the free grace of God that puts a man right by God's unmerited favor, and not by our working to achieve salvation. Because Satan is afraid of this, he does his deadliest work *not* by *ignoring* this great doctrine, but by *perverting* it. He seeks to play down the blood atonement, by denying the truth of the Virgin Birth.

Second, the enemy attacks in the realm of the *imagination*, by *unholy thinking*. It is in our mind that temptation is dressed up in its most attractive garb. There is no gift so exalting as that of our imagination; it can rise to great heights. But there is no curse so debasing, so degrading, as an imagination that is defiled by the enemy. Therefore, Satan, who knows exactly the moment to attack, will come with full force at the best time. At times of sickness and depression, when low in spirit and in health, he fills our mind with doubt, with questionings, with *self-pity*. When we are well, strong, and prosperous, he fills our minds with self-confidence, self-love, and *self-admiration*. In times when we relax and seek to rest our mind, he will fill an empty mind with *foul thinking* and imagination. When we seek the face of God in prayer, he will invade the holy place with thoughts of which we are desperately *ashamed*. For every mood or condition he Satan has his weapon.

**Thirdly, Satan attacks in the realm of conscience by self-deception.** It is here that Satan will seek to appear in the soul as the very voice of heaven. And if we are honest, each of us must confess that it is not always easy to discern whether it is the devil or the Lord talking to you. **And when Satan has you thoroughly confused he leaves us in our sea of doubt, we find that we are now trying to live the Christian life with no reality, no power, no grace, no hunger for God.** And when that happens, everything we do for God – our giving, our attendance, our commitment - becomes a duty and a performance.

**Satan's first great attack on mankind was to get them to doubt the promises of God for their lives.** And I must tell you today, that most Christians are still sailing on the *sea of doubt* for their lives, filled with *fear* and *uncertainty*.

**What is the answer for us today?** How are we able to exercise the authority that we have over the devil? The answer is the inspired Word of God! **Only the Word of God can reveal and defeat the devil's lies.** You cannot reason with Satan, for man's wisdom is no match for Satan's cunning ways. We must allow the Word of God to be our weapon.

**It was the weapon of choice for our Lord when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.** Matthew 4:1-11 give us this insight, “Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungry. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not

put the Lord, thy God, to the test. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Begone, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

**Our Lord did not use His divine power to defeat Satan.** He used the same weapon that is available to us today: the Word of God. Jesus was led by the Spirit of God and filled with the Word of God, which is "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6: 17).

**Therefore, we must know God's Word.** There is no reason why any child of God should be ignorant of his Bible. The Word of God is available to us in many translations. **John 16:13-15 tells us that we have the Holy Spirit within us to teach us the truths of Word.** There is a multitude of Bible study helps available. If any intelligent Christian today does not know his Bible, it is his or her own fault!

**This means, of course, taking time to read and study the Bible.** No one will master God's Word in a lifetime of study, but we should learn all we can. We must make time, not find time, to study the Word of God. Bible study is not a luxury, it is a necessity!

**We must memorize God's Word.** Our Lord did not have a concordance with Him in the wilderness! He reached back into the Book of Moses, selected Deuteronomy, and quoted three verses from that book to silence Satan. Most adults think that Bible memorization is for children in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School, when actually it is for every believer.

We have been told in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." And in Psalm 37:31, "The law of his God is in his heart, his steps do not slip." And in Psalm 40:8,

"I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart." **The child of God needs to memorize the Word of God!**

**We must use God's Word.** The child of God's mind should become like a "spiritual computer." It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring God's Word to our minds when we need it, as seen in John 14:26, "But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." **But the Spirit of God cannot remind you of something that you have not learned.** We must first of all let Him teach us the Word. We must memorize the Scripture that He opens up to us. Then the Spirit of God will be able to remind us of what we have learned, and we can use that truth to battle Satan.

**God has made provisions for us to live in total victory over the power and forces of Satan.** Satan truly is a defeated enemy, but we must do it God's way.

**Therefore, let take a little spiritual inventory tonight.**

1. Do I spend time daily reading God's Word and meditating on it?
2. Do I systematically seek to memorize Scripture?
3. Do I find myself automatically "thinking Bible" when I am tempted or when I face decisions, or must I telephone my Christian friends to get spiritual help?
4. Do I know God's will for my life? Do I really want to know?
5. Am I willing to take as true everything in God's Word as true for my life personally? Or do I occasionally ask, "Did God really say that?" Do I argue with God's Word?
6. Do I really have a desire to study God's Word for my own spiritual growth?