

Anticipating The Enemy

Satan

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As usual, it is good to be back with you all—especially after surviving this week of all the evil activities that were going on in this world. It drains the energy out of you, does it not—to resist not necessarily temptations, but just to resist the constant bombardment of what Satan is promoting in this world of his.

While on a business trip about 8 years ago, I was flipping through the radio stations in eastern Alabama and I ran across a talk show in which the host was interviewing a Satan worshipper. He was asking several questions, one of which was "What are the most important days of the year to a Satan worshipper?" Without hesitation, in his well-spoken smooth voice the Satan worshipper said, "The most important is Halloween, then your own birthday." I thought this was an eye-opening statement—that Satan promotes first his own kingdom, and then the pride and appeals to the human self.

He knew the names of several individual demons to which he had spoken many times. And my skin began to crawl during this interview. I was poised to turn the radio off; but a short time later in the interview, as I listened, the talk show host asked a pointed and incredulous question. He said, "Why in the world would anyone want to be a Satan worshipper?" And immediately, upon his reply there was an instant change in the voice of the Satan worshipper and he replied in a deep harsh growl, just one word: "**Power!**" But what came out was far more chilling than I can relate, of course. My skin went from crawling to leaping, and I turned the radio off at that point. It was not that I was afraid, but I was very, very concerned that I was in such close link with a demon at that time.

The spirit world is a subject many people would rather avoid, and probably for good reason. The problem is that it is greatly underestimated in its impact on our individual lives. Among true Christians, there are two common reactions when this subject is mentioned: *fear* and *ignorance*. Both extremes

are wrong. The apostle Paul counseled the church about this subject in II Corinthians 2:11 by saying:

II Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Not knowing how Satan works can render us more vulnerable to his devices. So ignorance is not bliss on this subject.

Revelation 12:10-12 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

So "the devil has come down to you." Let that ring in your ears! In his sermonette this afternoon, we heard from Clyde Finklea; and in it he mentioned something that I thought was extremely important. Going through I Corinthians 13, he mentioned that any being without love is nothing; and he related it directly to Satan. That is, that Satan is the epitome of a being *without love*.

In the New Testament, Satan is the Devil who stands diametrically opposed to God and human well-being. In the Old Testament, however, the figure of Satan is more ambiguous and less clearly associated with evil (compared with the New Testament). There is not as much said in the Old Testament. Contrary to what you might expect, Satan does not play a large role in the writings of the Old Testament.

Used in only a handful of passages, the Hebrew noun *satan* is often used to describe the *character* of an action or the *role* of the individual performing it—rather than as his proper name for the character or individual performing

the act. In this sense, the word "Satan" is used to describe actions of obstruction, of opposition, and of accusation. Where it is used to refer to a spirit being, the actions of that being are usually vague. (This is speaking of the Old Testament. Again, I am comparing it to what the New Testament says on the subject.)

The most extensive portrayal of a satanic figure in the Old Testament is found in Job 1 and 2. The satanic figure in the book of Job takes a place among the "sons of God"—or, heavenly beings—to present themselves before God as members of the divine assembly. Here Satan appears among the spirit counsel of angelic beings who have access to the presence of God. In Job 1, the satanic figure is referred to as *the Satan*—with the definite article "the" before it—indicating that the term is understood not as a proper name, necessarily, but rather as *a title or office* held by the individual.

Job 1:6-12 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and [the] Satan [as the original Hebrew has] also came among them. And the LORD said to [the] Satan, "From where do you come?" So [the] Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the LORD said to [the] Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So [the] Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the LORD said to [the] Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So [the] Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

The role of *the Satan* here, as the original Hebrew has it, is that of an investigator, a tester, or a prosecuting attorney who seeks to probe the character of human beings. He has a specific purpose in mind. His special function is to watch over human affairs and beings with the purpose of searching out men's sins and accusing them in the spirit court. It is

interesting that he is of a malicious and evil character in doing this. But he has no power to act without God's permission. In reality, he is powerless.

In Job, the Satan describes his activity as "going to and fro on the earth." When God raises the image of Job's blameless character and unblemished devotion to God, Satan responds with doubt about Job's integrity and the motive of his devoutness. Then he proposes that Job's character be tested. A positive response from God sets trial in motion, and he is inflicted with a multitude of disasters. (You know the story well.)

When Job maintains his devoutness after the first onslaught, the Satan proposes for him yet another trial more grievous than the first. After this second trial (which leads into a series of speeches that occupy the center of the book of Job), the Satan, in this case, recedes into the background and he is not mentioned throughout the rest of the book.

In assessing the character of the satanic figure in the account of Job, it is important to keep in mind that it is **God** who draws Job to the attention of the Satan. While Satan outlines the nature of the test of Job, it is approved by God and limits of the test are set **by God**. Throughout this whole situation, God was in total control.

Job 2:6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life."

Satan clearly works within the parameters of God's control, and God's power, and His glory. In Zechariah 3, the Satan stands as the accuser of the high priest Joshua. This role is executed without any direct quotation of the words of the Satan, and God rebukes the Satan. The rebuke is both a denial of the Satan himself and the Satan's accusation against Joshua. Again, the character of the Satan is vague. He is only there with God's comments back to him.

Zechariah 3:1-2 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and [the] Satan standing at

his right hand to oppose him. And the LORD said to [the] Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you!"

Satan's accusation puts this scene in a judicial atmosphere, just like a courtroom. The position of standing on the right side was *the place of accusation* under law. Psalms 109:6 also shows this position. It says there:

Psalms 109:6 Set a wicked man over him, and let an accuser stand at his right hand.

So we can see there why the position was taken of Satan being at the right hand. That represented the location of **the accuser**. In I Chronicles 21:1, Satan appears there—this time without the definite article "the"—as an individual who incites David to conduct a census of Israel. (You are very familiar with this case too.)

I Chronicles 21:1 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.

So you can see Satan there in an active mode—a position of *motivation* rather than *accusation*. Of Job 1, Zechariah 3, and I Chronicles 21, I Chronicles 21 is the only one in which the term **Satan** is without the definite article "the." It is used to refer directly to a spirit being. This indicates that we should understand the term in I Chronicles 21:1 as a proper name, compared to a title. In Job 1:1-2 and Zechariah 3:1-2, where the term is *the Satan*, the title of Satan's actions is emphasized. So we see a difference in emphasis. The emphasis in Job 1-2 and Zechariah 3 is that of an investigator, a tester, or a prosecuting attorney who seeks to probe the character of human beings. So you can see in just the way that Satan is mentioned in these locations in the Old Testament that there is a different emphasis on each.

In the Old Testament writings, Satan was a vague figure (compared to the New Testament). He was among the members of the divine counsel. His role appears to be that of testing and probing the character of human beings, and

trying to deceive those God was working with. Nevertheless, the satanic figure had to work within the parameters established by God and under God's control.

Within the New Testament writings, we find a significantly more specific description of Satan's functions. Under many guises, Satan is revealed as the epitome of evil who works at cross-purposes with God and humanity at every opportunity. Satan is the sworn enemy of all humanity, especially those who claim allegiance to God. And it is interesting that Satan is so much more clearly revealed in the New Testament than in the Old. It may be that with God's Holy Spirit being given to His church, it is more clearly able to understand some of these more detailed aspects of Satan.

In the New Testament, Satan and his kingdom are sometimes referred to by the Greek name **Satan** all-inclusive.

Mark 3:24-26 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided [That is, that his kingdom is divided—including him.], he cannot stand, but has an end.

Sometimes the Greek equivalent *diabolos* (from which we get our English word "diabolical") is used in the New Testament. *Diabolos* is usually translated *devil*, meaning **accuser**. The range of names given to Satan in the New Testament are much more extensive than the Old Testament. Some of those names are: the devil, the tempter, the deceiver, the evil one, the prince of demons, the dragon, the ancient serpent, Beelzebub, the accuser, the enemy (and many more names are alluded to). It is a testimony to the clarity with which God wanted evil portrayed, more so in the New Testament.

The ambiguity of the satanic figure in the Old Testament is totally gone as we read through the New Testament. So much more detail is added to his character and the aspects of his devices. This change from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and the clarity with which Satan and his devices are

portrayed, better arms God's people with protection and an easier identification of Satan in the affairs of mankind. Notice *who* and *what* the battle for those with God's Holy Spirit is against.

Ephesians 6:10-18 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

We have quite a job on our behalf to do—with God's help through the Holy Spirit—in resisting Satan's wiles. There are *seven major defenses* listed there against Satan's vicious attacks: truth, righteousness, preparation for the Kingdom of God, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and communication with God—all mentioned as important things that we should concentrate on and develop.

There are two related but distinct motivations of Satan's activities that can be identified in the New Testament. (1) Satan's hostility towards humanity and (2) his animosity towards God. First let us take a look at the hostility towards humanity motivation that Satan has. Satan's ill will towards humanity is summed up best in I Peter 5:8, where Peter says:

I Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

That is what Satan is doing *at all times* in relation to God's people, and he already has the world in his grips. This statement can be elaborated by considering several of Satan's activities. Satan is portrayed not only as the tempter who tested people to see whether they would succumb to evil (perhaps in a way comparable to the role of the Satan in Job), but also as the one who drives humans to evil. At times the dividing lines between these two activities may seem blurred. In the gospels, Jesus was led into the desert where He would not only endure but also resist temptation by the Devil. Similarly, after Peter's confession of Jesus' identity, Peter's rebuke of Jesus is condemned by Him as another temptation of Satan.

Matthew 16:21-23 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

In some instances, evil actions are attributed to the efforts of Satan—who has inspired or even possessed individuals. Thus, the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot is attributed to the entry of Satan into Judas. In Acts 5:3, Ananias' deceptive scheme is attributed to Satan, *who has filled his heart*. (That is the way it is expressed.)

Satan's hostility towards humans is also seen in his role as the author of misfortune, disaster, and illness. In Luke 13:16, a woman who had been subject to physical afflictions for many years was said to have been *bound by Satan*. There again we see Satan's involvement in the lives of men, and his scheming. Paul describes his famous *thorn in the flesh* as *a messenger from Satan*. Satan also hinders the actions of individuals, as in I Thessalonians 2:18 where Paul asserts that his desire to return to Thessalonica has been thwarted by Satan. Satan is very, very active in the lives of God's people. Not that he is necessarily always influencing, but *he is always there* trying to.

The second motivation of Satan's activities is the animosity towards God, as I mentioned earlier. As the opponent of God, Satan also seeks to thwart the advance of God's purposes and the Christian commission. The diametrical opposition between God and Satan is obvious in Acts 26, where—while recounting his vision of Jesus, and resulting conversion—Paul cites Jesus' comparison regarding *darkness* and *light*.

Acts 26:17-18 "I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

The association of Satan with darkness and God with light is characteristic of the broader descriptions of *darkness and light*, *evil and good*, and *damnation and salvation*. The important point here is that this reflects this **underlying hostility and conflict** between Satan and God. It is constantly there, and it is constantly active. The conflict between Satan and God comes to its most detailed description in the book of Revelation. Here we find explicit references to the struggle between Satan and God that broke out in heaven and is fought on earth.

Revelation 12:7-9 And war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

This description—used to characterize the enemy of God—has the effect of enhancing our view of the place of Satan as the arch-rival of God. There is a constant conflict going on there, and therefore, a constant conflict between Satan and God's people.

The biblical imagery associated with Satan shows a definite development from the Old Testament to the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Satan

functioned among the members of the divine counsel under the Sovereignty of God. However, in the New Testament writings, Satan was revealed as the Devil—the archenemy of God—who mounts a significant (but ultimately futile) challenge to God's authority. So the picture becomes clearer of who and what Satan is, and what he does.

Let us take a look at the concept of *possession* and *deception*. God reveals that there is a spirit in the human brain that accounts for man's fantastic intellectual output above and beyond the animals. That human spirit can be reached by both sides of the invisible spirit world around us.

I Samuel 16:14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Or it could be stated that "a distressing spirit **was allowed** from the LORD to trouble him." It is important to distinguish between *demonic possession* and *influence* (or, being deceived or misled) by Satan. There is a dramatic difference! Because Satan is able to implant thoughts and suggestions in human minds by broadcasting to our human spirit, biblical case histories reveal that he is able to deceive or distort the judgment of God's people on occasion. This is especially true if we are not vigilantly watching the doors of our minds.

I Chronicles 21:1, which we read earlier, shows this clearly in that it says "Now Satan stood up against Israel, and **moved** David to number Israel." David was a man after God's own heart, but Satan was able to move him. Of course, God allowed that. Why did David feel the need to take a military census at that time? Was he getting overly ambitious, attempting to carve out more territory in a burst of glory towards the end of his life? Or did he lack faith at the time? Satan found a weak link in David's armor (maybe it was in his shield of faith) and moved in with devastating effectiveness.

Similarly, minds focused on negative and depressing thoughts are more susceptible to darts flung at us from the world of evil spirits. Even Peter lost a bout with Satan. We read earlier in Matthew 16:21-23 how Jesus dealt him a famous rebuke by saying, "Get behind Me, Satan!" Of course, He was not speaking directly to Peter as much as He was to Satan, because He knew that

Satan was influencing Peter. But Peter certainly got the point when that was said to him.

In totally *misguided sincerity*, Peter was being used by the Devil to propose ungodly tactics that might appeal to Jesus Christ. So what triggered Peter's failure? Christ had praised Peter earlier. Did Peter let himself get puffed up with pride, and therefore allow an opening for Satan to get in? That may be. I Corinthians 10:12 warns that we are most vulnerable when we think we are doing fine.

I Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Both David and Peter were men of God. They bounced back. Satan used their pride to get to them, but they repented. There is a vast difference between Satan giving our wrong thoughts and attitudes a further push in the wrong way than there is in out and out demon possession. In Mark 5, we will read a classic case of a *possession*.

Mark 5:2-3 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had been dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains.

At this time in society, it was very common for someone who was thought to be possessed by an evil spirit to be sent off to the tombs because it was believed that evil spirits lived around the tombs. This is where this man had to live, in the tombs and in the mountains.

Mark 5:4-7 Because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud

voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."

Demons love to play games with the minds of God's people. Here in Mark 5, they posed as underdogs to subtly make Jesus feel overbearing. The phrase "worshiped Him" (in verse 6) is literally *fell on his knees in front of Him*. It is an act of homage, rather than worship. The demon showed respect because he recognized that he was confronted with One greatly superior to him. However, the genuineness of this respect was very much in question.

Mark 5:8-13 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion: for we are many." Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." And at once Jesus gave them permission. . . .

Again, they cannot do anything unless God permits it and allows it. Also keep in mind that this man was not converted. God would not allow this to happen to a converted individual.

Mark 5:13-15 Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

So you can see there a classic example of a demon possession—not only *a* demon possession, but a *multiple* one. The "there were about 2,000" phrase there is referring to the subject—which is the demons. It appears that there

were 2,000 demons in that person. No wonder he was running in all directions and cutting himself. None of them could agree on anything. Just total chaos and confusion! (Keep that word **confusion** in mind.)

In some cases, people ***not totally possessed on a permanent basis*** have so weakened their minds that they are strongly susceptible to demon influence and are bothered by spirits. Certain deceptive spirits were working through Ananias and Sapphira, who were two highly respected members of the Jerusalem church and they were that for many years. So what happened? Their ambition put them on the wrong wavelength. Only Peter could discern the root problem, and he said, "Why has Satan filled your heart?"

Years before, Judas Iscariot had slowly built resentment towards Jesus Christ. Satan tracked Judas for years and then, when the time was right, he moved into Judas' mind and used him to betray Christ. So we have to be very careful about ambition, and resentment, and many other human nature problems, because Satan can get hold of them, and he can develop them and push them so that they become totally out of control.

How does a person open up his mind to **spirit influence**? One way is to have an open mind to false doctrines. There are tares attending God's church who would take a Christian captive through deceit (much the same as captives are taken in war), leading them away as booty. Paul depicts such false teachers as "men stealers"—wishing to entrap them and drag them away into spiritual enslavement.

Colossians 2:8-10 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Verse 8 expresses the only occurrence of the word "philosophy" in the New Testament. Paul is not intending his statement to be a condemnation of all philosophy. The word in the Greek is *philosophia*, and it is a positive word (in the Greek)—literally meaning, "love of wisdom." Here, however, it is

used with the negative reference to the Colossian error that came from Satan's influence. Satan always had some truth mixed with his lies. That is why false teachers are so successful many times.

In verse 8, Paul uses three phrases to characterize this philosophy and empty deceit, and each constitutes a reason for its rejection. The first was "*according to the tradition of men.*" Or, said another way, "depended upon human tradition."

Second, it was a philosophy that was based on the "*basic principles of this world.*" The phrase "basic principles" originally meant the letters of the alphabet, with its root meaning "things in a row." So it had an innocent meaning (so to speak). The term then came to be used of the physical elements of the world—of the stars and other heavenly bodies, and of the elemental spirits. That is, the supernatural powers believed by many ancients to preside over and direct the heavenly bodies. And so "the principles of this world" were the principles of Satan.

And third, it was a system "*not according to Christ.*" This is Paul's most telling criticism of the teaching at Colossae. The philosophy of the heretics did not coincide with the truth as it is revealed in Christ. He is the standard by which all doctrine is to be measured. And any system—whatever its claims—must be rejected if it fails to conform to the revelation God has given us in Him. Instead of being lead by the Holy Spirit, apostates give their attention to *deceiving spirits* and the *teachings of demons* .

I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

These individuals were attending God's church, but were overcome by these deceiving spirits. Here in verse 1, the word "demons" only occurs in the Pastoral Epistles. You know that the Pastoral Epistles are I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, and Philemon—because they are written to pastors. That is the reason that they are called that. But they are very important for every member of God's church. The King James has "devils" (plural), and British scholars still use this term; but in the Greek there is a clear distinction between the Greek word *daimonion* (which is translated "demon"—often in

the plural) and *diabolos* (which is most often translated "devil"—and that is regularly in the singular, meaning one).

The New Testament teaches that there are many *demons* but only one *devil*. The plural of *diabolos* occurs only in the Pastorals. The locations are I Timothy 3:11, II Timothy 3:3, and Titus 2:3 (where it is used for human slanderers).

I Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.

Paul declared that the false teachers were hypocritical liars! The original Greek has "*speaking falsely in hypocrisy*." This implies that they knew better! They had deliberately forsaken the faith. They were men whose consciences had been *seared with a hot iron*. This phrase is all one word in the Greek. The Greek word means "branded with a red hot iron." They were seared in their own conscience, so that they had become *unfeeling* about their willful misconduct. They did not care whether they pulled someone away from the truth or not. They just wanted their way. They wanted a following because of **pride**. But, in another way, they had been branded as sinners and as slaves of Satan.

One of the most obvious ways to open our minds to spirit influence is to "play with the devil," so to speak. That is, to toy with him or to have fun with the things that he promotes. Here is some good advice. Just a quick list here. Avoid psychic fairs, hypnotism, parapsychology, horror movies (even the funny kind), and the astrological paganism associated with the New Age movement. Satan loves to package white or black magic under the guise of new truths or entertainment. Avoid entertainment associated with the occult. Avoid seemingly innocent movies and TV shows that show witches, magicians, and psychics in a pleasant or humorous light. Satan appears as "an angel of light." So too will his co-conspirators.

Avoid curiosities such as Ouija boards, haunted houses, channeling, yoga, and perverted music—and music that promotes sinful lifestyles. This may shock some of you, but country music does contain a lot of (if not most) perverted lifestyles. Avoid unbalanced lifestyles—like overly stringent

dieting, fasting too much, bulimia, anorexia, subliminal self-help techniques, and constantly missing sleep. Do not get involved in foolish religious practices—like testing for demons. Avoid pornography and anything else that puts your mind on the wrong track. So the key is to avoid, avoid, avoid Satan's world and the things that he has to entice us in it.

Another way to open our minds up is in the form of confusion, chronic moodiness, negativism, and deep emotional disturbances. If we cannot control our emotions, we can assume that we are spiritually immature. Ephesians 2:2 says that Satan is "the prince of the power of the air." He constantly broadcasts attitudes of negativism.

In I Corinthians 14, Paul was afraid that unregulated worship within the area of Corinth might lead to disorderly conduct and belie the God of peace, who called them to be orderly.

I Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

All congregations of God should be peaceful congregations—without confusion, without contention. *Confusion* is translated from the very strong Greek word *akatastasia*, indicating great disturbance, disorder, or even insurrection or revolution. The same Greek word is translated "confusion" in James 3:16. It is a common word for anarchy and political turmoil. James also speaks of disturbances and turmoil in the church.

James 3:13-16 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

In verse 16, "every evil thing" refers specifically to worthless activity—the deeds that are bad because they are good for nothing and cannot produce any real benefit. Selfish zeal and ambition, then, always tend to **destroy** spiritual

life and work. With confusion often come moodiness, negativism, and depression. We have all heard the expression "Misery loves company." Extreme depression and dejection can put you in the same mood as the defeated, hopeless spirits that God cast down and who love to lurk in darkness.

Continuing along in James 3:17, James shows in contrast that the basic characteristic of *godly wisdom* is that it is first **pure**. His reference to purity is not sexual, but to the absence of any sinful attitude or motive. It is the opposite of the self-seeking attitude of verses 14-16.

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

That is a direct commission given to every single individual Christian. That we, in our lives, have to individually **promote peace**. Peace is a key to sowing the fruit of righteousness. If it is not sown, the fruit cannot be reaped. Therefore, Satan knows that if he can keep us from having peace in our lives, then he can keep us from producing the fruit of the Spirit. He does this by influencing us to be envious and self-seeking, which leads to a life of confusion. So if you feel you have confusion in your life, then there may be an indication of some of these traits here. That is something to look out for.

Another way to open up our minds is through anger, bitterness, and resentment. (Some of these things overlap somewhat.) No one is more bitter, hostile, and hate-filled than Satan is. Bitterness is a dangerous spiritual drug. We must be careful that we do not get hooked on it. We have to settle arguments before the sun goes down.

Ephesians 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:26-27 "Be angry, and do not sin." Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.

That is not a request. That is a command to every Christian. Those who lose their tempers give rise to satanic influences, because they have lost control of their thoughts and actions. This is one of the things that make hypnotism so dangerous—giving control of your mind over to someone else. If you relinquish control of your mind for any reason (including what looks like fun in those hypnotic trances that people can be put in), all you are doing is opening the door so that Satan can walk right in.

In its raw form, **human anger** is the emotion of instant displeasure and indignation arising from a feeling of injury that was done or intended. Anger becomes sin *when* it is unjustified and out of control. The anger attributed to God in the New Testament is that part of God that stands opposed to man's disobedient obstinacy and sin. Anger is not evil per se. If anger were in itself sinful, how could God Himself be angry? But it is what happens with that anger, and the reason for that anger, that makes it sin.

Paul commanded the Ephesians in verse 26 that when angry they were not to sin. Paul does not forbid being angry in itself—and could not forbid it, because there is a **righteous anger**. At times, we have to have that righteous anger, but we have to be very careful that it is not a self-centered anger rather than a righteous one. It is much easier to have self-centered anger than it is to have that righteous anger.

Anger is sinful *when* it rises too soon, without reflection, when it is disproportionate to the offense, when it is transferred from the guilty to the innocent, when it goes on for a long time, or becomes revengeful.

Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."

Anger is *murderous* in principle. The angry person will be subjected to God's judgment, since no human court is competent to try a case in anyone's **inward anger**. There is no clear distinction between the person with seething anger, the one who insultingly calls his brother "a fool," and the one who prefers as the term of abuse "Raca"—transliterated from Aramaic, *Reca*, meaning imbecile, fool, block-head, and so on and so forth. (You see the intention.)

Satan is **a compromiser**. He is flexible and he will bend in all to bring human beings to destruction. He will engage in 'give and take'—as long as he gets his way in the end. That is, as long as those he is dealing with stop short of fully submitting to God's government. Satan has deceived the whole world by compromising and syncretizing. He has something for everyone—every last person in this room and every last person in God's church. Satan knows what each of our weakness are, where the places in our armor are weak. He knows what can spur us to evil action.

How many times have you (I know I have) driven down the road, or been sitting thinking, and for no reason that you can see whatsoever a wrong or evil thought will pop into your mind. And you say to yourself, "Where in the world did that thought come from? I've never had that thought before." Or, "I'm not thinking about that." Or it may be something where you were irritated at somebody a year before about and all of a sudden, out of the middle of nowhere, it will pop up. We have to block those thoughts out of our mind, because they are only coming from one source and that source is Satan and his kingdom.

Satan has deceived the whole world by *compromising* and *syncretizing*. He has something for everyone. Satan's way is a broad highway to destruction. It is divided into innumerable lanes and everyone finds at least one of these lanes appealing—every last one of us. Satan is willing to allow us to obey many of God's laws as long as there is at least one point of the law (whichever one it may be, for each one of us individually) that we refuse to keep. Satan knows that God has ordained that to break one point of His law of love is to break all.

James 2:8-12 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

To refuse to submit in any one point is to rebel against God's entire divine code of behavior. Anyone guilty of such an *attitude of rebellion* obviously is not totally submitted to God. Total submission to God's law is what makes the difference between Satan's broad, all encompassing, something-for-everyone way to *destruction* and God's narrow way that leads to *Life*.

Satan wants us to think that what makes the difference is whether or not a church preaches Christ and believes Christ is the Savior. He makes his whole mainstream Christianity think that is all that is necessary. He does not want us to know that we can believe Jesus Christ is the Savior, and even worship Him, all **in vain**. Satan is an expert in making evil look good. By compromising, he can take something that is evil and combine it with enough good to make it look perfectly innocent. His strategy is to use many disguises, and bring them in from different angles.

Matthew 7:15-23 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. [And you will know Satan by his fruits as well.] Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many

will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Satan made Eve believe that the innocent looking but forbidden fruit was good for her—that she would be able to distinguish between good and evil. So Satan made that decision to eat the fruit look good. That is, like a good decision—like a wise decision. But that was the opposite of reality, of truth. When he tried to get Jesus to disobey God, Satan quoted good and valid scriptures. Satan is **deceitful**, to say the least; and we cannot underestimate the deceitfulness.

I John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

While we should have a healthy respect for the power that Satan and his demon hosts are allowed to wield, there is no need to personally dread the spirit world at all. Scripture clearly reveals that God has put a hedge between His people and the more dramatic manifestations of Satan and his cohorts.

Let us begin to wrap this up in Job 1. God challenged Satan about the good reputation of the righteous Job.

Job 1:9-10 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

We in God's church have a hedge around us; but we can tear that hedge down, and we can open that hedge up, and we can take chunks out of that hedge—by sinning, by not living up to our requirements as a Christian.

Matthew Henry commented on verse 10 in this way:

The proof Satan undertakes to give of the hypocrisy and mercenariness of Job's religion, if he might but have leave to strip him [that is, Job] of his wealth God declared Job the best man then living: now, if Satan can prove him a hypocrite, it will follow that God had not one faithful servant among men and that there was no such thing as true and sincere piety in the world, but religion was all a sham, and Satan was king de facto-in fact, over all mankind.

So Satan saw a lot riding on this chance to bring Job down. He gave his all in trying to change Job's mind. But Job eventually, with God's help, came around to understand and see God as He really is. And so the end of it—what God allowed—was for Job's own good, and for our good in what we read now. Job 1-2 clearly shows Satan having to be very careful about how he treated God's servant, Job. Satan can only do what God specifically allows, and no more.

Jesus Christ had to cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene before her conversion. (You will find that in Mark 16:9.) She became one of Christ's most devoted followers, showing that there is no need for undue alarm or panic with regard to satanic attacks. Sometimes God allows Satan to attack His people personally, as He did Job. But most of the time God only allows Satan to transmit his thoughts through *bad attitudes* of all types. And Satan knows exactly the attitudes to get through to us—if God allows.

God *has* placed a **hedge** around His people. Our job is not to remove that hedge—or damage that hedge, or open that hedge. If we allow ourselves to let down just a little in our prayer, our Bible study, our church attendance, or our tithing, or the things that God commands, then Satan will have an opening—if we do not maintain those things.

Then we wonder why we find ourselves irritable, mentally on the defensive, suspecting others, giving conception to competition (or division, or sides) in the church; suspicious of the motives of others, controversial, cynical, sarcastic. And we do not realize what is causing all that. It is Satan! Satan's influence is able to take our weaknesses in our human nature and just work at us until it becomes such a bad attitude that we cannot control it.

Satan is the prince and the power of the air. He broadcasts such attitudes as confusion, hostility, animosity, curiosity with white or black magic, sorcery, witchcraft, bitterness, jealousy, resentment, self-gratification, anger, habitual lying, blinding pride, accusations, rebellion, or compromising your convictions to true doctrine. And that is not even beginning the list of the things that Satan can use, if he is allowed.

If any of these attitudes, or interests, is affecting your relationship with God even slightly, you may be letting Satan influence you. Satan is broadcasting constantly! And if we are not vigilant in prayer and keeping close to God, these *negative attitudes of Satan* will take hold of us; and Satan will work on us, like he worked on Judas.

But we have a benefit. We have God's Holy Spirit to help us stay close to God, and to have understanding and discernment of those evil spirits that are transmitting those thoughts.

That is why God warns us through Peter, "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (I Peter 5:8) So just think of that sentence literally. If a roaring lion were in here, how cautious (to say the very least) we would be. And how we would want to get away from it and avoid it. If you were alone with that savage lion and it came running at you, you would be scared to death! We have God's protection, and nothing can happen unless God allows it to happen; and He will not put us through more than we can bear.

God meant for us to realize that we should be just as **aware** and **watchful** at the knowledge that Satan is seeking to destroy God's church and all of us in it. Here is *our responsibility*. Jesus Christ gives us straightforward advice as to how to handle Satan's broadcast, and He does it through James.

James 4:7-8 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.