

Sermon to the Saints of God which are at Topeka – Sunday, November 22, 2015

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. - 2Co 2:11

In this particular passage of scripture, the Holy Spirit through Paul is admonishing the church at Corinth against having an unchristian, censorious spirit against a member who had earlier been excluded for a practice of (then) ongoing, known sexual immorality, but who had since, by all appearances, repented earnestly of that sin and was no longer in the practice of it.

Barnes: ...the idea is, that they should at once re-admit the penitent offender to their communion, lest, if they did not do it, Satan would take advantage of it to do injury to him and them. It is a reason given by Paul why they should lose no time in restoring him to the church. What the advantage was which Satan might gain, Paul does not specify. It might be this: That under pretense of duty, and seeking the purity of the church, Satan would tempt them to harsh measures; to needless severity of discipline; to an unkind and unforgiving spirit; and thus, at the same time, injure the cause of religion, and ruin him who had been the subject of discipline. We know his plans, his thoughts, his cunning, his skill. We are not ignorant of the great number of stratagems which he is constantly using to injure us, and to destroy the souls of men. He is full of wiles; and Paul had had abundant occasion to be acquainted with the means which he had used to defeat his plans, and to destroy the church. The church, at all times, has been subjected to the influence of those wiles, as well as individual Christians And the church, therefore, as well as individual Christians, should be constantly on its guard against those snares. Even the best and purest efforts of the church are often perverted, as in the case of administering discipline, to the worst results; and by the imprudence and want of wisdom — by the rashness or overheated zeal — by the pretensions to great purity and love of truth — and by a harsh, severe, censorious spirit, Satan often takes advantage of the Church, and advances his own dark and mischievous designs.

We know that this has nothing to do with an amount of time, but that the church should be as keen in watching for sincere evidence of repentance (and to be able to separate it from feigned), and be wholly and meekly responsive to it, as it is in watching for leaven. Lacking diligence in either of these two places the church in grave danger – without which, we *would* be described as being ignorant, or without knowledge of at least one of Satan’s devices. Earlier, we have preached on some of the precious remedies against the devices of Satan, but we must be keen in our apprehension of the workings of Satan – not being ignorant of his devices, but also not ascribing to him some power or device that he is not in possession of, that we also not give him a faulty advantage in our own minds and hearts thereby. Over time, in being asked questions by a few blessed members of this body, and by my own time in thought about such matters, there have been a few questions concerning the nature of Satan – of his devices, limitations, his motivations and his coming to be that will be the subject matter for this week, and Lord willing, next Sunday. This blessed word of God is a great deal of our armor, and I am only

interested in walking in the current light that we have with great contentment and thanksgiving, while asking our merciful God for more light, heeding the continual exhortation to:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. - 2Ti 2:15

By looking to scriptural answers to some of these questions, and sound scripturally-based expositions, it is hoped that we may more 'rightly divide the word of truth' in our lives, on the ground, increasingly endeavoring to:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: - 1Pe 5:8

In this world we are constantly bombarded with counterfeit notions of God which is a great evil. We are also culturally bombarded with counterfeit notions of Satan, and if embraced without full scriptural support may hinder us, make us lax, or make us overwrought. What I hope to separate out for us, in some measure, is perhaps a few things we can say with a great deal of clearly expressed biblical authority, from things that we can look upon as having some scriptural authority for but that we cannot say with as much certainty, given the current light that the Lord has willed us to walk in, and also perhaps pointing out a thing or two, regarding the subject matter at hand, that we have little to no scriptural authority for thinking. In all this I ask for your patience, as I will not be working this through in a wholly intuitive manner. I will not be starting 'at the beginning' with Satan (though this has been a question posed to me by several, as well as being provoked to thought in my own mind), as this investigation, though brief, leads to a few other scriptural conclusions that will need properly fleshed out themselves. For today, I will focus on some other questions that have been raised on this subject.

Common names of Satan and their attributes

There are many names, both proper and common (as by descriptive characteristic) ascribed to Satan in scripture. Some are: Satan, Devil, Lucifer, dragon, Beelzebub, the wicked one or the evil one, the tempter, the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, son of perdition, the prince of this world, angel of light, roaring lion, father of lies, wicked one, Apollyon & Abaddon, etc. I encourage each of you, especially those young people and those with children, to look these names up and look into the characteristics ascribed to these names. I have been asked by a few young people about a couple of the more common names of Satan and what they mean, and why he would be called by that name.

The word 'Satan' occurs 55 times in 49 verses in the KJV of the bible, and in the Old Testament is nearly always the Hebrew word 'satan' (saw-tawn) – adversary or the arch-enemy of good – to withstand, and in the New Testament is nearly always from the Greek word 'satanas' (sa-ta-nas) – the accuser – the adversary).

1. So Satan is an adversary, as described in scripture – or one's opponent in a contest, conflict, or dispute.

The word 'devil' occurs 61 times in 51 verses in the KJV of the bible – all in the New Testament. This word is translated from the Greek word 'diabolos' (dee-ab'-o-los) – false accuser, slanderer.

2. So Satan is a false accuser or slanderer, as described in scripture – or one who makes false and damaging statements about us, and one who accuses men of their sin, even in the midst of the imputed righteousness of Christ being bestowed upon them.

In our culture, and especially so in religious culture, the name Lucifer is all over the place, and has been ascribed to Satan, at least in terms of a former name that in some way related to a former nature. The word 'Lucifer,' however, only appears in the KJV of the bible one time, in the book of Isaiah. So,

3. Who is Lucifer, and what does he, or that, that have to do with Satan? Consider the scripture:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! – Isa. 14:12

So as I do, when I am trying to rid myself of any possible colloquial meaning or idiomatic expressions about my language (that can sometimes really cloud the mind as to the real meaning of a piece of scripture), I go back to, what I assume, is the Hebrew word that is rendered in the KJV as 'Lucifer.' What I find is, that in this particular place, it looks like the KJV translators did not 'translate' the Hebrew word heyleyl (hay-lale') into English, but instead simply duplicated the word used in the Latin Vulgate translation (accomplished by Jerome at the beginning of the 5th century, AD); the word is 'lucifer' – or literally, the planet Venus. In other words, 'lucifer' in the Latin Vulgate literally referred to Venus, but metaphorically would refer to earthly kings, emperors, and pagan deities. It is only by turning 'lucifer' into a proper name, through that verse, that would give rise to the notion that: 1) Lucifer is a former name for Satan, and that 2) the name (and the prophesy offered at Isaiah 14) are attached to this same entity.

The full prophesy offered in Isaiah 14 is this:

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon,

saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, everyone in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts. – Isa. 14:1-23

There are a few expositors who concede that the description of this king's great fall, having been lifted up in his heart against God, also bears a metaphorical association with the casting out of Satan described in Rev. 12:7-10 (a passage that we will spend some time with next week, Lord willing). But across the board, the mainline expositors do not speak of this passage as having any great weight in describing the nature of Satan, or the nature of the fall of Satan. And I tread lightly, here, as I am not one to rest too heavily on some statistical consistency amongst expositors. They don't always get it right – either individually or collectively. In the main, though, the embraced topic of this passage of scripture is the great fall of the either specifically Belshazzar, or of the Babylonian 'kingship' in total (including Nebuchadnezzar). There is a TON of 'second level' scholarship on this subject (outside of the main canon of expositors that we normally consult), but so much of it veers so much to the speculative that there is no place to hold onto – no real handles, scripturally speaking.

A brief aside that bears on the topic. In 1667, Paradise Lost was published. This was an 'epic poem' written by John Milton (in open verse form). This piece of literature was very popular (many people viewing it as a legitimate work of religious scholarship), and was especially popular with subsequent literary giants. In Paradise Lost, a somewhat speculative account of the war in heaven and subsequent

casting out of Satan is described, and Lucifer is named as a character. The impact of that work, and subsequent characterizations of Lucifer, has added to the cultural lore of Satan as Lucifer. I will be returning to this same passage of scripture next week, for wholly different reasons, and perhaps questions you may have about it will be answered then. But, as in all things I bring to you, please ask any questions as you have them. Today, next week, whenever.

How does Satan provoke men to sin?

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

The word 'provoke' there is from the Hebrew *cuwth* (sooth): to persuade, move, set on, stir up, entice, incite, allure, instigate

This could be done in an instant, but that is not always the way Satan works on us – he could present notions to us over a period of time that would lead to us making a bad decision as David did here. Ideas over time, in a variety of different ways – always armed with a great knowledge of the inner workings of the heart and mind of man. But again remember, that Satan is ALWAYS restrained by God. This point is amplified in the parallel verse of this same happenstance at 2Sam. 24:1:

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

These two verses are speaking of the same happenstance: in the one, Satan provoked David to sin; in the other, the Lord, whose anger was kindled against Israel, moved David against them.

There is no provocation by Satan that is not sanctioned by God. Any who ascribe free agency to Satan do err, not knowing the scriptures. The comfort we take in this notion, as forcefully laid upon us in the book of Job, ought to be plenty. But there is much more comfort to be taken in this restraint against Satan at the omnipotent hand of God. Christ commands Satan.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. - Mt 4:10

What does Satan know? How does he know it? How can he know things? What limitations are there?

Consider the scripture:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. – Job 1:6-7

(We will hopefully return to who those sons of God were in next week's talk, but for now just know that the Hebrew isn't fancy or highly idiomatic here: *beney haelohim* (bay-nay-hah-A-lo-heem) is literally translated as 'sons of the god'.) The sense in this passage of scripture is that Satan, in order to employ every device, strategy and advantage of his domain, seeks to understand both the operations of the world and the operations of the hearts and minds of men, to the fullest measure possible, and so seeks to analyze all such matters at a granular level – to gain every possible advantage. 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it' is somewhat idiomatic, but the general sense is he was, and is, constantly on the move to seek a new understanding of a current device, attempt to invent a new device (or evil thing), or better understand how to displace sincere, reverent thoughts of God in our minds and hearts:

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. – Gen. 6:5

Remember that this 'evil' means that their thoughts were contrary to God – that no one really had sincere, reverent, sustained thoughts of God. But also remember, although Satan's (God-given) power and ability to understand and therefore attempt manipulations of the hearts and minds of men is great, there are some limitations.

1. It looks like Satan cannot be in all places at once. Otherwise we wouldn't have had to walk up and down in the earth to harvest all the thorough-going analysis of its workings to yield Satan a greater (perceived) advantage over man. He seems limited by space and time, in contrast to the holy angels, which seem not to have any such constraint placed upon them - they seem to have continual access to heaven and God, whereas Satan seems not to.
2. Also, it looks like Satan doesn't know everything, nor can he read our minds. Consider the scripture:

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. – Job 1:8-11

Satan here may not know the core of the matter, as to why Job loves and fears the Lord. Satan knows a great deal about how the human mind and heart work, but his knowledge is incomplete. He can make educated guesses about what tempts a person and is sometimes wrong. To be sure, he understands the doctrines of grace and therefore election and reprobation, but he doesn't know whose names are written in the book of life – he only sees fruit like we do – just at a much keener level. This is at best a 'shot in the dark' to see if, by employing measures allowed by God, he can shake a false professor's

faith, or at worst the blinded, enraged pride of a creature to think that he can make a man renounce what God has already bestowed. It is significant here that God had already referred to Job as 'my servant,' and endearingly characterized Job's walk and heart. Satan arrogantly, ineffectively works with all he has against a pronouncement of God that is unshakable. This 'my servant' is offered by God with approbation. The love of God is fixed and sure. Remember what brother Ben preached a few Sunday's back – a huge jug of cool water to a very thirsty soul – that when God looks upon his people – his elect – any of them, he sees Christ. This is a great comfort.

In general, we can see that Satan employs a host of devices, simultaneously, to displace sincere, reverent thoughts of God in our minds and hearts – but in some important ways, he doesn't know with specificity what temptations will work for you or for me – so he puts an absolute deluge of them out there. One may work where another failed. But once I show him, through continued return to certain sins, where my weaknesses lie, he no longer has to guess. And then my only hope is the Lord's help, as I have no strength, wisdom or device of my own that can withstand my adversary – it is only through being invigorated by his Spirit, by his Word and by his providential restraint of Satan (which is absolute) that I am not devoured. Satan was not allowed to 'devour' Job, though fiery trials ensued - and that seems to be a strong 'standing type' in the scripture as to how the Lord perfects all of his dear children.

Why did Christ refer to Peter as 'Satan?'

Consider the scripture:

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. – Matt. 16:21-23

The Lord Jesus Christ had just finished showing his disciples some very important details about the CENTERPIECE of his ministry and ultimately the reason for his carnal manifestation to us – namely, the provision of salvation for his elect by taking their sins upon him and bearing the penalty for it himself. And Peter kind of took Christ aside, armed with a paltry, worldly understanding of the Kingship of Christ (though Christ would greatly amplify his understanding soon) and rebuked him, contradicting him concerning the events that Christ just said must come to pass? This acting out of his part in the Eternal Covenant, the hinge pin of the eternal moral realm, is the whole shooting match, as they say – and Peter is ignorantly (though not to his own mind) fussing at the Lord for saying them or committing them to reality? Several Hebrew linguists suggest that the phrase 'get thee behind me' is a Hebraism – an idiomatic phrase that suggests a meaning in linguistic context that can suffer a loss, or fading of original meaning in translation to another language – that means 'Follow me'. And we know that the Greek

word ‘satanis,’ that we normally translate as ‘Satan,’ literally means ‘adversary’ – and Peter’s words, both in connotation and denotation, were those of a ‘Satan-like man (another meaning from strong of the Greek word ‘satanis’). To be sure, Peter is chastened for his words, but if you consider the context of Christ’s last words with and about Peter, just prior to this incident, the import of the words tends to shift a bit. Consider the scripture:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. – Matt. 16:13-20

Blessed art thou, Peter. God revealed the answer to you, Peter. Upon this rock (the truth in the answer that Peter gave, not Peter himself), Christ will build his church. Peter will be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever Peter binds on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatsoever Peter looses on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Very heavy talk. Very blessed lot. So Christ had already pronounced a more enduring, long-term outlook toward Peter. But also notice just how quickly the heart of a man, just blessed face to face by Christ, is prone to sin and folly. It can be instantaneous, and it is Satanic in nature, but in the adversarial, sinful sense – not necessarily always specifically directed by Satan or another devil. OUR hearts are deceitful. The influence of Satan is certainly one to be on one’s guard against, but we don’t have honest hearts that, only through Satan’s influence, are MADE to deceive. OUR hearts are deceitful. We are prone to sin – whether Satan is around or not. Certainly his influences are EVERYWHERE, literally inundating us with Godless messages, and they drag and pull at us all day. But if you lay out in the tall grass of a meadow, and get welled up with pride, or hold a grudge and therefore have an unforgiving disposition against a brother, or give place to a host of other sinful ideas, that’s not necessarily Satan standing next to you in that meadow.

How does Satan put thoughts into a heart or take thoughts away from a heart?

Consider the scripture:

And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. - Mr 4:15

I don’t see any direct scriptural evidence that Satan directly controls the thoughts of a man’s mind, or the sentiments they convey to his heart. Gill suggests here: *Satan cometh immediately and taketh away*

the word that was sown in their hearts. The devil, signified by the fowl, or fowls of the air, immediately takes notice of such hearers, and is very busy with them; (presenting to) their minds with other things suitable to their dispositions, and setting before them other objects, whereby their minds are, at once, taken off from what they have been hearing; so that all that they have observed, and laid up in their memories, is lost at once, and never thought of any more.

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? - Ac 5:3

Barnes: A man's heart or mind is full of a thing when he is intent on it; when he is strongly impelled to it; or when he is fully occupied with it. The expression here means, that he was strongly impelled or excited by Satan to this crime.

Calvin: Peter pointeth out the cruelty and horribleness of the offense {1} by his question, when he saith, that Satan had filled the heart of Ananias. For there is no man whose heart is not pricked with the pricks of Satan, and all men are also many ways tempted, yea, these temptations pierce into their minds; but where Satan possesseth the heart, he reigneth in the whole man, having, as it were, expelled God. This is a sign of a reprobate, to be so addicted and given over to Satan, that the Spirit of God hath no place.

The 'filling' of Ananias' heart was not a lightning strike of reprobacy in an otherwise Godly-construed mind. It was clear that he had given himself over wholly to Satan, and was never God's – but a vain professor who made a fair show for a time, but had, over time, let the ideas presented to him by Satan take root and grow – taking over his whole mindscape. There were no sincere, reverent thoughts of God in either Ananias' heart or his wife's, otherwise recovery would have been the choice of the keenly-perceiving Spirit that abode in Peter, rather than instant death.

What does it mean for Satan to 'bind' men?

We already saw the constrained, though heavy, physical affliction that Satan delivered to Job. Now consider the scripture:

And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom

Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.- Luke 13:10-17

Satan binds men in physical affliction. Barnes says here: By his binding here is meant that he had inflicted this disease upon her. It was not properly a possession of the devil, for that commonly produced derangement; but God had suffered him to afflict her in this manner, similar to the way in which he was permitted to try Job.

There are so many good things going on here. The woman was afflicted for all those years, perhaps partially that the glory of God is magnified both in the sudden riddance of it by Christ and in her giving God the glory for it. But also, that she, though infirm, would nonetheless be there, having the word of Christ being preached to her – she a weak, afflicted nobody would find it important enough to be there, rather than merely sitting in the miserable puddle of her affliction and murmuring. And finally, this happenstance has the hypocrite being buffeted by Christ, in sight of all present and billions to come who read this, for such a perverse, litigious mangling of the concept of righteousness.

Does Satan actually possess the bodies of men? What does it mean for Satan to ‘enter’ a man?

Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. - Lu 22:3

And after the sop Satan entered into him.– Jn. 13:27

Satan enters into men. The Greek here is *eiserchomai* (eye-sur-kho-mah-ee): to enter - of men or animals, as into a house or a city; of Satan taking possession of the body of a person; of entrance into any condition; of thoughts that come into the mind.

Gill: *At the same time that the Sanhedrin were sitting, and consulting about the death of Christ, Satan, or the adversary, as the word signifies, the devil, who is the enemy of the Messiah, the woman's seed, entered into Judas; not corporeally, as he did into those that were possessed by him; but he entered "into his heart"; he put it into his heart to betray him (much in the same way that Ananias' heart was filled by continual thoughts contrary to God); he stirred up, and worked upon the corruptions of his heart; suggested evil things to his mind, and baited his temptations agreeable to his malice and covetousness:*

The continual presentation of ideas to the mind by Satan (not mind-control, as in making the mind think one thing over another, but rather knowing how the mind works at a level much higher than his subject, and being able to manipulate – MUCH in the same way, but probably at a much higher level, than how men manipulate one another through the persuasiveness of their ideas and arguments – all, of course, to selfish ends). Of course, in this case, there is another extremely important element to the potency of the influence against Judas' mind – Christ: *Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.*

This is different from an actual possession by devils into the body of a man (that have and do occur), as we can see from the following example:

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, what is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel. – Mark 5:1-20

This is a possession – devils, or evil spirits (which are the same thing), invading the man’s body – and sounding very much like they both have great impact on his behavior (crying, and cutting himself with stones), and that they speak for him, at least in part, while he is possessed of them (My name is Legion: for we are many). I don’t know, nor do I think any of us can say with certainty, how much of an influence these devils, being evil spirits in league with Satan, are capable of having upon a person – it is obvious that, in this case, the influence – both to speech and behavior, is considerable. I think there are two overarching points to be made here – one with great certainty and one with strong negative Bible evidence. First, we must always remember that any devil’s activities are completely harnessed by God. When God but speaks in a *hush*, Satan *jumps* to accomplish His will. Think of Job, who was tremendously afflicted by Satan, but never beyond the constraints placed upon him of God.

See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. - De 32:39

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. - Jas 2:19

Second, while we see several places in scripture where a person is actually possessed of devils, or evil spirits, we have no evidence that I have found of one of God's elect, while being imbued with the Holy Spirit of God, also being possessed of a devil. I certainly can make no rational case for the instance – but I try to be careful here, as my only desire is to rightly divide the word of truth to the edification of the hearer. The Comforter is just that – the Spirit of God that, amongst many other things, gives spiritual comfort, at all the appropriate and needed times, to the mind and heart of Jacob. And while our depraved hearts still carry around notions of sin that threaten to darken our mindscape at every turn,

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 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. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Rom. 8:14-16

Gill: The thing which the Spirit of God witnesses to is that we are the sons of God; which supposes the case in some sense doubtful and uncertain, at least that it is called in question; not by others, though it sometimes is, as by Satan, which need not seem strange, since he called in question the sonship of Christ himself, and by the world who know them not, and by good men, till better informed: but the testimony of the Spirit is not the satisfaction of others, but the saints themselves; who are ready to doubt of it at times, because of the greatness of the favour, and their own sinfulness and unworthiness; especially after backslidings; through the temptations of the devil, and because of their many trials and afflictions. Now this witness of the Spirit is to establish and confirm it; not to make the thing itself surer, for that stands on the sure foundation of predestination, on the unalterable covenant of grace, on union to Christ; redemption by him, the gift of Christ, and continuance of the Spirit; but to assure them of it, and of their interest in it; for the testimony is given "to our spirits"; for our own spirits are no witnesses to ourselves: the Father and Son are co-witnesses of the Spirit, but not our own spirits; the spirits of the saints are they which receive the witness of the Spirit of God, to which it is made; not to their ears, for it is not an audible testimony; but to their hearts, it is internal; to their renewed souls, where faith is wrought to receive it; to their understandings, that they may know and be assured of it; to their spirits, which are apt to faint and doubt about it. Now it is "the Spirit itself" that bears this witness, and not others, or by others, but he himself in person; who is a divine witness, whose testimony therefore must be greater than others, and a faithful one, who will never deceive; for he witnesses what he knows, and what is sure and certain: his very being and habitation in the saints are witnesses and proofs of their adoption; his powerful operations and divine landings persuade to a belief of the truth of it; and by shedding abroad the Father's love in the heart, and by the application of Gospel promises, he causes

and encourages them to "cry Abba," Father; which is a wonderful instance of his condescension and grace.

This does not at all suggest that a man, prior to being imbued with the Holy Spirit of God, is exempt from possession. Indeed, there are all indications, both in the man's deliverance from his demonic possession by Christ, and by the words of the man afterward, that he was a man who loved the Lord:

And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel. - Mark 5:18-20

For next week, Lord willing, I will focus primarily on the origin and nature of Satan, attempting to parse scriptural fact from that which is not as clearly expressed in the Word, and then attempt to faithfully deal with some other fundamental notions of scripture that appear to come into play upon that analysis.

I love you all. Amen.