

**“The ABC’s of the Christian Life: (32) Following Jesus Christ Rightly:
#19b. Three Great Foes: Third, the devil (part 2)**

Introduction:

Let us begin this morning with the reading of our Lord’s interaction with Peter, as Peter was about to experience a great trial of his faith that the devil would cause him. We read, however, that in spite of the devil’s malicious intention toward Peter, the Lord Jesus declared that through His intercession on Peter’s behalf, the devil would not only fail to accomplish the destruction of Peter’s faith, but his evil efforts would result in Peter becoming a more qualified servant of Jesus Christ. This exchange took place just before our Lord and His disciples traveled to the Garden of Gethsemane where He was arrested. It is recorded in **Luke 22:28-34**.

²⁸“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. ²⁹And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, ³⁰that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

³¹And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

³³But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.”

³⁴Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

Last Lord’s Day we began to address the spiritual foe with which we engage spiritual warfare, that being the devil. We considered his identity as a spiritual being, a fallen angel who is in authority over a third of angels that followed him in his rebellion. He fights against our Lord, attempting to frustrate His purposes and defeat His people. But our Lord totally vanquished him when He died upon the cross and then raised to be exalted and enthroned as the Lord over the heavens and the earth. In fulfillment of God’s first promise of the Gospel (Gen. 3:15), although the devil had “bruised His heel” in the crucifixion, Jesus had bruised the serpent’s head, that is, King Jesus deposed satan from his former absolute authority over the world, causing him to become subservient to Jesus the Lord. As Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:22, Jesus “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.” God the Father had glorified His Son, having given Him authority over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to those that the Father had given Him from eternity to save (John 17:1-3).

Toward the end of last week’s message we cited the many ways in which the devil seeks to defeat Christians. He is deceitful and deceptive. He is cunning and conniving. The Scriptures display him as yet having great authority over the fallen world system and over the unregenerate (non-Christian) peoples of the world, even though Jesus is his Lord. We pointed out, however, that although satan is a great and powerful foe, he is not unlimited in his power and his ability to thwart the purposes of God in the lives of His people. As we stated,

“satan is not as God, for God is infinite, but satan is finite (limited). Satan is *powerful*, but he is not all-powerful (omnipotent) as God is. Satan is *wise*, but he is not all-wise (omniscient) as God. But the Scriptures do speak of him ‘who deceives the whole world’ (Rev. 12:12). He is an intelligent, powerful, malevolent spirit being.”

Today we will begin with a short review for those who may not have been with us, but we will also include some additional information. And then we will consider in some detail this event from Luke 22 that we just read. First, let us review the names for the devil, which betray his nature and evil work in the world.

I. The names of the devil

The Bible employs a number of names, titles, and descriptions of the devil. The Greek word for devil is **διάβολος** (*diablos*), which conveys the idea of one being a “slanderer.” The use of the word, “devil”, is frequently employed in Holy Scripture. It is used 35 times in the New Testament. Unfortunately, the KJV uses the word, devil, on 60 occasions in the New Testament, to refer not only to satan, but to refer to a demon or demons. The KJV does not use the word “demon(s).” However, this is incorrect, for though there are many demons, there is only one devil.

Three times the New Testament uses the Greek word for devil, **διάβολος**, to refer to people who were slanderers (cf. 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3). On four occasions the word, devil, is used in the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), two of which refer to he-goats as demons, or goat-demons (Lev. 17:7; 2 Chron. 11:15), and twice translating the Hebrew word for demon (Deut. 32:17; Psa. 106:37).

Aside from the Greek word translated devil, the devil has the personal name of “satan.” Satan means “opposer”, or “adversary.” He is the one who opposes God and God’s people. Other names of the devil are “Abaddon” or “Apollyon” (Rev. 9:11), “the accuser of the brethren” (Rev. 12:10), “adversary” (1 Pet. 5:8), “Beelzebub” (Matt. 12:24), “belial” (2 Cor. 6:15), “the deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9), “the great dragon” (Rev. 12:9), “the evil one” (Matt. 13:19, 38; 1 John 2:13; 5:19), “the father of lies” (John 8:44), “the old serpent” (Rev. 12:9), “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30); “the prince of the powers of the air” (Eph. 2:2); and “the tempter” (Matt. 4:5; 1 Thess. 3:5).

The names of the devil reflect his evil nature and intention toward everything good and righteous in God’s creation.

II. The origin of the devil

Last Lord’s Day we stated that the Bible does not reveal *clearly* the origin of the devil; however, there are several places in Scripture that are commonly regarded as reflecting this chief angel who fell into sin, thus becoming the devil. That he did fall is clear. When God created the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1, we read that “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). This could not have been said had the devil already had sinned against God and was in rebellion. But certainly, shortly after creation, the devil, who was probably originally an holy angel, rebelled against God, with many holy angels following him, and thus they became fallen angels, we believe these are what the Bible describes as demons in the biblical story.

Does the Bible tell of the devil’s original fall into sin? The answer is “yes” and “no.” There are several passages in the Old Testament in which the direct context speaks of evil kings in history, enemies to God’s people. But the nature of these narratives seems to speak beyond the immediate context, and they seem to reveal beyond their historical context the spiritual state of the devil and a description of how and why he fell into sin. Last week we considered the first of these two passages, which is **Ezekiel 28**. Let us take the next few minutes to consider the second passage that intimates the fall of the devil into sin, which is **Isaiah 14:3-20**.

We should establish the context before we read the passage. Isaiah the prophet had been declaring God’s judgment on His people through the instrument of Babylon and its king. But then God made known His intention to restore His people after He had chastened them. He would break the power of Israel’s oppressors, delivering His people from their affliction. In describing the king of Babylon, the description seems to reach beyond the King of Babylon, to speak of the devil and his fall into sin. The

depths of sin to which the ancient king of Babylon had fallen was very much like the much greater fall of Lucifer into sin. Here is Isaiah 14:3ff

³It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, ⁴that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

“How the oppressor has ceased,
The golden city ceased!

⁵The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,
The scepter of the rulers;

⁶He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke,
He who ruled the nations in anger,
Is persecuted and no one hinders.

⁷The whole earth is at rest and quiet;
They break forth into singing.

⁸Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you,
And the cedars of Lebanon,
Saying, ‘Since you were cut down,
No woodsman has come up against us.’

⁹“Hell from beneath is excited about you,
To meet you at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.

¹⁰They all shall speak and say to you:
‘Have you also become as weak as we?
Have you become like us?’

¹¹Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your stringed instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.’

¹²“How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!

¹³For you have said in your heart:
‘I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;

¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.’

¹⁵Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.

¹⁶“Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, saying:

'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
 Who shook kingdoms,
¹⁷Who made the world as a wilderness
 And destroyed its cities,
 Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'

¹⁸“All the kings of the nations,
 All of them, sleep in glory,
 Everyone in his own house;
¹⁹But you are cast out of your grave
 Like an abominable branch,
 Like the garment of those who are slain,
 Thrust through with a sword,
 Who go down to the stones of the pit,
 Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
²⁰You will not be joined with them in burial,
 Because you have destroyed your land
 And slain your people.
 The brood of evildoers shall never be named. (Isa. 14:3-20)

This prophecy of the fall of the king of Babylon seems to reach beyond him personally, perhaps reaching to the distant past when the devil first rebelled against God, left his first estate, and became the leader of those angels that joined him in his rebellion. Of course in verse 12 we read of the king being addressed as “Lucifer.” It reads, “How you are fallen from heaven, *O Lucifer*, son of the morning!” I read from the New King James version, which is quite similar to the King James Version, in which the name “Lucifer” is the translation. This is the only place in the Bible that this name, Lucifer, is found. And so, you see in the immediate context, the name is a reference to the king of Babylon.¹ Actually, the common designation of Lucifer as a name for satan is more a result of our western literary heritage than it is a clear delineation of the biblical text.² In fact except for this translation in other than in the KJV and NKJV, it is not translated in this manner in the other common English translations. The **English Standard Version** (ESV) reads “How you are fallen from heaven, *O Day Star, son of Dawn!* How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!” The **New American Standard Version** (NASV) reads, “How you have fallen from heaven, *O star of the morning, son of the dawn!* You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!” And then the **New International Version** (NIV) reads, “How you have fallen from heaven, *O morning star, son of the dawn!* You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” And so, rather than the name, Lucifer, the word is translated as either “a day star”, “O star of the morning” or “morning star.” These words probably refer to the planet Venus, which often appears brightly in the pre-dawn sky. As an emblem of the king of Babylon, like the planet Venus, it appears brightly in the pre-dawn sky only to be overtaken as its brightness is overcome by the rising sun, which would be the emblem of God bringing forth His

¹ John Calvin did not believe that the name, “Lucifer” in Isaiah 14:12 was a reference to satan. He wrote, “The exposition of this passage, which some have given, as if it referred to satan, has arisen from ignorance; for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians. But when passages of Scripture are taken up at random, and no attention is paid to the context, we need not wonder that mistakes of this kind frequently arise. Yet it was an instance of very gross ignorance, to imagine that Lucifer was the king of devils, and that the Prophet gave him this name. But as these inventions have no probability whatever, let us pass by them as useless fables.” See John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, translated by William Pringle (Baker Book House, 1993), p. 442. Martin Luther also dismissed the idea that Lucifer should be regarded as a name for the devil, regarding such an interpretation as terrible error. See Jan Ridderbos, *The Bible Student’s Commentary: Isaiah*. (Regency, 1985), p. 142.

² Lucifer was the name of the devil used by Dante Alighieri in his *Inferno* and also by John Milton in *Paradise Lost*.

judgment on Babylon, causing its demise, and the setting free of His people who had been in bondage in Babylon. But even though the name, Lucifer, or “morning star” is directly applied to the king of Babylon, for a number of centuries “Lucifer” has been asserted as the name of the devil.

And so, if the reference here in Isaiah 14 does point beyond the king of Babylon to the devil who stood behind and energized that evil kingdom, then the devil is shown, *first*, to desire to be exalted above the angels. Verse 13 reads, “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.’” *Second*, it appears that he also wanted to be the lord of all the earth, when he said, “I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north.” *Thirdly*, finally, he aspired to take the place of God Himself. Verse 14 reads, “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

Aside from this passage as well as the one we considered last Lord’s Day (Ezek. 28), there are New Testament passages that suggest the original fall of the devil from his holy estate into which God had created him. In **1 Timothy 3:6** we read of the requirements for a prospective elder of a church. Paul wrote, “He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.” When the devil sinned, apparently 1/3 of the angels joined him, believing that he would be a better god to them than the one true God who made them. We might shake our head in disbelief that they would think such a thing. But remember, the angelic host had not long existed, and besides, their decision to rebel with the devil was at the beginning of history. The angels were quite ignorant of the true nature of God. This world and God’s dealings through the history of this world has been the stage on which God has been revealing Himself not only to the people of this world, but to the angels also.

We read of the fall of angels in **Jude 6**: “And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.” And similarly we read **2 Peter 2:4**, “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...” And so, the devil and his angels are God haters, and they hate everything that God has created; they hate particularly mankind, and especially those who have turned from serving him to serving King Jesus.

The devil’s chief concern is to challenge and discredit the Word of God in the minds of people. We will speak more of this next week, I believe. The serpent attacked Eve’s understanding and her regard for the authority of the Word of God. We read of the devil’s attack on God’s word when he said to Eve, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” He would first have her question the content of God’s Word, then he would have her deny its truthfulness forthrightly. He told her afterward, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4f).

The devil similarly assaulted our Lord in the wilderness temptation, when he twisted the meaning of Word of God, quoting it to Jesus (Cf. Luke 4:10f). But our Lord responded by quoting and applying the Scriptures rightly. In our Lord’s wilderness temptation He illustrated to us how we are to resist the devil. He used no other means than what is available to you and me to counter the efforts of the devil. The one who knows and applies the Holy Scriptures rightly, will not be deceived or defeated by the devil. The devil has no power over the man or woman who knows, believes, and obeys the Word of God.

But again, thankfully, in spite of what the devil and his minions desire to do to the Lord’s people, God is sovereign over the devil and his angels. This is abundantly clear in the Scriptures. The devil can only do what God permits him to do. The Lord is in control of the devil, in that the devil needs to obtain God’s permission to act against His people. The devil needed to gain God’s permission in order to afflict Job.

III. The activity of the devil in the experience of the Apostle Peter

Let us turn to the passage we read at the beginning in which we read that the power of the devil in subordination to God and His will. We read in **Luke 22:31-34**.

And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

³³But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.”

³⁴Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

Even when our Lord Jesus was about to go to His trial before the Jewish and Roman leaders, the Lord spoke to Peter about a spiritual trial that he was about to face. We see that Jesus was aware of the danger that Peter would soon encounter (22:31). Satan was after Peter. From these words we could conclude a number of things and, I dare say, we could speculate on many more things, and I am tempted to do so. But time is a good restrainer. I would like us to see, however, how our Lord used the evil intentions and designs of the devil to sanctify Peter, to equip Peter for future service as His apostle.

First, let us recognize that trials of our faith are necessary and certain to every Christian’s experience. Peter wrote,

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, *though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,* ⁷*that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,* ⁸whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:3-9)

Trials will come, and they will come to us often through the agency of the devil and his evil forces. One of the reasons for trials is God’s purpose and effort to make His people holy before Him and fruitful for Him. Our Lord Jesus said it this way,

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser...every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:1-3)

Pruning needs to take place on all of God’s branches. This work of God is sharp and severe. And often the Lord in His good and sovereign purpose will employ the evil machinations of the devil to accomplish this work in us. We may seem to be moving ahead in our spiritual walk quite easily and quickly, but then we are suddenly cut down significantly. A pruned vine is not a pretty sight, but it is one that is prepared for fruit bearing. The fact is that the new believer, though fresh with knowledge and invigorated with zeal, has much about him that needs removed. He sees himself quite fit and full; after all, he loves the Lord. He is zealous for the things of Christ.

But herein lay the problem: Under the surface of his profession there lies deep corruption that perhaps only the Lord sees clearly. There exists a measure of *self-righteousness* and *spiritual pride* that resides in the new believer’s heart. It was so with Peter; it is generally so with each of us. It is common for the immature believer to see himself quite advanced, but he does not see himself clearly. For even while he is rejoicing, or attempting to rejoice in that he knows and loves God, his life is a troubled one. For he continues to have problems and difficulties, even as he tries to walk in love before God. But in these early stages of walking with the Savior he does not see that the problems and difficulties lie mainly in himself. To him, others are the cause of his difficulty and sometimes misery. All he wants to do, as he sees it, is to walk with Jesus simply and sincerely, but other people and other things will not allow him to

do so, or so he thinks. He becomes frustrated and impatient. Perhaps for a while he becomes discouraged and embittered with others about him. In reality his major problem is not with externals, people and events outside himself, but the problem is spiritual and resides in him. But he does not see it. Mixed with his faith is carnal presumption. Intermingled with his love, is a counterfeit and shallow sentimentality. He does not know himself. He thinks too highly of himself and too lowly of others. He is as proud Peter, "I love you more than they." Although he may try not to do so, and perhaps claim that he does not do so, he tends to look down on others about him. He believes that they do not have the same degree of knowledge or the same measure of love for Christ that he himself possesses. He is as Peter was, when Peter expressed his love for the Lord Jesus, "Although all others may forsake you, I will lay down my life for thy sake." In short, this believer has in the root of himself a self-righteousness, a sense of self-sufficiency and a sense of self-worth that must be squeezed out of him. These sinful delusions must be surgically cut out of his soul. The Great Physician has ordained trials as the instruments by which He performs spiritual surgery on His people. And many times, He will use the evil working of the devil to accomplish His good work in His people.

There was a time that Peter himself was as we have just described and we read how the Lord superintended the work of the devil in order to prepare Peter for his great service as an apostle to Christ's church. We read about it and our Lord's dealings with him in **Luke 22:31-34**.

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

Peter was proud, confident of his faith and love toward Jesus. He believed that he was more spiritual and courageous than any others who followed the Savior. His pride preceded his "destruction"; his haughty spirit portended his "fall" (Cf. Prov. 16:8). The trial would come from Satan, but the spiritual benefit or fruit that would come from it would be due to the intercession and authority of Jesus Christ. Only after Peter experienced this great trial of faith, was he truly ready for spiritual leadership among the people of God. And in order to maximize the benefit of this sifting work in Peter's life, the Lord in very clear manner, predicts the exact time at which Peter would deny that he even knew Him.

Jesus saw the danger of that Peter as in (22:31). *Sometimes those more mature than we see the precipice before us long before we take the great fall.* Satan was after Peter. From these words we could conclude a number of things and, I dare say, we could speculate on many more things here, and I am tempted to do so. But time is a good restrainer. But we can make these few points.

First, we see that Satan had to ask permission to do harm to Peter. Satan is, and always has been subject to God's sovereign rule. God lets him have his way frequently so as to bring judgment on persons. Satan had to ask permission to do harm to Peter. Satan is, and always has been subject to God's sovereign rule. God lets him have his way frequently so as to bring judgment on persons. Satan would have his way with Peter in a measure, but only to the degree that the Lord Jesus would permit.

Second, we read that the devil desired and intended to destroy Peter's faith, but the Lord told Peter that He had prayed for him (22:32a). Jesus Christ is the High Priest of His people. He cares for His people and their well-being. In their need, He comes to the Father interceding on their behalf. If you are a Christian, the Lord Jesus intercedes for you in praying to His Father.

Here we see the need for and the effectual nature of the prayer of Jesus for His own. What Jesus asks of the Father is always granted to Him. He prays that you will be kept in the hour of trial, and that trial cannot overthrow your faith, even though the devil in all his fury is vented against you. Christ prays for His own with effectual prayers. Our requests are not always granted to us. If we ask with wrong motives, if we have rebellion in our heart, if we pray for things not according to the will of God, our requests remain unanswered. But all of our Lord's prayers are effectual. He in essence told Peter, "*Satan*

wants you, Peter, but I have prayed for you.” See how dependent we are upon our Lord Jesus! Forces all too subtle and powerful would ravage us if it were not for our Lord’s intercession on our behalf.

The Lord’s prayer for Peter did not remove the trial or his failure, rather, it reversed the outcome so as to render spiritual benefit for Peter rather than harm. There may be two people, one a Christian and one a non-Christian. They experience identical calamity, but one is ultimately helped by it, when the other may be destroyed by it. This is due to the sovereign work of God’s grace in the matter. Being a Christian will not necessarily spare you from tragedy, but it does assure you that tragedy will not destroy you, but rather the Lord will use it to produce in you that which is truly good and right.

Notice that both the Lord and the devil are in the “sifting” business. He told Peter, *Satan wants to sift you as wheat.*” Here “wheat” is an emblem of *faith*. Satan wants to so blow the winds of adversity upon you so that your faith will be blown away and only chaff remains. What Satan wanted Peter to do was to apostatize from Christ, to stop believing and ceased to follow Him as His Lord and Saviour. But notice that *the Lord Jesus is also in the sifting business*. But he uses the wind to blow the chaff away so only the pure grain of faith remains.

By the way, notice that our Lord Jesus, even while on earth, was informed of events occurring in heaven. He knew of Satan’s designs. He did not employ His divine nature often when He was ministering on earth, but from time to time we see it displayed. Here is one of those instances.

Thankfully, *through the prayer of Jesus, the works of the devil are thwarted*. We emphasize a great deal the matter of perseverance in faith and obedience, for there is no salvation promised to one who does not persevere in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ. We do so in order to drive home our responsibility to be watchful and to employ the means God has given us to stand. But this emphasis may result in a timid soul becoming fearful because he is so aware of his weakness and sinfulness. But be assured of this: The Lord has prayed that your faith will fail not. The same prayer that upheld Peter will uphold all true believers steadfast to the end. The grace of God will see us through trials which would destroy a person who lacks saving grace; but our Lord gives sufficient grace to all His own.

Third, we see the presumption of Peter regarding himself in Luke 22:33: *“But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’”* In this event in Peter’s life we have a wonderful illustration of divine provision even in the midst of human ignorance and folly. The only reason Peter would *not* be sifted is due to the grace of God, but he thought himself all sufficient in and of himself to withstand any trial. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” This was not a statement of faith by Peter; it was foolishness. Peter was sincere, but all too secure in his the estimation of himself. He had too *high* view of himself. He had too *little* a view of Satan. He had too *low* a view of Christ. Peter said in effect, “Though prison threaten me, though death stares me in the face, Lord, I, even I, will stand with you.” And in a few hours it would not be a rack or a point of a sword that would shrivel his valor, but the flippant tongue of a young maid. Luke 22:33 must be one of the all-time gaffs, one of those things we replay in our minds and blush at the remembrance. But he learned a valuable lesson here in the nature of faith: *faith is not presumption that I am able to stand, but rather confidence that He is able to keep me.*”

But *fourth*, in this event we see *the preparation of Peter for future service*. *“Jesus said to him, when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren”* (22:32b). If only we would learn only through instruction. If only we would simply read the Word of God and apply it in a diligent manner, we would save ourselves a whole lot of grief. But Peter would not take to heart the instruction until it was driven home to his heart through *experience*. This event cured Peter of his presumption. Never again would Peter be known as the boastful, patronizing, disciple. He was cut down in a night. And as a result he became a fit leader of the people of God. Through this trial using the devil, the Lord made Peter into a rock, a pillar, even the foundation, on which the church could rest. He would become a real cause of “strengthening of the brethren.” Thereafter, when believers became *arrogant* and *self-sufficient*, Peter would warn them, “be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). When believers would become *careless* in their walk, *unwatchful respecting Satan* they could see his words: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh

about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). When believers were later be *shaken from their steadfastness*, they could read in his writings,

“But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet. 5:10).

And in so writing, Peter strengthened and has strengthened many brothers and sisters in Christ over these many centuries.

And so, how does our Lord Jesus deal with His people? As the **Great Vinedresser**, with pruning hook in hand, He cuts the believer down severely. As a result that which is false, that which is fleshly, is removed, and so that which is true will increase. During this time, the believer may sense a gradual withdrawal of God’s light and life. The things that before stirred him, do so no longer. What he thought was love for Christ wanes. The presence of Christ is no longer sensed as before. Rather, there increasingly arises in the soul his knowledge that something is wrong, desperately wrong. But he has come to see that the problem is not primarily with others around him, but that it is something within him. He becomes keenly aware of the superficiality of his love, the shallowness of his understanding, the weakness of his praying. God no longer seems to be bestowing desire and strength as before. His soul may begin to feel abandoned. The believer sees his heart as cold and hard toward the things of Christ and His people. Interest in the Word of God is not as it was. The power of the Word to convict of sin is no longer. Doubts as to his state enter the mind and heart. It now seems to him that perhaps his former joys and wonders were delusions.

As a result of trials, the believer begins to see that whereas before he thought himself quite advanced in his walk with Christ, he now sees how little he has progressed and he now sees clearly how far he has yet to travel. Before he was concerned about *acts of sin*, but now he sees the problem to be much deeper. It is *indwelling sin* that plagues his conscience, for he now knows how weak his nature and how easy and soon is his potential fall. The believer who is in trial now sees more clearly his need for Christ. He needs not only forgiveness; he longs for deliverance.

But what he does not see, is that through the trial God has done a work of grace in him. He is truly a humble man now, though he probably would not describe himself as such. Pride is no longer; rather, there is a self-loathing; he feels his failure keenly. The prophesy of Ezekiel 36:31 is his experience, which reads of the Christian,

Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that *were* not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.

He esteems others better than himself. There is a sense of weakness, even helplessness; in short, he sees his need for Christ as he never had before.

And so, now due to having experienced this terrible trial, he truly sees Christ in His glory. One once described the tried believer in this way:

Independence has been broken in pieces, and the soul brought to hang upon Christ for everything; pride has been cut down, and humility produced; a deceitful heart has been laid bare, and spiritual integrity created; hypocrisy has been detected and sincerity implanted; a form of religion has been crushed, and power set up in its stead; and empty profession of dry doctrine has been rooted up, and a realization of eternal things has been substituted...

The Christian thus learns that if he stands, God must hold him up; if he knows anything aright, God must teach him; if he walks in the way of heaven, God must first put, and afterwards keep him in it; if he has anything, God must give it to him; and that if he does anything, God must work it in him... He can no longer take a killing letter for a living rule, but is deeply conscious that it is only by being “married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that he can bring forth fruit unto God...

While others boast of what they have done for God, he is glad that God has done something for him; while others are handling the shell, he is eating the kernel; while others are talking *of* Christ, he is talking with Him... While others are haranguing about the treasure of the Bank of England, he is pleased to find a few coins in his own pocket, stamped with the king's image and superscription...

Through the inward conflicts, secret workings, mysterious changes, and ever-varying exercises of his soul, he becomes *established* in a deep feeling of his own folly and God's wisdom, and his own weakness and Christ's strength, of his own sinfulness and the Lord's goodness, of his own backslidings and the Spirit's recoveries, of his own base ingratitude and Jehovah's longsuffering, of the aboundings of sin and the superaboundings of grace. He thus becomes daily more and more confirmed in the vanity of the creature, the utter helplessness of man, the deceitfulness and hypocrisy of the human heart, the sovereignty of distinguishing grace, the fewness of heaven-taught ministers, the scanty numbers of living souls, and the great rareness of true religion. Nor are these convictions borrowed ideas, floating opinions, crude, half-digested sentiments or articles of a creed, which may be right or may be wrong; but they are things known by him as certainly, and felt as evidently as any material object that his eye see, of his hand touches. (J. C. Philpot)

May the Lord enable us to have full confidence in our Lord Jesus that He will defeat any foe that may come against us. He will accomplish His purpose of glorifying Himself in the salvation of His people. And He will glorify Himself more greatly and wonderfully as he frustrates and defeats the devil in all of his efforts to destroy us.

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude,
like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder,
crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns." (Rev. 19:6)

Appendix:

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

by

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

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

There are two highly recommended books that I would recommend that address the Christian's spiritual warfare against satan and his forces. The first is by **William Gurnall** (1616-1679), *The Christian in Complete Armour*. This is a lengthy exposition on the spiritual armour of God in Ephesians 6:10-20. Be sure to obtain the full unedited edition by Banner of Truth. The full text (849 pages) is available on line at <https://archive.org/details/christianincomp00unkngoog>. The second volume is by Thomas Brooks (1608-1680), *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*. The entire book is available on line at http://www.gracegems.org/Brooks/precious_remedies_against_satan5.htm. I have included the Table of Contents of this book below, as it is itself suggestive and helpful.

Introduction

I. The Proof of the Point

II. Satan's Devices to Draw the Soul into Sin [12 devices and their remedies]

1. By presenting the bait and hiding the hook: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) We ought to keep at the greatest distance from sin and from playing with the bait
 - 2) Sin is but a bitter sweet
 - 3) Sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses
 - 4) Sin is very deceitful and bewitching

2. By painting sin with virtue's colors: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) Sin is never the less vile by being so painted
 - 2) The more sin is so painted the more dangerous it is
 - 3) We ought to look on sin with that eye with which within a few hours we shall see it
 - 4) Sin cost the life-blood of the Lord Jesus

3. By the extenuating and lessening of sin: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) Sin which men account small brings God's great wrath on men
 - 2) The giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater
 - 3) It is sad to stand with God for a trifle
 - 4) Often there is most danger in the smallest sins
 - 5) The saints have chosen to suffer greatly rather than commit the least sin
 - 6) The soul can never stand under the guilt and weight of sin when God sets it home upon the soul
 - 7) There is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction

4. By showing to the soul the best men's sins and by hiding from the soul their virtues, their sorrows, and their repentance: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) The Spirit of God records not only the sins of the saints, but also their repentance
 - 2) These saints did not make a trade of sin
 - 3) Though God does not disinherit his sinning people, He punishes them severely
 - 4) God has two main ends in recording the falls of His saints

5. By presenting God to the soul as One made up all of mercy: For remedies, consider that

- 1) It is the sorest of judgments to be left to sin upon any pretense whatever
- 2) God is as just as He is merciful
- 3) Sins against mercy will bring the greatest and sorest judgments on men
- 4) Though God's general mercy is over all His works, yet His special mercy is confined to those that are divinely qualified
- 5) The saints now glorified regarded God's mercy as a most powerful argument against, and not for, sin

6. By persuading the soul that repentance is easy and that therefore the soul need not scruple about sinning: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Repentance is a difficult work above our own power
- 2) Repentance changes and converts the whole man from sin to God
- 3) Repentance is a continued act
- 4) If repentance were easy, the lack of it would not strike millions with terror and drive them to hell
- 5) To repent of sin is as great a mark of grace as not to sin
- 6) Satan now suggests that repentance is easy, but shortly he will drive his dupes to despair by presenting it as the hardest work in the world

7. By making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Certain scriptures expressly command us to avoid occasions of sin and the least appearance of evil
- 2) There is no conquest over sin unless the soul turns from the occasions of sin
- 3) Saints now glorified have turned from the occasions of sin as from hell itself
- 4) To avoid the occasions of sin is an evidence of grace

8. By representing to the soul the outward mercies enjoyed by men walking in sin, and their freedom from outward miseries: For remedies, consider that

- 1) We cannot judge of how the heart of God stands towards a man by the acts of His providence
- 2) Nothing provokes God's wrath so much as men's abuse of His goodness and mercy
- 3) There is no greater curse or affliction in this life than not to be in misery or affliction
- 4) The wants of evil men are far greater than their outward blessings
- 5) Outward things are not as they seem, nor as they are esteemed
- 6) God has ends and designs in giving evil men outward mercies and present rest from sorrows and sufferings that cause saints to sigh
- 7) God often plagues and punishes those whom others think He most spares and loves
- 8) God will call evil men to a strict account for all the outward good that they have enjoyed

9. By presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, sorrows and sufferings that daily attend those who walk in the ways of holiness: For remedies, consider that

- 1) All afflictions suffered by Christians turn to their profit
- 2) All such afflictions only reach their worst, not their best, part
- 3) All such afflictions are short and momentary
- 4) All such afflictions proceed from God's dearest love
- 5) It is our duty and glory to measure afflictions not by the smart but by the end
- 6) God's design in saints' afflictions is to try, not to ruin, their souls
- 7) The afflictions, wrath and misery consequent upon wickedness are far worse than those linked with holiness

10. By causing saints to compare themselves and their ways with those reputed to be worse than themselves: For remedies, consider that

- 1) To be quick-sighted abroad and blind at home proves a man a hypocrite
- 2) It is far better to compare our internal and external actions with the Word than to compare ourselves with others worse than ourselves
- 3) Though our sins may not appear as great as those of others, yet without repentance responding to mercy, we shall be as certainly damned as others

11. By polluting the souls and judgments of men with dangerous errors that lead to looseness and wickedness: For remedies, consider that

- 1) An erroneous vain mind is as odious to God as a wicked life
- 2) It is needful to receive the truth affectionately and plenteously
- 3) Error makes its owner suffer loss
- 4) It is needful to hate and reject all doctrines that are contrary to godliness, that lead to self-righteousness, and that make good works co-partners with Christ
- 5) It is needful to hold fast the truth
- 6) It is needful to keep humble
- 7) Errors have been productive of great evils

12. By leading men to choose wicked company: For remedies, consider that

- 1) There are express commands of God to shun such company
- 2) Wicked company is infectious and dangerous
- 3) It is needful to look upon the wicked in such terms as Scripture describes them
- 4) The company of wicked men was once a grief and burden also to saints now glorified

III. Satan's Devices to Keep Souls from the Holy Duties, to hinder Souls in Holy Services, to keep them off from Religious Performances [8 devices and their remedies]

1. By presenting the world in such a garb as to ensnare the soul: For remedies, consider that

- 1) All things here below are impotent and weak
- 2) They are also full of vanity
- 3) All things under the sun are uncertain and mutable
- 4) The great things of the world are hurtful to men owing to the corruption of their hearts
- 5) All the felicity of this world is mixed
- 6) It is needful to get better acquainted with, and assurance of, more blessed and glorious things
- 7) True happiness and satisfaction does not arise from worldly good
- 8) The value and dignity of the soul is to be a subject of contemplation

2. By presenting to the soul the dangers, losses and sufferings that accompany the performance of certain religious duties: For remedies, consider that

- 1) All such troubles cannot harm the true Christian
- 2) Saints now glorified encountered such dangers, but persevered to the end
- 3) All such dangers are but for a moment, whereas the neglect of the service of God lays the Christian open to spiritual and eternal dangers
- 4) God knows how to deliver from troubles by troubles, from dangers by dangers
- 5) In the service of God, despite troubles and afflictions, the gains outweigh the losses

3. By presenting to the soul the difficulty of performing religious duties: For remedies, consider that

- 1) It is better to regard the necessity of the duty than the difficulty of it
- 2) The Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to the obedient soul and thus make the service easy
- 3) The Lord Jesus has Himself engaged in hard service and in suffering for your temporal and eternal good
- 4) Religious duties are only difficult to the worse, not to the more noble part of a saint
- 5) A glorious recompense awaits saints who serve the Lord in the face of difficulties and discouragements

4. By causing saints to draw false inferences from the blessed and glorious things that Christ has done: For remedies, consider that

- 1) It is as needful to dwell as much upon scriptures that state Christian duty as upon those that speak of the glorious things that Christ has done for us
- 2) The glorious things that Christ has done and is now doing for us should be our strongest motives and encouragements for the performance of our duties
- 3) Other precious souls who have rested on Christ's work have been very active and lively in religious duties
- 4) Those who do not walk in God's ways cannot have such evidence of their righteousness before God as can those who rejoice in the service of the Lord
- 5) Duties are to be esteemed not by their acts but by their ends

5. By presenting to view the fewness and poverty of those who hold to religious practices: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Though saints are outwardly poor, they are inwardly rich
- 2) In all ages God has had some that have been rich, wise and honorable
- 3) Spiritual riches infinitely transcend temporal riches, and satisfy the poorest saints
- 4) Saints now appear to be 'a little flock', but they belong to a company that cannot be numbered
- 5) It is but as a day before these despised saints will shine brighter than the sun
- 6) The time will come even in this life when God will take away the reproach and contempt of His people, and make those the 'head' who have been the 'tail'

6. By showing saints that the majority of men make light of God's ways and walk in the ways of their own hearts: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Certain scriptures warn against following the sinful examples of men
- 2) Those who sin with the multitude will suffer with the multitude
- 3) The soul of a man is of more worth than heaven and earth

7. By casting in vain thoughts while the soul is seeking God or waiting on God: For remedies, consider that

- 1) The God with whom we have to do is great, holy, majestic and glorious
- 2) Despite wandering thoughts it is needful to be resolute in religious service
- 3) Vain and trifling thoughts that Satan casts into our souls are not sins if they are abhorred, resisted and disclaimed
- 4) Watching against, resisting and lamenting sinful thoughts evidences grace and the sincerity of our hearts
- 5) We must labor to be filled with the fullness of God and enriched with all spiritual blessings
- 6) We must labor to keep up holy and spiritual affections
- 7) We must labor to avoid multiplicity of worldly business

8. By tempting Christians to rest in their performances: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Our choicest services have their imperfection and weaknesses
- 2) Our choicest services are unable to minister comfort and aid in days of trouble
- 3) Good works, if rested upon, will as certainly destroy us as the greatest sins that we commit
- 4) God has met our need of a resting place in Christ Himself

IV. Satan's Devices to keep Saints in a Sad, Doubting, Questioning and Uncomfortable Condition [8 devices and their remedies]

1. By causing saints to remember their sins more than their Savior, yes, even to forget and neglect their Savior: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Though Jesus Christ has not freed believers from sin's presence, He has freed them from its damnatory power
 - 2) Though Jesus Christ has not freed believers from the vexing and molesting power of sin, He has freed them from the reign and dominion of sin
 - 3) It is needful to keep one eye on the promise of remission of sin, and the other eye on the inward operations of sin
 - 4) Believers' sins have been charged to the account of Christ as debts which He has fully satisfied
 - 5) The Lord has good reasons for allowing His people to be troubled with sinful corruption
 - 6) Believers must repent of their being discouraged by their sins
2. By causing saints to make false definitions of their graces: For remedies, consider that
- 1) There may be true faith, even great faith, where there is no assurance
 - 2) The Scriptures define faith other than Satan tempts the saints to define it
 - 3) There may be true faith where there is much doubting
 - 4) Assurance is an effect of faith, not faith itself
3. By causing saints to make false inferences from the cross actings of Providence: For remedies, consider that
- 1) Many things, though contrary to our desires, are not contrary to our good
 - 2) God's hand may be against a man when His love and His heart are set upon him
 - 3) Cross providences are sent by God to work some noble good for saints
 - 4) All the strange and deep providences that believers meet with further them in their way to heaven
4. By suggesting to saints that their graces are not true, but counterfeit: For remedies, consider that
- 1) Grace may mean either the good will and favor of God, or the gifts of grace
 - 2) There are differences between renewing grace and restraining grace, between sanctifying and temporary grace (to particulars given)
5. By suggesting to saints that the conflict that is in them is found also in hypocrites and profane souls: For remedies, consider that
- 1) The whole frame of a believer's soul is against sin
 - 2) A saint conflicts against sin universally, the least sin as well as the greatest
 - 3) The conflict in a saint is maintained for several reasons
 - 4) The saint's conflict is constant
 - 5) The saint's conflict is within the same faculties
 - 6) The saint's conflict is blessed, successful and prevailing
6. By suggesting to the saint who has lost joy and comfort that his state is not good: For remedies, consider that
- 1) The loss of comfort is a separable adjunct from grace
 - 2) The precious things still enjoyed are far better than the joys and comforts lost
 - 3) The glorified saints were once in the same condition
 - 4) The causes of joy and comfort are not always the same
 - 5) God will restore the comforts of His people
7. By reminding the saint of his frequent relapses into sin formerly repented of and prayed against: For remedies, consider that
- 1) Many scriptures show that such relapses have troubled saints
 - 2) God nowhere promises that such relapses will not happen
 - 3) The most renowned of glorified saints have, on earth, experienced such relapses
 - 4) Relapses into enormities must be distinguished from relapses into infirmities
 - 5) Involuntary and voluntary relapses must be distinguished

- 6) No experience of the soul, however deep or high, can in itself secure the soul against relapses
- 8. By persuading saints that their state is not good nor their graces sound: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) The best of Christians have been most tempted by Satan
 - 2) All the saints' temptations are sanctified to them by a hand of love
 - 3) Temptations cannot harm the saints as long as they are resisted by them

V. Satan's Devices to Destroy and Ensnare All Sorts and Ranks of Men in the World [5 devices and their remedies]

I. DEVICES AGAINST THE GREAT AND HONORABLE OF THE EARTH

- 1. By causing them to seek greatness, position, riches and security: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) Self-seeking sets men upon sins against the law, the Gospel, and Nature itself
 - 2) Self-seeking exceedingly abases a man
 - 3) The Word pronounces curses and woes against self-seekers
 - 4) Self-seekers are self-losers and self-destroyers
 - 5) Saints have denied self and set public good above personal advantage
 - 6) Self hinders the sight of divine things: hence prophets and apostles, when seeing visions, were carried out of themselves
- 2. By causing them to act against the people of the Most High: For remedies, consider that
 - 1) All who have acted against the saints have been ruined by the God of saints
 - 2) The Scriptures show that God gives victory to His people against their enemies
 - 3) To fight against the people of God is to fight against God Himself
 - 4) Men of the world owe their preservation from instant ruin, under God, to the saints

II. DEVICE AGAINST THE LEARNED AND THE WISE

By moving them to pride themselves on their parts and abilities, and to despise men of greater grace but inferior abilities: For remedies, consider that

- 1) Men have nothing but what they have received, gifts as well as saving grace coming alike from Christ
- 2) Men's trusting to their parts and abilities has been their utter ruin
- 3) You do not transcend others more in parts and abilities than they do you in grace and holiness
- 4) Men who pride themselves on their gifts and set themselves against the saints will find that God blasts and withers their gifts

III. DEVICE AGAINST THE SAINTS

By dividing them and causing them to 'bite and devour one another.' For remedies, consider that

- 1) It is better to dwell on the saints' graces rather than on their weaknesses and infirmities
- 2) Love and union best promote safety and security
- 3) God commands and requires the saints to love one another
- 4) It is better to eye the things in which saints agree rather than those things wherein they differ
- 5) God is the God of peace, Christ the Prince of peace, and the Spirit the Spirit of peace
- 6) It is needful for the saints to make more care and conscience of maintaining their peace with God
- 7) It is needful to dwell much upon the relationship and union of the people of God
- 8) Discord is productive of miseries
- 9) It is good and honorable to be the first in seeking peace and reconciliation
- 10) Saints should agree well together, making the Word the only touchstone and judge of their words and actions

- 11) Saints should be much in self-judging
- 12) Saints should labor to be clothed with humility

IV. DEVICE AGAINST POOR AND IGNORANT SOULS

By causing them to affect ignorance and to neglect and despise the means of knowledge: For remedies, consider that

- 1) An ignorant heart is an evil heart
- 2) Ignorance is the deformity of the soul
- 3) Ignorance makes men objects of God's hatred and wrath
- 4) Ignorance is a sin that leads to all sins

APPENDIX

I. Five More of Satan's Devices

1. By suggesting to men the greatness and vileness of their sins [Eight Remedies]
2. By suggesting to sinners their unworthiness [Four Remedies]
3. By suggesting to sinners their want of certain preparations and qualifications [Three Remedies]
4. By suggesting to sinners that Christ is unwilling to save them [Six Remedies]
5. By causing sinners to give more attention to the secret decrees and counsels of God than to their own duty [Two Remedies]

II. Seven Characteristics of False Teachers

III. Six Propositions Concerning Satan and His Devices [Five reasons of the point added]

IV. CONCLUSION: Ten Special Helps and Rules Against Satan's Devices

“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:11-13)
