

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Satan, The God Of This World

By Micky Galloway

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn (upon them).”*

The extent of Satan’s rule is clearly indicated when he is also called *“the prince of this world”* (John 12:31), and *“the prince of the powers of the air”* (Eph. 2:2). John says that *“the whole world lieth in the evil one”* (1 Jn. 5:19). Revelation 12:9 calls him, *“the deceiver of the whole world.”* In our text he is called the *“god of this world,”* not because he has any divine attributes, but because, unfortunately, he is worshiped by the people of the world as their god. By their own selfish submission, Satan, in effect, has the affections of their hearts. And so, the minds of the unbelieving are blinded. These see no beauty in the gospel, have no conscience of sin, no awareness that they are lost and feel no need supplied by the gospel. Sadly, all these see is dark and obscure; no beauty in truth, chastity, honesty, or in the fear and love of God (cf. Rom. 3:10-18). All Satan has to do is promise us the world and then give us the opportunity to practice the unrestrained indulgence of our own passion. Then the glory of the gospel will be as unseen as the glory of the sun in the darkest night.

In Luke 4:5-7, Satan led Jesus up to an exceeding high mountain *“and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine.”* Whether Satan actually possessed the power and authority he claims for himself in these passages is a much-debated subject. It must be understood that Satan could have no power except what has been committed to him. Whatever power he had was his only because it had been *“delivered”* to him. Satan does not have power equal with God (cf. Lk. 11:21-22). Remember when Job was tempted, Satan operated under the restraint of God (cf. Job 1:12; 2:6).

NOTE: Even though *“the whole world lieth in the evil one”* (1 Jn. 5:19), it is not because Satan exercises absolute rule over the world. He could not give the domain and glory of the world to whomever he chose. Whatever ground he has gained in the world is not his by right, but by the choices of foolish people who are deceived by him! His claim that the earth (all the kingdoms in the world, and their glory) had been delivered to him was only partially true to the extent of those who choose to submit to him (cf. Rom. 6:16-18). His claim that he could give it to whom he willed, however, was absolutely false! His lordship is limited in power and duration. If Jesus met Satan’s demands He would have conceded that Satan did in fact own *“all this”* (power over the kingdoms and the glory that belongs to them) by right, and this simply was not the case! There is a power greater than Satan’s and his days were numbered. So, it was with this half-truth and half-lie, and using the Messianic hopes of the Jews for Jesus to establish a political kingdom, that Satan assaulted the integrity of Jesus. Essentially, Satan was inviting Jesus to compromise with him. A shared dominion was better than nothing.

How Then Was Jesus Tempted? For one thing, He was tempted to concede that Satan did indeed exercise absolute lordship in the universe and could bestow that authority to Jesus immediately without the suffering of the cross. After the cross however, Jesus would claim without compromise, *“All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth”* (Matt. 28:18). Another element of this temptation would have been to influence Jesus to establish the earthly kingdom of Jewish expectation involving pomp and power (appealing to the *“pride of life”*) (cf. 1 Jn. 2:15ff). If Satan could distract Jesus away from His mission in the world, *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Lk. 19:10), Satan’s mission would have been accomplished.

What Is The Solution? Jesus remained faithful in His resolve to do the Father's will. For the third time He made a direct appeal to the word of God. ***"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. Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him"*** (Matt. 4:10-11). Jesus employed the words of the Psalmist, ***"Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee"*** (Psa. 119:11). Satan presents himself as ***"an angel of light,"*** and his ministers appear as the shining examples of piety, ***"and their mouth speaketh great swelling words"*** (Jude 16). He always promises what he cannot deliver. He is a liar! However, Jesus exposed Satan's true character and showed him to be the adversary that he was. By telling him to ***"Get thee hence,"*** He expressed his resolve to withstand his appeal and reject his deception. Do not be blinded by the god of this world! Follow the example of Jesus; arm yourself with God's word! It is ***"profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work"*** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). – *Fifth Street East church of Christ bulletin*, January 9, 2022. ■

MAINTAINING SELF-CONTROL

By John Edwards

The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27, ***"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, which I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."*** In order to bring our bodies into subjection to the Lord, we must maintain self-control. Self-control is a part of three vital areas of our lives: our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

OUR THOUGHTS. Paul tells us in Romans 12:3 not to think too highly of ourselves, but to think soberly. Solomon said in Proverbs 23:7, ***"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."*** From this passage I ask the following questions: What are we filling our minds with? Do we spend all of our time watching television? What types of literature are we reading? What do we listen to on the radio? What are our friends telling us? In Philippians 4:8 Paul tells us to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and things of good report. If we're not thinking on these things, we may be thinking on things which will damn our soul.

OUR WORDS. The Psalmist said, ***"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer"*** (Psa. 19:14). The words of our mouth must be acceptable in the Lord's sight. Jesus said, ***"That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"*** (Matt. 12:36). We must stop to count the cost of not controlling our words. We must do as James said, ***"be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"*** (Jas. 1:19). Wrath, or anger, brings on actions which are not acceptable with the Lord of Hosts.

OUR ACTIONS. Peter said, ***"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul"*** (1 Pet. 2:11). Philippians 2:14 tells us to ***"Do all things without murmurings and disputings."*** We must abstain from fleshly lusts and be found doing all things without murmurings and disputings. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 12:14, ***"God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*** In Romans 14:12 Paul said, ***"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."*** Whether or not we have controlled our thoughts, our words, and our actions will be a factor in the day of judgment. – *The Terre Haute Speaker*, December 19, 2021. ■

"8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:8-9, ASV).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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