

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

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The Pulling Down of Strong Holds (Part 2)

Not only is Satan the “prince of this world” (see John 12:31), he is also called the “god of this world” and has “blinded the minds” of the lost to the light of the gospel:

- 3 But if our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost:
- 4 In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of the Messiah, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. -2 Corinthians 4

Satan is a spiritual being that was given the authority by Yahweh to operate as the “prince” and “god” of this physical world. He uses his demons, which are also spiritual beings, to help him gain access to natural bodies in order to carry out his work in this natural world.

He gains influence over our bodies by instilling thoughts into our minds that we are willing to accept. Employing the same tools that he used to deceive Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 3), Satan uses a powerful combination of worldly enticements to deceive the lost into worshipping him as the “god of this world:”

- 16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. -1 John 2

In exchange for their worship, Satan offers to share with them part of the power and glory of his earthly kingdom (see Luke 4:4).

Satan’s demons have such a strong desire to operate from within physical bodies that, if they are not given access to human bodies, they will try to inhabit the bodies of other creatures. In one example, which occurred as Yahshua (Jesus) was casting out a large number of devils (demons) from an afflicted man, they pleaded with Him for permission to enter into the bodies of swine. They would have rather dwelt in pigs than to be cast into “the deep,” which is the abyss that is often called the “bottomless pit” and is the abode of disembodied spirits:

- 30 And Yahshua asked him, saying, What is your name? And he said, Legion: because many devils had entered into him.

31 And they sought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they begged him that he would permit them to enter into them. And he permitted them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were drowned. -Luke 8

Demonic spirits afflict men, as shown in the above example, and they also afflict women, as with Mary Magdalene:

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, -Luke 8

They afflict boys, as in the example of a father asking Yahshua to cast out a demonic spirit that was trying to destroy his son:

22 And oftentimes it has cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if you can do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. -Mark 9

Demonic spirits also afflict girls:

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: -Mark 7

Satan’s powerful influence over righteous kings, such as David, is clear:

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

Even the twelve disciples that Yahshua personally chose to accompany Him in His earthly ministry were vulnerable to the workings of Satan. Judas succumbed to him:

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

Even Peter was severely tested by Satan:

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: -Luke 22

From this, we can only conclude that none of us is immune from the attacks of the power of Satan. However, although Satan, in his pride, wants to be God, he is a created being. As such, he is under the power and authority of his Creator, which is Yahweh. While Satan wants to be worshipped as God, he is not Yahweh.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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Therefore, even though Satan has power over earthly kingdoms, he does not have all power. As we learn from the example of Job, Satan can only do that which Yahweh allows him to do. Even though He gave Satan permission to afflict Job, Yahweh set boundaries for him. First, Yahweh gave Satan the power to afflict everything that Job possessed, but would not allow him to touch Job himself:

12 And Yahweh said to Satan, Behold, all that he has *is* in your power; only upon himself put not forth your hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Yahweh. -Job 1

Later, however, Yahweh extended Satan's power to personally afflict Job. Nevertheless, He would not allow Satan to take his life:

6 And Yahweh said to Satan, Behold, he *is* in your hand; but save his life. -Job 2

Therefore, based on the example of Job, we can conclude that Satan must receive permission from Yahweh to afflict us. Furthermore, even after Yahweh grants him that permission, He has the power to limit the degree of Satan's attacks upon us.

How, we might ask, is Satan able to get permission from Yahweh to gain access to us in the first place? The simple answer to that question is that Yahweh will not give Satan that permission as long as we wear His protective shield, which is called "the whole armor of God." It enables us to stand against Satan's deceitful methods of operation:

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. -Ephesians 6

If we have on the "whole armor of God," then we are covered from our heads to our feet. We are protected with truth, righteousness, and the gospel of peace. Using the shield of faith, we fully trust in Yahweh for our salvation. Equipped with the Word of God, we have a weapon that we can use like a mighty sword that is powered by the Spirit of God:

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

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15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: -Ephesians 6

To be fully equipped with the "whole armor of God," we must be indued with the power of His Spirit and be continually praying to Yahweh for His protection. While we pray, we must also be patiently watching and waiting for the enemy to come, fully trusting in Yahweh to deliver us from the power of the "prince of this world:"

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; -Ephesians 6

We should not, however, naively believe that having on the "whole armor of God" will stop our spiritual battles. Satan has unleashed his demonic spirits like a flood of water to destroy the woman (which are the people of God and are often called the "Bride of Christ"):

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. -Revelation 12

Satan's flood of demonic spirits enters into those that have accepted his offer for worldly power and glory and uses them as the tools by which to wage war on the saints of God (see Daniel 7:21; Revelation 13:7). Operating from positions of high places of worldly influence, they perform their spiritual wickedness through the powerful leaders and rulers of the darkness of this world:

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. -Ephesians 6

Consequently, we encounter trial after trial, temptation after temptation, and persecution after persecution as Satan unleashes his minions of spiritual warriors against us. Operating through deceived evil men (and women) they plant deceiving thoughts into our minds:

12 Yes, and all that will live godly in the Messiah Yahshua shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. - 2 Timothy 3

Maintaining the effectiveness of the "whole armor of God" requires that we, as Jude warns, diligently and earnestly contend for the faith in the true gospel. The "evil men and seducers" have crept among us unnoticed:

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unnoticed, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Yahshua the Messiah. -Jude 1

(To Be Continued)