

SATAN'S SCHEMES

2 Cor. 2:11,"In order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes."

The Apostle Paul spoke these words to the Corinthians. In many subtle ways Satan had come against them, to *deceive* them, to *drive them to despair*, with the ultimate purpose of *destroying* them. Satan's schemes are numberless, and we can only look at a few.

Satan seeks to drive us to despair.

Satan wants to break down a believer's confidence in his God. He wants to discourage us to the point of despair, and to make all things appear gloomy and hopeless.

Be like Abraham who against all hope, in hope believed (Rom.4:18). The Psalmist in Ps. 42 and 43, three times speaks to himself, and picks himself up by saying:

Why, my soul, are you downcast?
 Why so disturbed within me?
 Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Savior and my God.

Satan tempts us to feel confounded and to begin to doubt God when our prayers seem to go unanswered.

There comes those periods of *deadness* and *dryness* in prayer, when God doesn't seem to be listening. By allowing these periods in our life God intends to stretch our faith. However it is at those very times that Satan will try to tempt our patience and will discomfort our souls with all sorts of anxieties.

In Jesus' Gethsemane experience, God the Father seemed so removed, so remote, and Satan was so close, and so tormenting.

Cheer up, my brethren, when you fall into similar circumstances; knowing, that you are sharing in the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Even though your skies are clouded, do not doubt God in your barren times. Persevere in seeking Jesus even though it seems to be cold and useless; continue even though your soul feels barren, and you grieve all day long. Before long He will show up!

Satan try's to tempt us by our carnal friends and relatives.

This is one of the most common, as well as most sneaky schemes he makes use of, to draw us away from God; for when he cannot prevail over us by himself directly, he will try what he can do by the influence and mediation of others.

Satan deceived Eve that she might tempt Adam. Likewise he stirred up Job's wife, to suggest to him that he "*Curse God and die.*" Satan made use of Peter's tongue, to persuade our blessed Lord "*to spare himself the death on the cross.*"

If you are resolved to serve the Lord, prepare your souls for many temptations like that; for it is necessary that these sort of attacks should come, to test your sincerity, and to teach you to not trust man, and to see if you will forsake everything to follow Christ.

Satan will not tempt us at all, in order to "surprise" us when we least expect it.

This fourth scheme is as dangerous as any of the others. By not tempting us at all, or rather, by withdrawing himself for a while, in order to come upon us at an hour when we least expect it. The Bible says, that Satan left Jesus Christ only for a season; and our blessed Lord has commanded us to always watch and pray, that we do not enter into temptation.

Satan, whether we realize it or not is always seeking new ways to devour us. We must be always on our guard, and never pretend to lay down our spiritual weapons of prayer and watching, till our warfare is ended by death or by rapture. If we lower defenses and lay down our weapons, our spiritual enemy will quickly prevail against us.

In a little, like a roaring lion, and with double the fury, he will attack us again. As he followed our blessed Lord with one temptation after another, so will he treat the Lord's servants.

And the reason why he sometimes does not renew his attacks, is because God knows our weaknesses and at times are unable to bear an attack. Sometimes the pause in the temptations comes because our adversary thinks it is better to assault us at a more convenient season.

We are to carefully watch over our heart, and whenever we perceive ourselves to be falling into a spiritual slumber, we must speak to our own souls, as Christ said to his disciples, "Why are you sleeping?" "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

God didn't give us spiritual lives so we can lie down and sleep? Wake up, and call upon your God; your spiritual enemy is not dead, but lurks in some secret place, seeking a convenient opportunity how he may betray you.

Soli Deo Gloria!

*With much indebtedness to George Whitefield