

TOPIC III

SATAN - LITERARY ERRORS ABOUT HIS ORIGIN AND OTHER DOCTRINES

Part VIII

Comment. In the whole matter of God creating Satan and evil spirits for the sake of the salvation of as many as possible, as well as the understanding that evil, tragedy, unfortunate circumstances - including persecution and ridicule test one's true heart faith and genuine trust in God, and that we are responsible for the choices we make within these circumstances, there are those who would rather remove the entire dynamic and just settle for the idea that all is foreordained and there is nothing we can do about it. So we ask the question,

(H) a. "What of free will?"

And, to complete this part of the Satan study, b. how do we discern the truth and avoid his influence?

a. What of "Free will?"

Those of the Calvinistic persuasion (and the numbers are growing) conclude that man either has no free will or has a severely limited free will and that all that transpires in this world has already been predetermined and pre-programmed from before creation to the end of it. Man, therefore, has no choice when it comes to matters of who is to be saved and who is to be lost for all eternity, let alone the daily matters of life.¹ How convenient. God is to be blamed once again, and we can all plead, "The woman whom YOU gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Or "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

But God's question to them was, "What is this YOU have done?" The key is to put one's power of choice under God's authority, word and will. The scripture is clear that man was given free will to choose whom he would believe and upon whose word he would act. Here are a few examples:

Deuteronomy 30:17-20,

¹ We will return to the controversial topic of "predestination and free will" at another time.

17: "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, 18: I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong *your* days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. 19: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20: by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Joshua 24:15-24,

15: "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." 16: The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17: for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. 18: "The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God." 19: Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. 20: "If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you." 21: The people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD." 22: Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses." 23: Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." 24: The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice."

Judges 5:7-8, 7: "The peasantry ceased, they ceased in Israel, Until I, Deborah, arose, Until I arose, a mother in Israel. 8: "New gods were chosen; Then war *was* in the gates. Not a shield or a spear was seen Among forty thousand in Israel.

Judges 10:11-16, 11: "The LORD said to the sons of Israel, "*Did I not deliver you* from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the sons of Ammon, and the Philistines? 12: "*Also when the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you, you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hands.* 13: "Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you. 14: "Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your distress." 15: The sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day." 16: So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer."

Luke 10:38-42, 38: "Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 39: She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. 40: But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." 41: But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; 42: but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Genesis 6:1-2, 1: "Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2: that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.

Genesis 13:8-11, 8: "So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. 9: "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if *to* the left, then I will go to the right; or if *to* the right, then I will go to the left." 10: Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere--*this was* before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah--like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. 11: So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. 1:12 Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom."

Acts 6:3-6, 3: "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4: "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

5: The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6: And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them."

But one might bring up the very popular and controversial doctrine of "pre-destination." We will come back to that at another time. But I will tell you that while I was teaching an adult Sunday School class, I was asked by an attendee, "Are you a Calvinist or an Armenian?" "Neither," I answered. To which he responded, "You have to be one or the other." "No" I answered, "I am a student of God's word, not man's opinion."

(H) b. How do we discern the truth and avoid his influence?

First, awareness and being watchful of false prophets and teachings.

Matthew 7:15-17:

15: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16: "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? 17: "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit."

Matthew 24:3-5,

3: "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4: And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5: "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many."

Matthew 24:21-26,

21: "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22: "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23: "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There *He is*,' do not believe *him*. 24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if

possible, even the elect. 25: "Behold, I have told you in advance. 26: "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, *or*, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*."

Jeremiah 14:13-14,

13: "But, 'Ah, Lord GOD!' I said, 'Look, the prophets are telling them, 'You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.' 14: Then the LORD said to me, 'The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.'"

Jeremiah 28:15, 15: "Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie."

Deuteronomy 18:20-22,

20: 'But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' 21: "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' 22: "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

II Peter 2:1-3,

1: "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2: Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3: and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep."

II Corinthians 11:3-4 (again),

3: "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ. 4: For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully."

Second, personal needs, drives, emotions, afflictions and persecution.

I Corinthians 7:4-6,

4: "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. 5: Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6: But this I say by way of concession, not of command."

James 1:12,

1: "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. 13: Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14: But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15: Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

I John 2:15-17,

15: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17: The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

I John 4:1, 1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Matthew 24:9-13,

9: "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10: "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11: "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12: "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13: "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved."

I Timothy 4:1-7,

1: "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2: by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3: *men* who forbid marriage *and advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4: For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; 5: for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. 6: In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. 7: But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women."

II Thessalonians 2:1-4,

1: "Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2: that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3: Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4: who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

II Corinthians 2:5-11,

Comment: Paul is writing to the people in the Corinthian church regarding one

who has brought "sorrow" to both Paul and the church there on a previous visit Paul had made to the church. A point is made in verse 11. So he writes,

5: "But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree--in order not to say too much--to all of you. 6: Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority, 7: so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8: Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him. 9: For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10: But one whom you forgive anything, *I forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11: so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes."

The word for "schemes" here is different than we saw in Ephesians 6:11. There it is "methods." Here it is more "intent of the mind."

I Thessalonians 3:1-8,

1: Therefore when we could endure *it* no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, 2: and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, 3: so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 4: For indeed when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. 5: For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. 6: But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, 7: for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; 8: for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord."

And the list of things that could distract or derail our trust in God is huge, including world and personal catastrophes, personal lusts, drives, emotions, desires, fears, etc., persecutions, humiliations, attacks, and so on, but especially

false and misleading teachings about how one is to view and respond to all of this, and the means to avoid or believe in something about all of this that isn't true.

That would be done in order to get you to deny your faith and curse God. For example, the teaching that God promises and would never allow His people to suffer, So when you suffer, you will blame God for violating His promises. Or, you do certain things based on a formula and God will prosper you. After you have lost everything by following this, you will then blame God for not keeping His word. This list is endless.

Now the apostles wrote about this challenge

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. **We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,...**" II Corinthians 10:3-5

And, Ephesians 6:11-16,

11: Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12: For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13: Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14: **Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH,** and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15: and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16: in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*."

Now we can learn quite a bit from this passage as it relates to the actual battle which is spiritual including the disposition of the mind and what we believe. The mind is the gateway and it is up to us to sort out the information that comes through it and decide which information we will believe and which we will discard. Genesis three again.

Peter writes,

"Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **But resist him, firm in your faith**, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world." I Peter 5:8-9

Like Paul, the issue is whom one is going to believe. The simple matter is whether we will believe God or Satan. We believe God, all will be well. We believe Satan and it all goes to hell. Here is more,

Ephesians 1:15-23,

15: "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, 16: do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; 17: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.** 18: ***I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know*** what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19: and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20: which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21: far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22: And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23: which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 2:1-10,

1: "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2: **in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.** 3: Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, **indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind,** and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." 4: But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5: even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6: and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7: so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8: For by grace you have been saved

through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9: not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10: For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Ephesians 3:8-12,

8: "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9: and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10: so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11: *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12: in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him."

Acts 26:14-18,

14: "And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15: "And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16: 'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17: rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18: to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

Colossians 2:13-15,

13: "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14: having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15: When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

I Peter 3:21-22,

21: Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22: who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

II Timothy 2:24-26,

24: "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25" with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26" and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."