

# The Devices of the Devil

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 2:11  
**Preached On:** Sunday, January 26, 2020

**Crossroads Ministries**  
301 S. 8th Street  
Opelika, Alabama 36801

**Website:** [www.fbcopelika.com](http://www.fbcopelika.com)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers](http://www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers)

Those of you who are only listening to the audio feed may not see the visual of this evening, the fact that a few moments ago I had a coat on and I have since removed it, not because the air temperature in the room has increased but as we were seeing and I was thinking more and more about the message from 2 Corinthians, my blood just started to boil on the inside. So for those of you who may be truly from the South, let me put it in your terms: I think we may be about to shuck the corn, if that makes any sense. So let's pray together.

*Lord, as we prepare to hear from and to be challenged by your word tonight, Lord, I do pray that all of the competing voices, Lord, that we confess are so much more voluminous than yours at times, would somehow be quietened and drowned out from this place. Lord, may you give us eyes to see, may you give us ears to hear. Help us, O God, to hear your voice in the midst of so many competing ones. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

Tonight we're gonna find ourselves in 2 Corinthians 2, but as we often do when we gather, particularly on Sunday evenings, be prepared for sword or Bible drill as we're gonna go back and forth to several passages. Today we find ourselves in 2 Corinthians as a part of our Bible reading plan as we walk through this second letter to the church at Corinth, and if you have had the privilege in days past of reading the entirety of 2 Corinthians, you know that it obviously follows 1 Corinthians but there's been a gap in the middle, in other words, the Lord used the Apostle Paul to communicate a message, it was a message that if you've read 1 Corinthians was very strategic, shall we say it was not seeker friendly. He called it what it was. He said to do what needed to be done and there was no bones about it. We gather from the tone of 2 Corinthians, shall we say it was not necessarily real well received, in fact, one of the themes of 2 Corinthians is the defense of the Apostle Paul's apostleship. There is this underlying tone of him communicating the authority that God has given him to say the things that he is saying; that this is not up for debate; this is not up for an opinion; nobody gets to take a vote in this; that he, much like we studied today, the prophet Gad in David's life, is the prophet for their lives and thus they need to hear him out because he's not speaking in his own opinion but he's speaking on behalf of the Lord.

Not only do we kind of see this back and forthness in 2 Corinthians, but I believe that we have biblical scriptural support for this because the very first what we know as letter from the Apostle Paul chronologically is the book of 1 Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians he begins to lay out some of the truths, some basics of the faith, but he ends 1 Thessalonians in a very unique manner. He tells the believers at Thessalonica to read this epistle when they gather together. You say, "Well, why would that be significant? Of course they should read it." But he made it very clear that when they gather like we are tonight, or when they gather as a congregation, they are to take these words and read them. The reason that is so important is because growing up in the Jewish faith, growing up in the synagogue, the only thing you would read publicly would be Scripture. So the Apostle Paul was absolutely convinced that the Lord was using him as the apostle called out of due time, not to give an opinion, not to give a perspective, but to give, "Thus saith the Lord" in their lives.

So when you read 2 Corinthians and you see kind of a backlash to 1 Corinthians, understand he's not debating as we would see in a courtroom today, he is frustrated, he is upset that God has spoken directly to them and they have rejected what God has said. And so now in 2 Corinthians, he's coming back, he's re-emphasizing the same truths as 1 Corinthians and yet what we see is he's beginning to give us some insight of how they missed the message.

I want to read just one simple verse in 2 Corinthians 2:11. He is, again, kind of beginning this rebuttal of, "Why did you not listen? Do you not understand? Do you not recognize how God has chosen to use me? This was not what I chose for myself but the Lord chose for me." And when you get to verse 11 of chapter 2, it says,

11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Interesting. Tucked in the middle of this going back and forth of who should you listen to and who should you not, it is verified by God himself what I've already communicated or can you just discard it, he says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." And the thing that I want to focus on today is kind of that part b, "The Devices of the Devil," or the devices of Satan. What are the means, what are the measures, how is it that not just in the church at Corinth, how is it in our own individual lives, our personal lives, what are the devices that Satan uses to, shall we say according to this, get advantage of us?

Now currently in the sports world there is one of the major tennis tournaments taking place over in Australia, and in that tennis tournament you will notice that as they keep score, they're comes a point where one of the competitors will have "the advantage." In other words, in the scoring system they are one up from the other one, and so how is it that Satan gets a leg up, how is it that he gets a step ahead, how is it that we always end up just a step behind where we should be and he has gotten advantage of us? So tonight I want to address not only from this verse but other verses the devices of the devil. How

does he pull off what he pulls off even among those of us who are believers in Jesus Christ.

The first thing that he does, his first action not just in your life and in my life but in humanity's life, is the action of perversion. Now when we hear that word "perversion" or "pervert," we automatically naturally, at least in our cerebral thinking, go to a specific person with a specific agenda, but the word by definition means "to take that which is true or right and to twist it or to turn it." And dare I say the most dangerous perversions are not 180 degrees from the truth, but maybe only 1-2 degrees from the truth.

The very first action that we have is found in the book of Genesis 3. By the way, we're gonna turn to some passages, I'm gonna allude to a lot of passages, feel free to follow me if you so choose. But in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve, the garden of Eden, the great fall. We're familiar with it, right? That's how we ended up in the mess that we're in today. If it had not been for the garden of Eden, by the way, it would have happened somewhere along the line most likely, we wouldn't have the experiences of death and destruction and heartache that we have today. But at the beginning of that story, before we feel, before humanity consumed of the forbidden fruit, there was a conversation, that conversation is between the serpent and Eve, and what's interesting is the very first statement/question that the devil, Satan, the one who's mentioned here in 2 Corinthians 11, lest he get advantage of us, what is the first question he asked us? "Yea, hath God said." The very first thing that Satan will do in our lives is get us to question did God really mean what God really said.

You know, it's interesting in our society today is consumed with the trial in the DC area, and there's been a lot of verbiage and there's been a lot of opinions but one of the wisest statements I heard this week was by someone who said, "You know, instead of reading people's minds, maybe we ought to just read their words." Now think about that for just a moment. You know how we get in trouble, right? It's when we start postulating what we think somebody said rather than just reading or hearing what they actually said.

That's what Satan did. What he did is he came to humanity and said, "Alright, I know what God said to you, is that really what he said to you?" What he got us to do was to think about the intent, to think about the implications, to really begin to twist it in our minds, "Did I really hear it right or is there something more or less to it?" And then what he did that was so sly because he is the serpent, is he actually quoted Genesis 2:16 but very strategically left out one word. In the initial, shall we say instructions for the garden of Eden, the Lord came to Adam and he said, "Alright, here's the game plan. Here's the agenda. Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." Those were the instructions. Pretty simple, right? By the way, you find it interesting that God's instructions to mankind began with one sentence, then it went to 10 Commandments, and now we've got 66 books. Obviously we're hard-headed, right? But when Satan in Genesis 3:1 says, "Yea, hath God said," interesting when he quotes Genesis 2:16, he leaves out the word "freely."

Now I know one of the things that you and I know and we, I guess we regurgitate but oftentimes it's difficult to believe, that the greatest lies are 90% true. The greatest deceptions in life is that which looks, sounds and appears to be authentic but it is not. If you have ever, shall we say been deceived into buying a product that was not of the genuine fact, the times that you have, Tracy and I, at least, have when we've traveled the world, there are always people that are, shall we say peddling fakes, and one of the things that she and I enjoy is seeing how close of a fake can you get to the real thing without anybody knowing, because the greatest fakes are 90% authentic. But something that is 90% true is still 100% false and this is the perversion and this is what Satan does in our life, he gets you and I to just begin to question, "Did God really mean what God said as God said it?"

Years ago as I was serving in my very first pastorate, I had a man, he was a retired military, the logistics division of the National Guard. He gave me some of the greatest wisdom in life. He said one of the things I'm seeing and one of the things I'm concerned about years ahead, now he said this a quarter century ago, he said when they start taking hell out of the Bible and blood out of Jesus, we're headed the wrong way. He's right, is he not? How often do we hear of that subject of hell anymore in "popular Christianity"? Jesus talked about it twice as much as he did heaven. Tonight, we sang a whole montage of the blood of Jesus and it seems like nowadays everybody is scared to talk about the blood of Jesus but it's the blood that has the power to save, and when we take out hell and we remove the blood, then we have a lot of verbiage but it's kind of like Genesis 3, we've lost the freely or the freedom of God's promises.

It always begins with, "Yea, hath God said." Where does it end up? When he twisted or he turns it or you've seen the analogy of a train or a car that's 1 degree off the track, where does it end up in a thousand miles? Let me tell you where the destination is, it's in the book of Isaiah 5. It's a passage of Scripture I'm sure you're familiar with, you've probably heard it through the years, you may not know that it's in Isaiah 5, but allow me to share with you the Israelites are a whole lot like you and I today. They find themselves in a culture that is very wealthy, it's very militarily strong, it is very educated, it's one to be admired not only within but without. In fact, one of the Israelites' problem, and oh, if this doesn't resonate today, is they had become so self-sufficient they didn't realize they needed God and what did the Lord keep telling them? "If you don't repent, judgment is coming. If you don't repent, it's not gonna be pretty." Did they repent? No. Did judgment come? Yes. Nebuchadnezzar came, he didn't knock on the back door, he knocked it down. But in Isaiah 5 there is a series of woes. Now let me warn you, anytime the Lord says woe, you need to take a step back. The Lord is giving a dire warning. In Isaiah 5:22, he says, "Woe unto those who call evil good and good evil. Woe unto those who call black white, and white black," in another series of analogies, and what the Lord is saying is that when it gets twisted and it gets turned 1 degree off center, if you give it enough time, pretty soon you're 180 degrees and rather than resisting it, you embrace it, you support it, you celebrate it. Wow, if that doesn't sound like our culture and our communities today, I don't know what does.

What does he tell the church at Corinth? "Lest Satan get advantage of you." We are not ignorant of his devices even in the context of our current culture. Years and years and years ago, specifically about 100, we began to say, "Yea, hath God said." The attack on what you and I know as the Bible began in our culture about 100 years ago as we began to question and debate, "Is this or is that, should this be, should that not?" And at first everybody said, "Oh, it's just a bunch of theologians and preachers all getting in the weeds." Well, that "weeds" has become a forest of lies in our culture because now we actually live in a context that celebrates the antithesis of what the Bible promotes. We live in a context that says, "If you adhere to what the Bible says, you're archaic, you somehow are out-of-date, and you are against humanity." And yet if you side with the things the world is propagating and peddling, you are in vogue and cultural. Congratulations, we've become the Israelites of Isaiah 5. Nebuchadnezzar, so to speak, proverbially speaking is knocking on the back door and we're too busy celebrating our own distinct deception.

When he tells the church at Corinth "lest Satan should get advantage of us," we are not ignorant of his devices. Please understand the first mode of operation is he always perverts, he always twists the word of God so that we replace it with our own ingenuity and our own ideas and our philosophies. What's the second stage or the second step? It's penetration. He begins to penetrate – hear this – the people of God and the places of God with his perversions because if the perversions were to come from the outside, we would resist, would we not? If the perversions were to come from somewhere out there, we would see it coming like the watchman in Ezekiel and we'd say, "We need to be prepared." The problem is much like the garden of Eden, he didn't stand on the outside of the garden with a bullhorn yelling at Adam and Eve, what did he do? He got on the inside.

I want you to turn a few pages to the right to chapter 11 of 2 Corinthians as the Apostle Paul inspired by the Lord goes a little bit further in depth here. There's this little passage, it's three verses in length beginning in verse 13 where he's warning these believers. Now let me go back while you're turning. This was the church at Corinth, this was the carnal church, these were the educated people of the day who had come to faith and knowledge in Jesus Christ and he's warning them that they don't be deceived by the enemy to trusting the devices of this world. Verse 13 of chapter 11, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Interesting that one of the most popular movies of recent days is called Transformers, taking that which is evil, taking that which is contrary to the things of God, and according to what we just read, presenting it as a representative of God. And I know there has been just debate ad nauseum about the garden experience, but according to what I've just read, Satan did not show up in the garden of Eden wearing a red suit, horns and a tail. He came, according to what we just read, as an angel of light. In other words, he disguises himself as, "I'm one of the good guys. I'm one of the ones that you want to listen to."

Yesterday I had the, and please note my tone, I had the privilege of attending a basketball tournament for the entirety of the day. From the moment the sun came up until well

beyond the sun went down, I was at a basketball tournament. If you've ever attended one of those tournaments, you don't just see the games that your own children play in, you have to see the games before, the games after, and pretty much by the end of the day you've seen enough basketball for a day. But in one of the games that was being played prior to one of our games that I was there just in attendance watching, I saw something very interesting. Now these are junior high, middle school boys here, alright? We're not talking professors with PhDs, these are middle school boys and I've lived with this and so you understand the contrast to what I just said. There was a time out that was taken and there was a team, we'll just call it Team A and Team B, Team A was inbounding the ball in front of Team B's bench and time out was called, and the representative from Team A, one of the players, stayed by the referee to inbound the ball when he would blow the whistle. In other words, he didn't go to his bench to his coach, he just stayed right there where the ball would be inbound about three feet from the opposing team. Why would he do that? So he could hear what they were playing, correct? I wish I had videoed the referee. He saw what was going on and he tapped the young man on the shoulder, he said, "Hey, get to your bench, boy!" And he said, "But..." He said, "Don't you 'but' me. I know exactly what you're doing." It was hysterical because what he was doing is he was disguising himself in the mix of all that was happening so that the opposition wouldn't have any idea that he was listening and watching and being a part of things.

He disguises himself as an angel of light. Hear me clearly: the enemy gets the greatest penetration not when he throws bombs and missiles from the outside world into the church but when he sneaks into the church, he infiltrates the church and he destroys the faith of the believers from the inside out so they no longer defend the faith against that which is in opposition to. Satan got us not outside the garden yelling in, inside the garden convincing us we really shouldn't listen to the one who placed us there in the first place. He got us to doubt our own Creator.

If you have time to turn a few more pages to the right to the book of Jude, if you're not familiar with Jude, go to Revelation and hang a hard left. It's only one page in length but I love how the Lord uses Jude to communicate these words. It is divinely inspired and preserved but you can hear how the Lord is using human emotion to communicate divine truth. Beginning in verse 3 of Jude, "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 ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Can you hear it in the voice, "I wanted to encourage you. I wanted to talk about how great things were, but we gotta get to battle here. We gotta fight for the faith." Listen to verse 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, 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 Jesus Christ." Here we are in the early days of what you and I know as the church, not only do we have the Apostle Paul divinely inspired saying Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, but here we have Jude saying these guys have crept in, they get on the inside and they spoil it from the inside, not from the outside. How many historical illustrations we could go through tonight of those who have lost battles and cultures that have lost themselves not from the outward enemy but of the inward enemy within.

He perverts, he penetrates, which necessitates this question: what's his purpose? What is his real ambition? What is his desire? Well, according to Jesus in John 10, the thief, who is the devil and Satan, comes to steal, kill and destroy. Is that not what he did in the garden of Eden? He stole our innocence, he destroyed our souls and he killed the garden. Steal, kill and destroy. He's on the same mission.

Back in 2 Corinthians, we were in chapter 2 earlier, but in chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians there's some interesting insight to the purpose of why the devil does what he does. I'm gonna begin reading in verse 1 of chapter 4. It says, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost," listen to verse 4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Interesting. What's his purpose? He wants to blind us to the truth of God. He blinded Adam and Eve. He blinds us so that we would not see, we would not hear, we would not experience the truth of the Gospel.

One of the great "sad stories" of your Old Testament is found in the book of Daniel 5. I'll give you a little context here. Daniel 5 happens somewhat between the great golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar and the lions' den of Darius. There's a man by the name of Belshazzar who has risen to power. He has decided to commence a celebration filled with great debauchery and excess and it's while he is having that celebration, so to speak, that there is a hand that writes on the wall. For those of you who know the biblical story, the message is that the kingdom will be taken from them. Historically speaking, they did not realize it but without a shot being fired the Medes and the Persians would remove the kingdom out from them in the middle of the night, in the midst of the debauchorous celebration. What's interesting about that story is that a hand was seen writing on the wall and nobody knew what it said. We even use that phrase in our culture today, "Did you now see the handwriting on the wall?" In other words, "Could you not see this coming? It was right in front of you." How did Belshazzar miss it? Let me twist that, how is our culture missing it? How is the church missing it? I mean, it's written on the walls. How are we missing it? Well, we just read it, Satan does what? He blinds us.

Go back to the Genesis story. What was humanity's defense? "It looks good to eat. It'll make us wise. This is beneficial for us." Interesting, all of those were statements of blindness. They were attributing to the forbidden fruit that which it could not provide for them and what has Satan done in our lives? He blinds us. In fact, you get to the book of Romans 11, kind of from a more cosmic or universal scale, it says there in verse 25, it says lest in our own conceit we think otherwise, that Israel is now partly blind until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled and this then shall the same be told that all of Israel shall be saved.

I mean, I want you to think back to the crucifixion story. I'm sure many of you know it well. We had it put on flannel boards for us as children. We've taught it as teachers in vacation Bible school, and we hear it sung every Sunday when we gather together and at Easter we celebrate it. We know the story pretty well, so how is it that a group of men who had studied the Old Testament their entire lives, most of them most likely had the Torah or the first five books completely memorized, had spent their entire life anticipating the Messiah, how did they miss him when he was standing there right before them? Because they were blinded, because they got caught up in, "Yea, hath God said." they twisted it, they turned it, and the rejection of Jesus Christ did not come from the outside, it came from the inside. Those who should have received him easiest, those who should have celebrated him the most were the first to condemn him. Interesting, his purpose is blindness.

So in conclusion, it's pretty obvious what's coming: what's the preventative? Well, if you have that which is darkened, if you have that which is blinded, what is the antithesis? Light. We just read it in 2 Corinthians 4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not," listen to this, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ shine unto them." In other words, as Jesus said that he is the light of the world, he called us the light of the world, that the only way that darkness, the only way that the blindness of humanity in our own lives and other's lives is removed, is by what we see as a simple example every day of our life. How do you get rid of a dark room? You turn on a light. How do you get rid of a situation that is dark? You allow a substance of light to enter into that place and then you can see where to walk, you can see where to navigate. You know, it's interesting that even in the darkest of rooms, the smallest of lights over a period of time can illuminate even the furthest corner of the place. And so what's happening here when he talks about the devices of Satan that we should not be ignorant of, the only antidote to the darkness, the only antidote to the blindness is that those of us who are of light penetrate the darkness and shine the light as bright as possible.

Now as we gather together as believers, this is what I like to call the great flashlight party. That's what this is. We've all got a light and we're all shining it, right? You say, "Why would you want to have a flashlight party?" Because it's lonely when you're the only flashlight in a dark room. It's lonely when you're the only one walking down a dark alley and you're the only source of light. Let me put that in everyday terms: it's lonely when you're the only person in a classroom who's a believer. It's lonely when you're the only person at work on a team that's a believer. It's lonely when you're the only person in a family that's a believer. So we gather together and we have flashlight parties to encourage us there's other lights out there, and it charges and it energizes us to go and be the light.

Now I'm gonna go ahead and go somewhere that you may say is meddling, I just call it preaching. We live in a world today that even the church holistically is encouraging us that it's not really important to gather together, just watch it on tv, it'll be fine. Now I'm not opposed to our media ministry, we have home-bounds, we have shut-ins, we have people who their job takes them other places and that is an incredible resource, but I want



you to know this is First Baptist Church, not First Baptist of Bedsheet and Pillow. Some of y'all will get that when you leave. But what has Satan done? Is it that important to really physically be together? Technology has brought us together. You don't believe that anymore than I do. You've seen families at a restaurant, right? Four people at a table all looking at their phones? That hasn't brought us together, technology has actually caused more distance, and the problem is it's because we spend less time gathering together energizing each other, we make less impact in the dark alleys of life. Hm, there's a reason the Lord said, "Do not forsake the gathering of believers." Why? Because it's dark out there. It's dark and if our light is going to shine in the darkness, then we have got to be together with other persons of light, other believers to let us know, hey, we're not the only one.

You know, I'll close with the prophet Elijah. He defeated the Baal worshipers in 1 Kings 17. Great story. Yay! They're all dead! But do you know what happened shortly thereafter? He starts whining and moaning and crying. He says, "O God," he had the spirit of Eeyore, you know that spirit of Eeyore? He had the spirit of Eeyore, "O Lord, I'm the only one. Nobody but me. What am I gonna do?" You remember what God said? "There's 7,000 others out there." Now last time I checked, that's a pretty big church, isn't it? 7,000. Why did he get the spirit of Eeyore? Why did he get defeated? Why did he get down? Because he was all alone, all by himself, and he wasn't with the other 7,000.

You see, the antidote to the darkness is when we gather together, the antidote to, "Yea, hath God said." You see, you start thinking those things when you're all by yourself, and by the way, I know there are people that would argue with me, but I'll be glad to sit down with you and debate, the struggle and the problem with the conversation with the serpent is that Eve did it by herself and she began to say, "Oh, maybe God did say." You know, it's amazing when you get with other people that are believers when times you're struggling, they can encourage you and say, "Hey, time out now. What do you mean, 'Yea, hath God said'? It's okay here." And all of a sudden it synergizes us in the faith. We live in a world today where even those who claim to be of the church are telling us it's not that important to get together anymore, and if we continue that, we're gonna continue down the path of the deception. Darkness shall reign and the light will get dimmer and dimmer and dimmer.

Satan got us in the garden and even with all of our education and technology today, he's getting us today in the same exact manner. All he wants to do is blind the world and to make your light be dimmer when the Lord has given us the antidote. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." He told you, "You are the light of the world." Let us be the light.

Let's pray.