

Stronghold of Satan

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Romans 1:18-22 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

- I. Again, Romans 1 spells out the steps that lead us away from God and into depravity and a reprobate mind.
 - A. It is made very clear how it happens and we are foolish if we do not study it closely and become very familiar with how the devil executes his plan of destruction for us.
 - B. It is very clear in the Word of God that the mind is the battleground and arena where this spiritual warfare takes place.
 - C. The whole point of studying the Bible to learn how the mind works is to make us better able to resist the devil and have victory over the evil powers in this world that intend to destroy our soul.
 - D. The things we see and hear are absorbed by our mind and then a process begins to put all the pieces together to form a view of the world around us, the people in it, and God who created it all.
 - E. It begins as soon as we are born into this world and continues until we die.
 - F. At every stage of this process the devil is present and working to turn our minds into a way that seems right, but leads to death.
 - G. But we are not ignorant of his devices and it will do us immeasurable good to study to show ourselves approved unto God in this matter.

- II. There is a method common to all men by which we gather and process information in our mind.
 - A. First, there is perception – When the mind takes notice of external objects through the senses, we perceive, or are made aware of an object, an idea, a fact, etc.

 - B. Second, there is apprehension - To take or seize; to take hold of and commit to memory; to possess; to understand.
 1. To comprehend is another word we use for what happens here with the information we receive.

 - C. Third, there is conception - To form in the mind; to be able to visualize, to call to memory and to look at the object perceived and apprehended.
 1. The act of conceiving in the mind is that mental act by which an idea or notion is formed of an object absent of perception, or of a sensation formerly felt.

2. When we see an object with our eyes open, we have a perception of it; when the same object is presented to the mind with the eyes shut, in idea only or in memory, we have a conception of it.
3. It is that stage when we begin to be “set in our ways” or where we have settled on acceptance or rejection of any certain way of looking at things.
4. We form concepts of things and they are cemented into our thinking so that they form the structure of our views of everything else we encounter to think about – they are then called “ideas.” (i.e., “He has his own ideas.”)
5. Conceit - Conception; that which is conceived, imagined, or formed in the mind; idea; thought; image.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Proverbs 26:12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

- D. Imagine – to take the perceptions and conceptions we have in our mind and modify them, rearrange them, and add to them to create our own ideas according to our fancy.
1. We create in our own mind a world that is more to our liking.
 2. Then we go about to manipulate things and people around us to make our fantasy real.
 3. In order to understand imagination and how it works we need to be clear on some words that define it.

IMAG'INE, v.t. *L. imaginor, from imago, image.*

1. To form a notion or idea in the mind; to fancy.
2. To form ideas or representations in the mind, by modifying and combining our conceptions.
3. To contrive in purpose; to scheme; to devise.
4. To conceive; to have a notion or idea.

IDE'A, n. *L. idea; Gr. to see, L. video.*

1. Literally, that which is seen; hence, form, image, model of any thing in the mind; that which is held or comprehended by the understanding or intellectual faculties.

Idea signifies the same thing as conception, apprehension, notion. To have an idea of any thing is to conceive it.

According to modern writers on mental philosophy, an idea is the object of thought, or the notice which the mind takes of its perceptions.

1. In popular use, idea signifies notion, conception, thought, opinion, and even purpose or intention.
2. Image in the mind.
3. An opinion; a proposition. These decisions are incompatible with the idea, that the principles are derived from the civil law.

NO'TION,

Notion and idea are primarily different; idea being the conception of something visible, and notion the conception of things invisible or intellectual, as the notion we have of spirits.

FAN'CY, n. *contracted from fantasy,*

1. The faculty by which the mind forms images or representations of things at pleasure. It is often used as synonymous with imagination; but imagination is rather the power of combining and modifying our conceptions.

5. Inclination; liking. Take that which suits your fancy. How does this strike your fancy?

8. False notion.

9. Something that pleases or entertains without real use or value.

III. So the Scripture here refers to the fact that when people stop glorifying God as God they are not thankful, and then they become “vain in their imaginations.”

A. The imagination works off the things we perceive, apprehend, conceive in our mind through our senses.

B. These things become ideas that we form and then piece together in our mind to create our overall view of the world around us, the people around us, moral values and laws, and God who created everything.

C. At every point the devil is present to insert his influence in what we perceive, what we apprehend, what we conceive, and what we imagine.

D. He is the god of this world, the prince and power of the air, so he can control to a great extent what you hear and see.

1. He is the author of lies and deceit, so what you see or hear can always be tainted and twisted because of his meddling in it.

2. What you see is not always what you get when you apprehend it.

3. You can very easily be tricked, fooled, deceived by what you see or hear.

4. Once you perceive something and seize upon it and commit it to your memory as true when it is not true, your reasoning from that point on will be faulty and dangerous to your soul, as well as to anyone you influence with your corrupted mind.

5. So we must be very careful about what we perceive, or let through the gate into our mind.

6. We must also be very careful about what we accept as true (apprehend) and allow into our thought process as we reason about everything else.

7. This is just basically ruling your own spirit so that you are not like a city that is broken down and without walls.

E. The devil is not only involved in the physical world around us but he can also interfere with our thoughts and reasoning in our minds, which is the spiritual realm.

1. So he can trick us into apprehending or comprehending something and forming an idea about it which is totally wrong because our perception was wrong.

F. Then where Satan can establish a stronghold is our imagination.

1. This is where he can fully communicate with us in the spiritual realm and influence our thinking to bring about our destruction.

2. He is a liar, that is his outstanding characteristic and ability.

3. So he lies to us in our mind about the things we have seen and heard and felt and we begin to form ideas and opinions based upon imagination rather than reality.

4. When the devil is involved these ideas are either fancies of bliss and pleasure or ideas of bitterness and hatred toward other people and God.
 5. When the devil is involved you become the hero in your imagination and the all-knowing, all-understanding, all-wise god of your own little universe – wise in your own conceits.
- G. Satan is able to ensnare us in our minds and establish a stronghold there through our lusts and desires.

James 1:14-16 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

1 John 2:16 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.

- H. He works to ensnare us as we are perceiving things around us.
1. Much of the time we see what we want to see.
 2. This means our lusts and desires change the way we see, hear, or feel about things.
- I. He works to get us to remember certain things and forget certain things. (apprehension)
1. The things that appeal to our lusts and desires we keep and the things that do not we forget.
- J. He works to influence us to conceive things in a crooked way, so that our reasoning from that point on lead us away from righteousness and into self-pleasing, and then to sin and death.
1. We may hear or see something and understand it to be true, but after thinking on it a while we somehow put it with other ideas we have picked up in the past and after reasoning about it we “conceive” a way to put it in another folder of our mind and keep it out of sight or reject it entirely.
- K. He works in our imagination through the lusts and desires of the flesh.
1. Since imagination can create things out of nowhere it is wide open to his suggestions unless it is owned and occupied by the Spirit of God.
 2. Imagination is a powerful tool when Satan is in control of it.
 3. Most people would rather live there than in the real world.
 4. That is why “virtual reality” is a thing now.
- L. There is only one way to be safe from the destruction of your life and your soul and that is to cast yourself completely upon God and put your heart, mind, and soul in his hands.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

- M. It should be very easy to see how important it is to have your will and your heart and your mind and your body subject to God and under the control of his Holy Spirit through his Word.