

THE PATHS OF THE DESTROYER, THE PATHS OF THE LORD

TEXT: *Psalms 17:4-5*

⁴ Concerning the works of men, by the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

⁵ Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Judges 2:15: Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

Job 19:21: Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

It takes the fullest knowledge of the Word of God under the Spirit's illumination to discern the paths of the destroyer from the paths of the Lord. Satan's ways are tricky and subtle, working thru our senses and inherent weaknesses. One of the first things the Bible says about the devil is:

Genesis 3:1: Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?



He excels in putting doubt and fear in men's minds concerning our relationship to God, Christ, and His Word. In order to deceive, he uses misapplication of the Bible, either to lead into error or arguments. The later leads to strife, resentment, envy, and evil speaking, and obviously takes us away from God.

He mixes truth with error in such a clever way that the blend looks right to the untrained eye. Then once he gets the mind pre-occupied, he has gotten a foothold.

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The minds of men are the battlefield of the enemy. He must be recognized here and defeated. If not, he will lead us unto the paths of destruction. Through the mind, he enters the heart to control the whole life. This is where the fiery darts of poison are sent. Thus we need the helmet of salvation and the shield of faith.

When our thoughts are under the Blood, in subjection to Christ, Satan is defeated

and helpless. Paul said we are not ignorant of satan's devices. Oh, that all the saints could say the same thing. He could say that after knowing the value of the whole armor of God, and he admonishes us to put the entire armor on. We must use or exercise our spiritual senses to discern good and evil. The paths of the destroyer and the paths of life are entered onto by the use of — or the lack of use of — the armor.

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Hebrews 5:14: But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

They are so close that there must be only a fine line between because of the mixing or blending of truth by the devil.

Can you always tell whether or not your trials are from the Lord or the devil? What about those tests and troubles? Can you tell the difference between the Lord's chastening and the Lord's sifting? Do you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is proving you just as he did Israel, or that the devices of satan are working to destroy your soul? Do your circumstances constitute the cross you are to bare daily in the Saviour's name?



Luke 9:23: And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Or is it the buffeting of Satan from that thorn in the flesh?

2 Corinthians 12:7: And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Or is it the fiery darts the enemy?

Ephesians 6:16: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Do you know whether it is the searching and trying of your faith?

Revelation 2:23: And I will kill her children with death; and all the

churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Do your troubled feelings mean the conviction of the Spirit because of some sin or disobedience?

Psalms 32:4: For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

Or are your troubled feelings due to the condemnation of the devil who is the accuser of the brethren?

Revelation 12:10: And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, Now is come Salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.



Job 2:1-13:

1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

2 And the LORD said unto satan, From whence comest thou? And satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3 And the LORD said unto satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause.

4 And satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.

6 And the LORD said unto satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

7 So went satan forth from the Presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.



11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.



12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward Heaven.

13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

1 Timothy 3:6: Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Is that door closed by our Lord Jesus, or is it a hindrance from satan?

Acts 16:6-7:

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

1 Thessalonians 2:18: Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but satan hindered us.

Is that open door from a lying demon?

1 Kings 22:5: And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I

pray thee, at the Word of the LORD to day.

1 Kings 22:22: And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And He said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

Or is it from the Lord? Is your help indeed from angels sent to minister unto the heirs of salvation, or from the false angel of light who leads into darkness?

2 Corinthians 10:4: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Hebrews 1:14: Are they not all Ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them Who shall be heirs of Salvation?

Are we to go out to invade the kingdom of satan?

Ephesians 6:10: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His Might.

Are we to be aware of the snare of the devil?

Psalms 91:3: Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

2 Timothy 2:26: And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Are we free in the will of God, or are we resisting Him? Or are we following the design of Satan?

Joshua 4:7: Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the Children of Israel for ever.



Spiritual maturity enables us to compare spiritual with spiritual:

Hebrews 5:11-14:

11 Of Whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the Oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.



13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by

reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Ephesians 4:14-16:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the Truth in Love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ:

16 From Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Philippians 3:15-19:

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)



1 Corinthians 2:12-16:

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the Mind of Christ.

The gift of discernment of God's provided protection.

1 Corinthians 12:10: To another the working of Miracles; to another Prophecy; to another discerning of spirits [of God or man]; to another divers kinds of Tongues; to another the interpretation of Tongues:

Heavenly help is always available. To our shame, we are often not dependent upon Him enough, but instead — trusting in our own understanding — we discover our heads have betrayed us into the hands of the enemy.

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The spirit of error and the Spirit of truth are both spoken of in the Bible — the workings of satan, and the manifestations of the Spirit of God. In the one we are walking in presumption; in the other we walk by faith. Each will determine whether we're walking in the spirit or in the flesh; whether we're walking in the light, as He is in the light, or whether we are walking in the shadows by the angel of light, the counterfeiter. The fiery trials which are to try us are won or lost here.