

**“Back to Basics”**  
**Part 11: Doctrine of Satan and Spirit Beings (Sections 9 and 10)**

**Introduction:**

In our series, *Back to the Basics*, we return tonight to the second half of what I started two weeks ago. We are in sections 9 and 10 of our church’s Articles of Faith. Because these two sections are interrelated, I divided them up between a study of Angels (which we looked at last time) and now tonight a study of Satan and Demons. So, let me read again Sections 9 and 10:

*Section 9. Doctrine of Satan*

We believe in the personality of Satan and that he was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness--destined however, to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels. (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4; Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30; I Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1-11; I Peter 5:8; Zechariah 3:1; I John 3:8; Matthew 13:25,37-39; Luke 22:3,4; Revelation 12:10; Revelation 13:13,14; Revelation 19:11-16,20; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 12:7-9; Revelation 20:1-3; II Thessalonians 2:8-11; Matthew 25:41).

*Section 10. Doctrine of Spirit Beings*

We believe that angels and demons are spirit beings. Angels were created as heavenly hosts, but some through choice are now the hosts of Satan and dishonor and will share in his ultimate doom. The angels of heaven, ministering spirits, are sinless and pure and are forever seeking to praise God in their ministries for Him and His people. Their ministries, ranks, and orders differ, and their strength, appearance, travel, etc. are not bound by natural human laws. They are immortal and do not marry. Their abode is in heaven. (Matthew 18:10; 22:30; Mark 5:2; 8:38; Colossians 1:16; I Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 1:14; Jude 6,9).

All right, so last time we gave attention to the holy, unfallen angels, whereas tonight we’re looking at the evil, fallen angels. I’ll be quoting a lot of Scripture tonight. So, God’s Word will be doing much more of the talking than me explaining. On one hand I feel like I should apologize for that, but on the other I don’t. Being bombarded with Scripture will be good for us. Like last time I’m going to approach this in a question and answer manner.

**I. HOW DID SATAN AND DEMONS COME ABOUT?**

Like the holy angels, the Bible has little to say about the origin of evil angels or how their current evil character came about. Nevertheless we can learn something about their origin based on what Scripture says about their moral character.

There are two texts of Scripture that relate the fall of the evil angels. The first one is 2 Peter 2:4: “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” Now, don’t let this phrase throw you off: “[God] case them down to hell and delivered them into chains... to be reserved for judgment.” This verse simply means the evil angels have been removed from God’s presence and are now under some kind of restraint by God until final judgment. They are reserved for this. But, this doesn’t mean they are inactive in the world. In fact, the rest of 2 Pet 2 describes continued sinful activity of people kept under punishment. 2 Peter 2:9 says, “The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to reserve the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.” So, if this can be true of sinful people certainly it can be of sinful angels. They both have freedom to carry on their evil activities.

The second text concerning the evil angels’ fall is Jude 6: “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain (position of authority), but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” Both of these verses indicate that Satan and demons are formerly holy angels who sinned and thus came under God’s judgment. So, it’s safe to assume they were created like all the other angels, but then fell. Colossians 1:16: “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” And when God created all he

“saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31). So, originally all, including all angels were considered “good.” But, at some point before Genesis 3, Satan exists. So, sometime between the events of Genesis 1:31 and 3:1 there had to be a rebellion by some angels. The Jude 6 text gives us a clue that pride was their sin. Again, it says they “did not keep their own position.”

Some believe, and I tend to agree, that Isaiah 14:12-15 refers to the fall of Satan, the prince of demons. Indeed, Isaiah is describing God’s judgment on a human king, the Babylonian king. But, then the prophet starts talking in a way that seems too powerful to be referring only to a mere man. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit” (Isaiah 14:12-15). This kind of language (like “ascending to heaven”) seems to indicate that an angel of great power rebelled. It’s typical of prophetic speech to parallel human events with heavenly events that actually happened. So, here Satan is characterized as one of great pride who sought to be equal with God. Speaking of which...

## II. WHO IS SATAN?

Satan is the originator of sin. John 8:44: “[Satan was a] murderer from the beginning [and] a liar and the father of life.” 1 John 3:8: “The devil has sinned from the beginning.” Since we know God originally created Satan good we know then the phrase “from the beginning” refers to “beginning” of world history. He is seen as the originator of sin and the one tempting others with sin.

Satan is the chief ruler of the demons (i.e. 2 Corinthians 4:4). Furthermore, His personal name is Satan. The Hebrew name for “Satan” means “enemy” and comes from a Hebrew verb that means to be or act as an adversary. Hence, he is the opponent of God, God’s causes and God’s people. Zechariah saw a vision which pictures Satan’s adversarial role. Zechariah 3:1: “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.” In New Testament Greek, “Satan” is just a transliteration of the Hebrew term and so likewise means “adversary.”

There are other names for Satan as well. “Devil” is the most common way the New Testament refers to him (*diabolos* in Greek) (i.e. Matt 4:1; Rev 12:9 etc.) which means “slanderer” or “schemer.” He is also referred to as “Accuser” (Rev 12:10); “Tempter” (i.e. 1 Thess 3:5); “Beelzebub” – Prince of demons (i.e. Matt 12:24, 27; Luke 1:15); “Enemy” (i.e. Matt 13:39); “Evil one” (i.e. Matt 13:19); “Belial” (2 Cor 6:15); “Adversary” (1 Pet 5:8); “Deceiver” (Rev 12:9); “The Great Dragon (Rev 12:3); “Father of lies” (John 8:44); “Murderer” (John 8:44); “Sinner” (1 John 3:8; 14); “The ruler of this world” (John 12:31); “The prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2); “Abaddon” and “Apollyon” which means “destroyer” (Rev 9:11). All of these names convey something about Satan’s character and activity. Again, he opposes God and people and does that especially thru temptation, as show in Jesus’ temptation.

One of his primary means of opposing and tempting people is through deception. Scripture says he disguises himself as an angel of light and his evil servants disguise themselves as servants of good (2 Cor 11:14-15). As a result, he “the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthian 4:4). Of course, he doesn’t just work to deceive unbelievers. He also opposes and hinders Christians in their service. Yet, for all his power, he is limited in power. He is not omnipotent. The story of Job shows that. Further, Christians can resist him successfully and he will flee (James 4:7). Not by our strength of course, but by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26).

## III. WHAT ARE SATAN AND THE DEMONS LIKE AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

In other words, what are their evil characteristics and actions? Let me mention a number. First, likely demons have names just as the holy angels have names (i.e. Michael, Gabriel). Also, demons are intelligent beings (Lk 4:34; 8:28; Acts 19:13-17). Luke 8:28: “When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, ‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.’” Demons are knowledgeable. In this case, they knew who Jesus was and what He was all about.

Demons have emotions (Js. 2:19; Lk. 8:28). For example, one emotion is fear. James 2:19: “The demons believe and tremble.” Demons have different degrees of strength and sinfulness (Mk 9:29; Mt 12:45). “And he said to them, ‘This

kind [of demon] cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.” (Mk 9:29) “Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation” (Mt 12:45).

Demons can appear to people in various ways, both physically and spiritually (Mt. 4; Rev. 9:7-10,17; 16:13-16). Matthew 4 shows Satan coming to and tempting Jesus. Some readings of Revelation 9:7-10 see demons coming in “the shape of locusts...[with] faces like the faces of men...[and] hair like women’s hair...teeth like lions’ teeth...breastplates of iron...tails like scorpions.” Similarly Revelation 16:13-14 talks about “three unclean spirits like frogs...[that] are spirits of demons.” These are would be alarming manifestations for us to behold.

But, remember again, Satan can come as an angel of light. And this is why some theologians have pointed out the possibility that demons could interact with us without us even knowing it. Heb 13:1-2: “Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels.” This passage is talking about holy angels visiting w/ us w/o us being aware, therefore it stands to reason demons can do the same.

Demons can communicate with humans (Lk. 4:33-35,41; 8:28-30; Acts 19:13-17). For example, “Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, ‘We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?’” (Act 19:13-15).

Demons can infuse their victims with super-human power (Mark 5:1-3; Acts 19:16). For example, Mark records the story about the Demoniac of Gaderene. He writes, “[The] man with an unclean spirit...had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains.”

Demons can physically abuse and afflict people (Mk 9:25; Mt 9:32-34; Lk 9:39; Mt 17:15; Acts 8:7). Scripture records how a man was unable to hear or speak b/c of a demon (Mark 9:25). Luke 9:39 gives us a very graphic picture of what one demon did to a young boy he seized. It says, “And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.” Matt 17:15 adds the details that the demon violently threw him to the ground and into fire and water. Acts 8:7 indicates paralysis and lameness were caused by demons.

Demons seek to destroy people (1 Kg 18:28; Deut 23:17; Ps 106:35-37;) Make no mistake about it. The Adversary and his fiends only have one objective concerning you – destruction. For example, the Old Testament records that pagan worship of demonic idols involved self-mutilation (1 Kg 18:28), cult prostitution (Deut 23:17) and children sacrifice (Ps 106:35-37). The point is that the father of lies desires to take people down paths of self-destruction, mutual destruction (i.e. immorality) and the destruction of others (hurting others).

Demons can move through space rapidly (Mark 5:1ff.; Dan. 9:21-23; 10:10-14). They are like God’s holy angels in this regard. The normal physical barriers don’t restrict them. In the story of the Demoniac of Gadarene, the legion of demons (6,000 of them) went from inhabiting one man in one moment to immediately into 2,000 pigs.

Demons actively spread false doctrines of their own false doctrinal systems (1 Tim 4:1ff.). 1 Tim 4:1: “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” Certainly there are false teachers who misrepresent and distort the truth. However, from this verse we learn certain distortions of truth are demonically inspired. Along these lines, 1 John 4:1, 3 says: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world... and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” Now remember, John was writing to Christians. So remember, demons are very active in promoting falsehood, not just out in the world but in the church.

Behind false prophets lie supernatural agents of evil. Therefore, having precise theology is crucial. Some people resent nuanced and precise theological teaching. But Christians should love it, because if we don’t, the least bit of imprecision can lead down disastrous paths with many sad consequences.

Demons energize all non-Christian false religions and idolatries (1 Cor 10:14-22). Paul writes, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry... What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship

with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:14, 19-21).

Demons energize the wisdom of the world that often seeps into relationships in the church (James 3:13-16). Speaking to Christians, James writes, "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there" (James 3:13-16). James says, wisdom that is arrogant and sectarian in spirit is demonic in origin.

Demons were actively involved in Christ's crucifixion (Col 2:15; cf. 1 Cor 2:6-8; 15:24; Heb 2:14). On the positive side, Christ defeated them at the cross. Colossians 2:15 says, "Having disarmed principalities and powers, [Christ] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." Heb 2:14: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Demons are engaged in spiritual warfare (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:1-12; Dan. 10; Eph. 6; 1 John 5:18-19; 2 Cor. 4:4; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12-13; Eph. 2:2; Mt. 13:1-23). There are four levels in which demons engage in spiritual warfare:

1. The warfare between God and Satan (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8).
2. The warfare between the holy angels and the unholy angels (Rev. 12; Dan. 10).
3. The warfare between Satan and believers (Eph 6). "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (Eph 6:11-12). This warfare happens either *direct* an encounter between an intelligent evil being and the believer, or as *indirect* warfare. This warfare is inescapable by virtue of the believer living in the world. This fallen world lies in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:18-19). 1 Jh 5:19: "The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one." The world is shaped by the ideologies, governments, institutions and values energized by Satan. The point is that, whether directly or indirectly, Satan seeks to make Christians succumb to doubt, guilt, fear, temptation, pride, envy, slander, confusion or any other kind of sin. Let us therefore be circumspect and wise. Satan is real, and spiritual warfare is real. It would shock us beyond words if we could pull back the veil and see what's actually going on around us. We'd be left speechless if we saw the sp warfare ragging around us, to destroy us. We'd be dumbfounded to see how demons are at work to destroy this church. No doubt, the demons are eager today after you've heard the Word to swoop down like vultures and snatch up the seed of the Word scattered in your hearts. Be vigilant. Satan is as active today as he ever has been. He might not use the same strategies he did in Jesus' day or as he does today in other countries. But make no mistake, he's sly and wants you consume you.
4. The warfare between Satan and unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12-13; Eph. 2:2; Mt. 13:1-23). I use warfare here in a different sense than the other three because the unconverted are not at war against Satan but rather are at war along side, as allies of Satan. The unregenerate gladly side w/ Satan although they are ignorant of doing so.

Demons are restricted in their power by God (Job 1:12; 2:6). As I already indicated, Satan and therefore his hoards are limited in ability to do evil. Again, in Job's case Satan had to have permission to do what he did and not one thing more (Job 1:12). As Jude 6 says, Demons are in "eternal chains" – they are limited. Thus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, believers can "resist the devil and he will flee" (James 4:7). So, let's realize, the devil is not some unconquerable power. Indeed, Christian, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8). Yet, let's not give him and his malignant minions any more credit than we have to. Let's realize they did rebel against God and with such rebellion there is a diminishing of power. They don't have the power they once did as angels. They've been weakened. It seems their power is probably less than that of the holy, elect angels.

Besides power limitations, their knowledge can only take in so much. Indeed, they have ability to observe things that occur in a way that humans can't. This explains why for example people under demonic influence, like palm-readers, can know and recount accurate details in people's lives. This doesn't indicate omniscience so much as observation. Just as angels watch us, so do demons. So, they have knowledge above ours. But there's nothing in Scripture that indicates they

can know the future with certainty or human thoughts. Granted, ability to carefully observe enhances their ability to predict, but they are not all-knowing.

Thankfully we can say along with John: “Greater is He (God) that is in you, than he (Satan) that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Only our God can say, “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done” (Isa 46:9-10). Christ’s earthly ministry was filled with constant manifestations of his superiority over demons. In fact, he explained his power over demons was a distinctive mark of the kingdom’s inauguration. It was a way to show people the reign of God among humanity had come in a new and powerful way. Jesus said, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house” (Matt 12:28-29). What a powerful image Jesus uses here. Satan is the “man” of the house. Yet, Jesus bound him and throughout his ministry entered the “man’s house” – in other words, the world over which Satan holds in bondage. Jesus came into Satan’s house and plundered it, freeing people from his bondage – translating them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.

Yes, as then, Satan today roams about seeking whom he may devour, but he’s always been on God’s leash and he will in the future too. During the millennium we see how the devil and demons are under God’s thumb. At the beginning of the millennium John says: “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while” (Rev 20:1-3). I’m not trying to be dismissive of Satan, but just understand that he can only do what God allows him. In the end of course, the evil one and his followers will be eternally defeated and damned. His condemnation is certain. He will be “thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur” and “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev 20:10).

#### **IV. HOW DO DEMONS PRACTICALLY RELATE TO OUR DAILY LIVES?**

First, let me make something clear. Christians cannot be demon possessed. Christians can be attacked and influenced by Satan. But they can’t be under the domination of Satan. Satan can’t reside in them as demon possession is usually thought of. Not to the degree that they have no choice except to yield to Satan. Fact is, this term possession is a poor term to even use because it doesn’t accurately reflect the Greek New Testament. Some English translations have done us a real disservice by using the term “possessed.” It’s inaccurate terminology. That’s not how the Greek New Testament puts it. In the Greek, the idea is of people who “have a demon” (i.e. Mt 11:18) or under demonic influence. But the idea of a demon actually possessing a person is misleading. So, it would be best just not to even use the term “possession” – “influence” is better.

This is why asking the question, “Can Christians be demon possessed?” is tricky. It depends how someone defines possession. If someone defines possession as absolute control of the Christian’s will so that he can’t obey God, then “no,” he cannot. Rom 6:14 says, “Sin will have no dominion over you (Christian).” We’ve been raised with Christ. We have the victory in Christ. But, if someone is talking about Christians being influenced by or attacked by Satan, then “yes,” that happens in varying degrees.

Next, realize Christians cannot blame Satan for their own sin. The old saying, “The devil made me do it” is totally invalid. Satan can’t make you do anything. Nowhere does the Bible use Satan as an excuse for the sin of Christians. Since the fall, we sinners have sought to shift the blame for our sin on to others and the Serpent. But, over and again God’s Word holds us accountable for our own actions.

The focus in the New Testament is not on the influence of demons making us sin. Rather the focus is on us battling our own flesh and Satan so we don’t cave into our flesh. We are “not [to] let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26). Apparently our wrongful anger can give opportunity to demons to negatively influence us. Also, we are commanded to “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil” (Eph 6:12). Indeed, the devil can intensely tempt us. But, we as believers are held responsible for the choices we make to sin or not to sin.

Next application: Christians must fight Satan. So pick up your Bible and a copy of Brooks! I’m pretty certain you know what the Bible is, but who is Brooks? Thomas Brooks was a seventeenth century English Puritan and he wrote a book *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*. We can certainly profit from many works written by saints in the past but

perhaps none more so than the Puritans. As one person put it: “There’s nothing written today that the Puritans did not already write better and with more conviction.” I certainly agree with that in terms of resisting the devil. The detail of Brooks’ work on this subject is amazing and so helpful. It’s just thoroughly saturated with Scripture as was customary for the Puritans. We actually have a copy or two in the bookstore. You can also read it on-line for free.

I was tempted to read you the table of contents to give you a flavor for it, but I decided not to b/c it is 10 pages long. Now, the book isn’t that long and it’s a great read but the table of contents is very detailed. So, what I did was I made some copies of the table of contents for you as you leave, because believe it or not, it in itself is instructional and applicatory. Hopefully it will whet your appetite. It’s a book that deserves multiple reads.

Anyway, at the end of the book in APPENDIX 4, Brooks gives TEN SPECIAL HELPS AND RULES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES. Let me run down through these with a few excerpts from Brooks along the way.

Brooks writes, “The first help: If you would not be taken by any of Satan's devices, then walk by rule of the Word of God (Prov. 12:24; Gal. 6:16). He who walks by rule, walks most safely; he who walks by rule, walks most honorably; he who walks by rule, walks most sweetly. When men throw off the Word, then God throws them off, and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure. He who thinks himself too good to be ruled by the Word, will be found too bad to be owned by God; and if God does not, or will not own him—Satan will by his stratagems overthrow him” (Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*). Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must wield the Sword of the Spirit. You must read, study, meditate on, and memorize God’s Word.

The second help: “As you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, take heed of vexing and grieving of the Holy Spirit of God The Divine Spirit is very tender; if you grieve him, he will certainly grieve and vex your precious souls (Lam. 1:16.) It is the Spirit who is best able to discover Satan's snares against us; it is only he who can point out all his plots, and discover all his methods, and enable men to escape those pits that Satan has dug for their precious souls. Ah! if you set that sweet and blessed Spirit mourning, who alone can secure you from Satan's depths—by whom will you be preserved? The Spirit of the Lord is your counselor, your comforter, your upholder, your strengthener.” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Do not harden your heart. The Spirit of God is your chief ally.

The third help: “If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labor for more heavenly wisdom. Ah, souls! you had need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom, to see where and how Satan lays his baits and snares; and wisdom to find out proper remedies against his devices, and wisdom to apply those remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually to your own hearts, that so you may avoid the snares which that evil one has laid for your precious souls.” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must put yourself in places of wisdom and with people of wisdom. You need to be under the preached Word. You need to receive godly counsel.

The fourth help: “If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then make immediate resistance against Satan's first motions. It is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes, and falls in paradise (Gen. 3); Job resists, and conquers upon the ash-heap. He who will play with Satan's bait, will quickly be taken with Satan's hook! The promise of conquest is given to resisting, not to disputing: 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4:7).” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, don’t play with sin’s fire. It will burn you. Don’t nibble on Satan’s bait. You will get hooked.

The fifth help: “If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labor to be filled with the Spirit. It is not enough that you have the Spirit—but you must be filled with the Spirit, or else Satan, that evil spirit, will be too hard for you, and his plots will prosper against you. That is a sweet word of the apostle, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18); that is, labor for abundance of the Spirit.” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must be controlled by the Holy Spirit. How? Ephesians 5 tells us. By singing with the saints, giving thanks to God in everything and submitting to one another.

The sixth help: “If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep humble. An humble heart will rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness, and sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading.... God has said, that 'he will teach the humble,' and that 'he will dwell with the humble,' and that 'he will fill and satisfy the humble.’” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must be sensitive to pride rising up in you. Be very sensitive to how pride enters into your thoughts, attitudes and speech. Beware of using “I” too much in your speech. If you are using “I” too much when you talk you are probably subtly promoting yourself.

The seventh help: “If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep a strong, close, and constant watch (1 Thess. 5:6). A sleepy soul is already an ensnared soul. That soul that will not watch against temptations, will certainly fall before the power of temptations. Satan works most strongly on the imagination, when the soul is drowsy. The soul's slothfulness is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul and to destroy the soul, as Joshua did the men of Ai. The best way to be safe and secure from all Satan's assaults is, with Nehemiah and the Jews, to watch and pray, and pray and watch.... Shall Satan keep a crafty watch, and shall not Christians keep a holy spiritual watch? Watchfulness is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of what comes from within us, and of what comes from without us and into us.” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, don't be clueless, but alert. Satan is always seeking to find an angle to get at you and destroy you.

The eighth help: “If you would not be taken with any of Satan's snares and devices, then keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted—but will not easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul, by divine influences, sweetly ascending up to Christ. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, elevating and strengthening. While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him—he goes on conquering and to conquer. But when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. It will be so with your souls. So long as your communion with God is kept up, you will be too hard for 'spiritual wickedness in high places'; but if you fall from your communion with God, you will fall, as others, before the face of every temptation.” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must constantly commune with Christ. You must practice the presence of Him and worship Him throughout the day.

The ninth help: “If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then do not engage Satan in your own strength—but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. Ah, souls! when the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, who is lifted up in the gospel, as the brazen serpent was in the wilderness, and say to him, "Dear Lord! here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from your blessed bosom, will not deliver me from this snare. Oh! give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, that so I may escape the snares!” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must depend on Christ.

The tenth help: “If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then be much in prayer. Prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God and a scourge to the devil. Christ says: 'Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation' (Matt. 26:41). Ah, souls! Tell God that [Satan] digs deep, and that he has plot upon plot, and device upon device—and all to undo you! Tell God that you have neither skill nor power to escape his snares! Tell God that it is a work too high and too hard for any created creature to work your deliverance... Tell God how his honor is engaged to stand by you, and to bring you off a victor, that you be not ruined by Satan's plots! Tell God how the wicked would triumph, if you should fall into Satan's snares! Tell God of the love of Christ, of the blood of Christ, and of the intercession of Christ for you, that a way may be found for your escape! Tell God that if he will make it his honor to save you from falling into Satan's snares, you will make it your glory to speak of his goodness and to live out his kindness. The way of prayer... is the only way... to escape Satan's snares.” Christian, if you are going to fight Satan, you must pray and then pray some more and when you think you have prayed enough pray some more.

Okay. That's just a nibble of Brooks. I urge you – read him. He will arm you with God-soaked thinking that will help you fight the evil one.

The last application I want to give you tonight then is this: Christian, live in the power of Christ's victory over Satan! Beloved, do you believe one of the reasons/ “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” as I John 3:8 says? Do you believe he succeeded in his temptation for you? Do you believe he gave the deathblow to the serpent at Calvary for you? Then walk in these gospel realities. Preach to yourself over and over, “I am complete in Him and my victory is complete in Him. How then can I live to this sin for which I am dead to?” Satan is defeated, and we have the victory. Our job now is to live in that victory and make Satan know his defeat. Christian, rejoice in Christ's victory for you, walk in that victory and therefore expect victory.