

CHRISTIANS & SATAN - an Introduction

Christians have to be very careful indeed when writing or speaking about evil not to do the enemy's advertising for him! Christians should, by and large, not be interested in him, although it makes sense to 'know the enemy' to some degree.

This article consists of six mini-talks that I gave on Satan within a specially structured service designed to offset the subject of evil by affirming and renewing commitment to Jesus.

The talks are very simple and are more basic than a summary of Bible material – for reasons which will emerge.

I have adjusted the talks wherever I made reference to myself, so that a would-be speaker could – if he/she wished - use this article as a speaking-script without alteration.

OUTLINE

- 1. Satan & Our Creeds: Trusting or Just Knowing?**
- 2. Satan & Our Scriptures: Revelation or Reticence?**
- 3. Satan & Our Terminology: It? He? She? or even They?**
- 4. Satan & Our Attitude: Fascination or Contempt?**
- 5. Satan & Our Role: Agent of Satan, Agent of Christ?**
- 6. Satan - Our Enemy: Things to remember.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: As this teaching is in speech format, titles and subtitles should not be read aloud, and have only been inserted to help readers see the structure.

The layout and use of **bold** and *italic* fonts has been used to make reading the talks aloud easier.

TALK 1

SATAN & OUR CREEDS: TRUSTING or just KNOWING?

To avoid confusion in these short introductory talks about evil, I shall tend to use simply the title '**Satan**', and avoid the many alternative names and titles like the *Devil*, *Beelzebub*, *Adversary*, the *Enemy* and so on.

In the centuries immediately after Christ, Christian Belief needed defining and protecting because then – like nowadays – there were many who would otherwise try to dilute or deny the great Gospel truths.

Statements to define the basic Christian beliefs evolved, called '**Creeds**' – from the Latin word to *believe*.

Creeds have always had an important role in **defining, maintaining** and **proclaiming** Christian belief.

Probably all of you will have met a Christian Creed, like the Apostles' or the Nicene Creeds from the early centuries. These usually begin '***I believe in God the Father***', and have sections on ***believing in God the Son*** and ***believing in God the Holy Spirit***. Sometimes these are summarised into three short questions-and-answers about God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As we – as Christians – consider evil, I thought our Christian Creeds would be the best place to start. They summarise Scripture, and draw out the essentials of Christian faith.

So. What do the **Creeds** have to say about **Satan**?

Absolutely nothing at all! He gets no mention whatever!

That might strike you as exceedingly odd. But, in fact, it isn't odd at all!

So what does it all mean? It's very simple.

[BELIEVING IN]

The Creeds are about **believing in**, and the complete absence of Satan from the Creeds means that it is **not** part of the Christian Faith to believe **in him**.

Now, in Christian usage **believe-in** almost always means to **entrust oneself to**.

When Christians **believe in** God the Father –
they are saying that they **entrust** themselves to him.

When Christians **believe in** God the Son –
they are stating that they have **entrusted** themselves to him.

When Christians state that they **believe in** God the Holy Spirit – they are affirming their **personal trust in** him.

So you can see quite clearly that Christians never,

never,

never,

ever,

ever,

ever **believe in** Satan –

for that would mean that they were entrusting themselves to him! God forbid!

People who believe and **trust in Satan** (and they certainly exist) are called **Satan-ists**, (just as we who believe and trust in Jesus the Christ are called Christ-ians.)

The **omission** of Satan from the Christian Creeds - does not deny Satan's existence, or his power.

The omission makes clear that Christians

are **not called to believe in him**,

but

to **renounce** him – and all his works.

[SATAN'S DOWNFALL]

Our Christian faith would never want us to believe **in** Satan! We acknowledge the terrible reality and power of evil. We do not **believe in** Satan.

The reason for the very wide range of opinions among Christians about Satan is basically a good one. It is because Satan is *not* an object of Christian belief – so there has never been any need to define him or safeguard the truth about him.

There was once a series of Christian Books under the general title ‘I BELIEVE IN...’. After writing one on the Holy Spirit, Michael Green produced a second volume on SATAN. Since he could not have a Christian book entitled **I Believe in Satan** – he cleverly chose **I Believe in Satan's Downfall**. It was a change from a Satanist title to a Christian one.

So far we have learned that –

1. Satan is not in the Christian Creeds.
2. Jesus came not to teach us *about* Satan but to deliver us *from* him.
3. We put our trust in Jesus, but not Satan – although we may acknowledge Satan's existence.
4. We believe in Satan's downfall.

TALK 2

SATAN & OUR SCRIPTURES : REVELATION or RETICENCE ?

In my first Mini-Talk I reminded you that the Christian Creeds don't mention Satan. Christians trust in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but are not called to trust in Satan. They are called to renounce him.

The reason the Creeds do not focus on Satan is because Scripture does not focus on him.

In Scripture Satan gets only a *passing* mention because

- **God's purpose in Scripture is to reveal Jesus, (who, in turn, reveals the Father.)**

It has never, I believe, been God's purpose to **reveal** Satan.

[REVEALING]

We all know what to 'reveal' means, and Christian usage is no different from anyone else's.

In women's fashion it usually refers to the minimum possible distance between neckline and hemline!

To reveal means to make what has been hidden **visible**.

The invisible God the Father loved us so much, that he wanted to save us and **reveal** himself to us,

so he sent his Son Jesus into human life (*'incarnate'* as we say) to be **visible** to us.

We could therefore see God for ourselves in terms that we could understand – human life.

At Bethlehem God's *Word became Flesh*. God incarnate is historical fact.

But God never gave Satan a Bethlehem!

(The term 'devil incarnate' is just a phrase; it has never been fact, mere Hollywood fiction.)

Scripture mentions countless things but does not reveal them all, only those which are necessary for its **purpose**. And the **purpose** of Scripture is to **reveal God**, and his **saving** work.

It is *not* the purpose of Scripture to dwell very much on what we need to be rescued **from**.

There was a time, last winter, on the river Thames, when the rains had increased it to a raging torrent. It was running too fast for any boats to travel on it. One man was in his home near a weir – where the water tumbles down to a lower level. To his astonishment he heard a boat engine – and then to his absolute horror he heard it stall and stop.

He knew that an unpowered boat would be swept over the weir. While his wife phoned for the police, he raced to his garage, grabbed a long rope, and ran to the weir. As he expected, there was a man in the foaming water.

The great question was '*could the man be saved?*'

The local resident did not throw the man a scientific book explaining the rushing water, nor a biological book to explain why he was drowning – he threw him a **ROPE** !

The man's purpose and priorities were to save, not to dwell on the complex causes which had put the man in peril.

That's exactly the same with Scripture.

Scripture has priority and purpose, and we believe that its priority and purpose are inspired by the Spirit of God himself. Its divine inspiration is inseparable from its divine purpose. It is God's answer to the great question ***Can we be saved?***

Scripture does not exist primarily to teach us why we are perishing – but to alert us to God's plan to save us!

(Unless we keep this goal of Scripture in mind, we will ask of the Bible questions it was not written to answer - and will lead ourselves astray.)

The reason why Scripture does not reveal Satan but mentions him only with reticence, is because it is a handbook to rescue those who are perishing, it's purpose is not to diagnose evil but to destroy evil.

Scripture proclaims that –
whosoever believes in Jesus
*should **not perish**,*
but have everlasting life.

TALK 3

SATAN & OUR TERMINOLOGY : HE, SHE, IT or even THEY?

I have, somewhat reluctantly, had to use the word 'he' of Satan. What does this indicate?

Our English language has, unfortunately, only three words that refer to a single item.

'It' on the one hand,

or --

'He' or 'She' on the other.

There's an important difference! Let me explain.

[IMPERSONAL]

The chair you are sitting on is an 'it'.

It cannot tell its neighbour that it is being sat on, it cannot have any personal feelings towards you.

Fortunately, it cannot decide to collapse because it dislikes you, because it cannot discern or decide, or do anything.

It cannot feel anything.

It has no memory of the past, no hopes for the future.

It cannot plan, scheme or react.

It is a **thing**;

It is not personal –

so '**impersonal**' is a word we can use.

Your chair, like an omelette, or a brick, or gravity, is an '**it**' - it cannot be a 'he' or 'she'.

[PERSONAL]

But suppose, when you came in, **that you had sat on your neighbour's lap instead of a chair!!**

You would have *immediately* realised how very different it is sitting on something **personal** rather than on something **impersonal** like a chair!

No **person** who was sat on would have behaved like a **chair**! He or she would have reacted in all sorts of ways, I can imagine a scene of near chaos! Such a situation would provoke feelings, embarrassment, action, comments, criticism, and - of course – it would be remembered and talked about for years!

That's the difference between sitting on something that is

'impersonal'

and something that is

'personal'.

It is a *very important* distinction as far as understanding evil is concerned. So please remember it.

[RANGE OF THE 'PERSONAL']

Now that we have very clearly established the essential difference between what is **impersonal** and what is **personal**, we need to go one step further, a step which may be unexpected. It is this.

Note carefully:

- something **personal** – *need not be human*.

The most obvious example is a **dog**.

Many folk love their dogs, precisely because they don't behave like chairs.

Dogs, for instance, react to you, you can relate to them, they know you, they recognise you, and – when the mood takes them – even *obey* you!

We now come to the important question regarding **Satan** -

- Is Satan an **impersonal thing** like a chair, an omelette, gravity or a brick?
- Or does Satan belong to that cluster of **personal** things that live and react - like God, you, me, and dogs?

You already know the answer! All I need do is to remind you.

Jesus's account of his temptations make it quite clear that Satan is not some impersonal thing like a chair, but is someone who reacts with us.

Satan is **personal** - Satan did things: he *tempted* Jesus – and the account involved *suggesting*, *understanding*, and *responding* with some sort of verbal dialogue.

Listen again:

*Jesus answered him,
It is said do not put the Lord your God to the test'.
When the devil had finished every test,
he departed from him until an opportune time.*

Chairs, omelettes, and bricks cannot behave like that,
so -

Satan fits into the same category as God, you, me and dogs.

Satan is personal.

This means that in the English language Satan cannot be an 'it', but can only be described, like God, as a 'he' or 'she'.

This is *extremely* unfortunate for our understanding of both God and Satan.

The either/or choice in our English language between 'he' or 'she' leads the average person to envisage Satan and God too much in human and (almost invariably) male terms.

This results in two very influential but quite trivial images:

- The first is of God as a stern Father Christmas wearing only his nightshirt and riding a cloud.
- The second is of Satan as a pantomime figure in red tights.

Such images make it difficult to bother about either of them: they lack any reality or power. Such a God would be too trivial to be worshipped, such a Satan too trivial to be feared.

This works in Satan's favour – if people believe he exists at all, the best thing from *his* point of view is that he should be thought trivial and ineffectual.

There is another advantage as far as Satan is concerned. Such 'smallness' and 'humanness' means that when folk mentally 'locate' Satan sometime or somewhere (whether it is at Auschwitz, the Kremlin, or the Pentagon, or wherever) then they can too easily give him human limitations. Such limitations can be felt to imply that if Satan is so obviously *there* or *then*, he cannot be *here* and *now* !

This too works in Satan's favour if it disguises
his nearness, and
his now-ness.

[A WIDER VIEW]

Scripture has a check against the danger of seeing Satan as anything akin to a mere man. This check is, I believe, mentally helpful to us.

Scripture views evil not only in the singular figure of Satan, but in **plural terms**.
Not '**him**' ,
- so much as '**them**'!

Jesus, for instance, talks of evil as a **Kingdom**: *If Satan also is divided against himself how will his kingdom stand?* [Luke 11:18]

In the well-known account of the demoniac 'Legion', Jesus certainly deals with evil in plural terms. [Mark 5:2-20]

We do not need to have any precise idea of the realities in St. Paul's famous passage in Ephesians [6:12] (below) to realise that he is viewing evil in decidedly **plural** terms.

*For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh,
but against the rulers, against the authorities,
against the cosmic powers of this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

[CONCLUSION]

Evil, then, is certainly not just an *it*.

Evil has more than just a figurehead - a *he* with its man-sized limitations.

Evil is perhaps most usefully thought of as a terrible *them*.

TALK 4

SATAN & OUR ATTITUDE: FASCINATION or CONTEMPT?

So far we have learned –

1. That Satan forms no part of the central Christian beliefs about God and the Gospel.
2. That the Bible records God's revealing of himself in Jesus.
3. The Bible does *not reveal* much about evil, but proclaims God's initiative to rescue us from it.
- 4 Christians may find it helpful to think of the more powerful and plural images of evil in Scripture, and not to confine themselves to a singular image of a Satan.

Along the way we have noted the reticence of Jesus, and Scripture, to talk very much about evil.

[A MISTAKEN APPROACH]

When Christians first become aware of evil (and that experience is part of Christian growth) they can sometimes go off in some great individual campaign against it.

At a meeting of Christian ministers a speaker once began his talk with the words ' Satan, I want a word with you.'(!)

All the priests and pastors present were stunned into silence – everyone was flabbergasted, until one man present called from the back –

'You speak to **your** friends, mate – but leave us to speak with **ours**!'

It was a devastating but very necessary rebuke.

The speaker had allowed his sincerity, insight, enthusiasm, and eagerness to fight for Jesus to get himself dangerously embroiled with evil, not detached from it – spiritually and mentally.

Evil has its own magnetism (which all the media know and use to their profit).

The young and inexperienced speaker's **attitude** to evil was mistaken.

[THE CHURCHILL LINE]

Interestingly, Winston Churchill had an instinctive understanding of evil, and his attitude was very wise. It provides us Christians with a good guide.

When Churchill was asked if he had anything to say about Hitler, he replied:

**'How can I have anything to say about someone
with whom I am not on speaking terms?'**

Churchill took that line deliberately – because he knew

Hitler's **terrible reality** and **enormous power**.

If Churchill allowed himself to talk much about Hitler, he realised that he would almost inevitably **spread the awareness of Hitler's reality and power**.

Churchill knew that his task was to **defeat** Hitler, **not** to increase Hitler's power and influence by spreading details of them. 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' – as the wartime poster wisely pointed out.

The Christian finds him/herself in a similar relation to evil as Churchill was to Hitler.

The calling of the Church – and its individual members – is to
fight evil and diminish its power,
not to publicise it and increase its power.

[INFLATING EVIL]

The human tendency to exaggerate evil works in Satan's favour: it encourages people to believe that he is stronger than he really is. If left unchecked and uninstructed, Christians can strengthen the forces of evil by their behaviour in relation to them.

Consider, now, a true incident:

A man had a toy plastic gun.
He went into the bank.
The people became fearful.
Their fear gave him power over them.
He used that power
– and robbed the bank!

The robber was virtually powerless until the bank personnel allowed themselves to be swayed by their impression of him. The people were needlessly defeated.

[UNDER-PLAY & OVER-PLAY]

Christians have to avoid two opposite errors -

1. Ignoring evil as if it doesn't exist.

Such a policy plays into any enemy's hands.

(This is quite often done on a shallow pretext of being 'scientific' and unwilling – too scared? - to use non-scientific language to describe non-scientific things!)

2. **Over-reacting to the reality of evil** and inadvertently increasing it by 'careless talk'. Enthusiasm has no place in our attitude to evil, since it is all too often a response to its magnetism and attraction (and Christians may helpfully be reminded that *en-thus-iasm* derives from the Greek word *in-God*. Let's keep it for him!)

Perhaps one of the worst things that a Christian can do to Jesus is inadvertently to re-empower the forces whose rule Jesus broke on the Cross.

[SCRIPTURE]

Scripture, as we would expect, shows us by example how to keep our thinking about evil free of distortion. Scripture regularly relates **three** things about evil that it keeps in balance – as should we.

1. The Power of Evil
2. The Character of Evil
3. The Defeat of Evil

Here is an example of each.

The Power of Evil –

*...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers,
to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,*
[2 Corinthians 4:4]

The Character of Evil -

*[The devil] ...was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth,
because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature,
for he is a liar and the father of lies.*
[John 8:44]

The Defeat of Evil -

*The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*
[Romans 16:20]

[CONTEMPT]

The key to the Scriptural approach to evil lies in the one word – **Contempt**.

When we approach evil with **contempt** – as Churchill viewed Hitler - we are in the strongest position for it

- **not** to contaminate us,
- **not** to infiltrate our thinking,
- **not** to be frightened by it,
- **not** to increase its power by our fear of it.

The great Christian image of contempt and victory is of God **crushing Satan under our feet** (as I have just quoted).

Charles Wesley in his hymn 'Soldiers of Christ arise' takes up the theme in verse 4 -

*From strength to strength go on
wrestle and fight and pray;
tread all the powers of darkness down,
and win the well fought day.*

That's the right place for evil – not grasped in our minds, not heading-up our fears, but crushed underfoot!

TALK 5

SATAN & OUR ROLE: AGENTS of SATAN? AGENTS of CHRIST?

I'll pitch straight-in and reply to the obvious question - '**Could I be Satan's agent?**'

Speaking for myself – the answer is simple - YES! – **I can be Satan's agent.**'

Any Christian *can* be, but there are usually greater pressures on Christians in positions of influence and leadership.

Scripture seems absolutely clear.

Matthew chapter 16:15-23 is about Jesus and Simon Peter.

I shall summarise and quote its main points.

Jesus said to the disciples 'But who do you say that I am?'

Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

And Jesus answered him

'Blessed are you, Simon,...

*for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you,
but my Father in heaven.'*

Jesus is claiming that Peter has **not** discerned Jesus's Messiahship through his natural abilities or common sense (*'flesh and blood'*), because human understanding alone could not have led him to have such spiritual insight.

On the contrary, it was, said Jesus, *revealed to you by my Father in Heaven.*

Peter, like us, had two sources of knowledge – **human** and **divine**.

In other words –

what his human nature told him (the 'natural') and

what God revealed to him (which we could call 'the *super-natural*')

Because Peter heard and realised what **God** had **revealed** (instead of remaining limited to human insight) Jesus confirmed a very special status on Peter and called him the *Rock on which I will build my church* (v.18).

That makes perfect sense.

As the Church is **God's creation and tool**, so its leaders need to be chosen from those whose lives demonstrate that they are most able to know God's mind and discern his purposes. Who better than Peter!

But then everything changes:

*From that time on, we read, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great **suffering** at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and on the third day be raised.*

The disciples, we must remember, had left all to follow Jesus as their inspiration, their teacher and their leader. They were beginning to discern that Jesus was God's Chosen One, the Messiah.

They probably envisaged Jesus (as his name suggested) as someone who would save and deliver their nation. They will probably have heard the prophecy that Jesus would be God's light to the Gentiles and the glory of the Jews.

The disciples, remember, did **not** live on **our side** of the Resurrection. (We can be wise after the event.)

When Jesus warns his disciples of his forthcoming suffering it must have shattered completely almost **all** their assumptions and expectations.

Peter loved Jesus. Peter wanted to protect Jesus, he wanted to steer him clear of such an overwhelming tragedy. He acted as any kind relation, friend or neighbour might, by being reassuring that things would turn out better than expected.

So the Biblical account continues:

*Peter took Jesus aside and began to **rebuke** him saying – 'God forbid it, Lord! This must **never** happen to you!'*

That would have been my natural reaction had I been there, and loved Jesus even half as much as Peter did.

Jesus then drops an absolute bombshell! He turns on Peter and says:

Get behind me, Satan!
You are a stumbling block to me.

The same Peter – whom earlier Jesus had envisaged as the Rock on which he would build his Church – is used by Satan in an attempt to divert Jesus from obeying his Father.

The one who had been God's mouthpiece one moment
- becomes Satan's mouthpiece the next!
(If Peter – why not us?)

Let's be clear about what happened. Peter was not suddenly overpowered by an uncontrollable evil force that made him say things he would never have meant in ordinary life. Peter was a Christian and was speaking with real sincerity. He was not being nasty. He was upset – and trying to be helpful!

Peter had not suddenly become evil, he was not a puppet in Satan's hands, he had not changed. He was quite responsible for what he said.

Peter (like so many) wanted the comfort of Jesus's Gospel without the pain of Jesus's Cross.

Peter had done what I often do – and I expect you do too – he

- **allowed himself to be ruled by his natural response,**
- **he did not wait to try and discern God's will first,**
- **he rushed in to speak sincerely from his own heart,**
- **he did not pause to learn what was in the heart of God.**

Jesus, of course, immediately realises that Peter's **natural response and assumptions** were a temptation for him to avoid the very suffering and death that God was calling him to endure for us to save us.

Peter's limited human understanding simply wanted Jesus to avoid the Cross.

Had Jesus avoided the Cross,

he would not have become our Saviour,
there would be no Gospel,
no message of salvation,
no New Testament,
no Church,
death would not have been conquered,
the victory would not be ours,
Satan would not be facing his downfall.

Jesus's mission could have totally collapsed there and then if Jesus had taken Peter's well-meant advice.

Jesus could not tolerate for a single second, any such thought of disobeying his Heavenly Father.

So Jesus therefore immediately attacks the temptation at source –

he turned and said to Peter –

Get behind me, Satan!

You are a stumbling block to me.

Jesus realises that such a head-on attack, such an accurate and well-timed temptation, must have come ultimately from Satan, who – with uncanny wisdom - chose the time and the person most likely to have swayed him.

Evil is clever – never forget that!

If Satan could prompt **Peter** to make such a suggestion so soon after Jesus had affirmed Peter's ability to discern God's will, there might be a chance that Jesus would swallow his suggestion!

Very devious!

You will realise now the importance of the point I stressed in my second talk – that evil is not impersonal but **personal**. There is *mind* at work. Evil is often uncannily strategic.

Poor Peter must have been *shattered* by Jesus's immediate response, so **Jesus explains to Peter exactly why he was Satan's mouthpiece** – note carefully what Jesus says:

you are a stumbling block to me,

- ***for you are setting your mind not on divine things***
- ***but on human things.***

Or as we might say today,

- 'Peter, you're imposing your *own* agenda – not God's!'

It is a sobering thought, but when you or I do that we too may be agents of Satan.

Peter was the instrument of Satan for a period because, although he was a follower of Christ, he made the following mistakes with which most of us will be familiar

- he thought that learning to know God's will and being obedient to it wasn't necessary all the time
- he assumed that common sense told him all he needed to know for his Christian life and leadership
- he didn't pause to give God's purposes priority over his speech and actions

When Peter slipped into *that* way of thinking – where obedience has no place – he was neither a soldier nor a servant of Jesus, and so was working on the side of Satan.

When Christians are not obeying their Lord, then their own well-intentioned efforts can work against God's Kingdom, not for it.

Churches can be rendered useless as instruments of God's Gospel if/when their agenda is merely devised by humans and run by them. They can degenerate into simply religious clubs to serve their members instead of being God's divine instruments for the salvation of the world.

The Church is created by God for his purposes, not ours,
to be run on his lines, not ours,
and to be empowered by him, not us.

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father *your kingdom come, your will be done*.
There is no prayer better for re-establishing God's agenda when, like Simon Peter, we have imposed ours.

**Our agendas delay Satan's final downfall.
God's agenda ensures it.**

[NOTE: For a much fuller treatment of Jesus and Peter see the article '**Evil's Strategy in Church Life**', available on this website.]

TALK 6

SATAN – OUR ENEMY : THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
In his cross, death and resurrection, **Jesus defeated Satan**, and that as a result, Satan – although still active – is beaten and condemned.
2. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
Christians in whose lives **Jesus is Lord**, are incorporated into Christ, and share his ultimate victory over sin and over death itself.
3. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
We can – and should – avail ourselves of **Jesus's deliverance from evil** by praying daily the Lord's Prayer as he taught us.
4. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
Invariably, when Christians do **not** use the short and easy deliverance prayer from the Lord's Prayer, **that prayer for deliverance** simply gets forgotten.
5. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
The **Kingdom of God** brings release, freedom and eternal life, while **Satan's kingdom** brings bondage and eternal death. Satan will do everything in his power to get you to work for his kingdom against God's.
6. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
Usually, evil is *not* obvious, ugly, bad and instantly recognisable. Most evil is difficult to spot or discern because it is most often **good that has been distorted**.
7. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
His evil is strategically active against God and God's Kingdom, and is therefore **particularly active within the Christian Church** because it is the main army of God's Kingdom.
8. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
The daily **outpouring of the Holy Spirit** on Christians, by their invitation, goes a long way to ensure that the Church is characterised by the fruits of the Holy Spirit (i.e. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control [Galatians 5:22-23]) – not the fruits of evil.
(It is a useful checklist to discern evil when the fruits of the Holy Spirit get replaced by their opposites.)
9. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
Every time you display the opposite of the Holy Spirit's fruits (listed in No. 8 above), you are working against your Lord.

10. Satan would **not** want you to know, or remember, that –
He is most active among religious people in religious ways.
Most often Satan works to **distort their love for the things of God,**
- **by distorting their love into idolatry, and**
 - **by inflating the object of their love into an idol.**

Such things vary from person to person, but can be any of God's good things – Christian Scripture, Christian worship, Christian leaders, Christian traditions, Christian groups, Christian denominations, Christian music, Christian fellowship, Christian buildings, and so on and so on and so on.

When these become distorted they no longer serve the Christian, but enslave him/her. Instead of being channels of God's truth and love *to* the Christian, they come as a wall *between* the Christian and God.

Christians then find their security in such things and so resist any change. Satan is glad when Christians find a false security in the good things of God. Satan knows that he can most easily ensnare religious people in *religious* things. Because such things are good, their distortion into **idols** can go largely unnoticed.