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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Bereans “received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.”

1

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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

2 Corinthians 2:11
Lesson #18
Satan’s game plan
09/28/2025

2

Hard Questions

How should we make peace in a culture war?

The devil is often in the details.



The devil can also be in the big picture if it is distorted so as to make a mockery of the Gospel, the Kingdom, and God.

3

Satan’s “game plan”

2 Corinthians 2:11

“... in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for **we are not ignorant of his schemes**”

2 Corinthians 4:4

“...in whose case the god of this world has **blinded the minds** of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

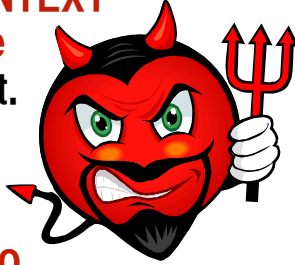
Luke 22:31

“... Satan has demanded permission to **sift you like wheat;**”

4

Satan doesn’t mind people using the Bible and quoting it authoritatively so long as they ignore its **CONTEXT** and the **WAY of the Cross** in applying it.

The Devil can be in the details but really wants to **shape the big picture.**



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Satanic fingerprints.

Silly joke

Sacred cows

Sovereign controller



Mythical God

Means God

Monster God

6

Common stereotype

the Man upstairs



Is God a myth?

God is as real as:



Father Time



Mother Earth



Uncle Sam

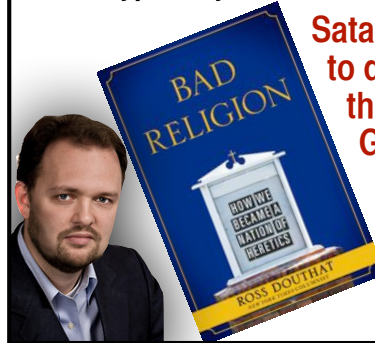


Santa Claus

7

As Messiah, Jesus was expected to stand against the evil of the Roman Empire.

What he did was go after the religious community for its hypocrisy.



Satan can use Scripture to distort God's image, the Kingdom, and the Gospel, if we are not careful in how we teach the Bible.

8

With respect to the secular culture the church is called to be an Alien Ambassador,

not a chaplain.



9

American values that can seduce the church

1. **God will save me with my American dream.**
2. **If it produces worldly blessings it's of God.**
3. **God's plan is for my temporal comfort.**
4. **Competition makes everything better.**
5. **Growth & size define success.**

10

"American dream"

Is God a means to it?

It is available through God via **"selective" proof texts + faith.**

Satan has no problem with signs & wonders through standing on the promises -

- so long as the promises are **turning "stones to bread"** ie. expecting to find true life primarily in "this world".

- so long as it leaves people with **shame or confusion** if God doesn't meet expectations.

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"Sovereign Grace"

means God's control over every aspect of life, **both good and evil.**

Satan has no problem with "sovereignty" as the core element to God's nature and glory if it -

- ultimately **ties Him to sin and evil.**

- undermines God's glory in **creating humans as His image bearers** with freedom to respond to Him.

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Divine sovereignty seems *well attested in Scripture.*

Acts 2:23

"this man, delivered over by the **predetermined plan and foreknowledge** of God"

Ephesians 1:4

"just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."

Ephesians 1:11

"also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,**"

Satan would have us read too much into the implications of these passages and *distort the image of God, His Kingdom, and the Gospel.*

13

"If one single molecule in the universe is outside God's sovereign control, nothing can be assured."

R.C. Sproul

14

"God not only created everything, but He also foreordains everything that comes to pass. ... God has foreordained every sin for His own wise and holy ends."

Jonathan Edwards

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Is God a monster?

A theology that attributes everything (including evil) to God's decree and control, **makes it difficult to see the difference between God and Satan?**



Matthew 3:23

"He is possessed by beelzebul"

Genesis 3:1-7

The temptation of Eve.

Matthew 4:1-11

The temptation of Christ.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

The disruption of Paul.

16

Political leaders crucified Jesus because of their misunderstanding and false expectations.

Satan's fingerprints are all over this.

"People don't reject Christ so much as a distorted characterization of him."

Bill Bright

"There are few things worse than bad religion and there are few things better than good religion"

Billy Graham

When we define God as **PRIMARILY sovereign Lord** (dictating everything, including evil) **as opposed to a loving relational Savior we invite "bad religion".**

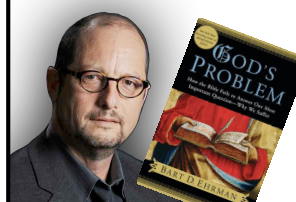
1 John 3:10

"anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God,"

17

"I just began to lose it. It wasn't for lack of trying. But I just couldn't believe there was a God in charge of this mess."

Dr. Bart Ehrman



"My expectations of faith, prayer, the church, and God were crushed."

"I had too much to live with and not enough to live for."

Rev. John W. Loftus



18

But what about the clear teaching of Scripture?

How we see the big picture will dictate the way we see the details.

How we see the **GREATER** Biblical narrative will dictate how we read specific texts.

Is this an eye or an ear?



19

Sovereign Grace "proof text" IN CONTEXT

John (O.T. believers)

6:37 "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;"

- These texts probably refer to the **believing "remnant"** in Israel who were already justified by faith (like Abraham).
- Upon hearing Jesus, they **recognized him as the promised Messiah**, and followed him.

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Sovereign Grace "proof text" IN CONTEXT

Ephesians 1 (Jesus is the elect)

"4 just as He **chose** us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. 5 He **predestined** us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**."

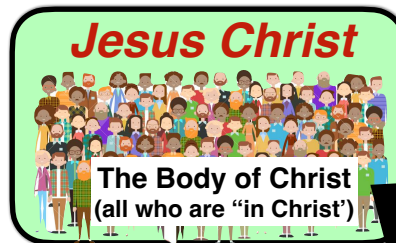
1 Peter 2:4 (Isa.42:1, Lk.9:35)

Jesus is "a living stone,...rejected by men, but **choice (elect)**...in the sight of God."

21

The chosen (elect)

Jesus Christ



Believers are chosen as, and because they are **"IN CHRIST"**, the chosen one.

They are "in Christ" if and when they believe.

by faith

22

Sovereign Grace "proof text" IN CONTEXT

Romans 9 (Corporate election)

"6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all **Israel** who are descended from **Israel**; 7 neither are they all children because they are **Abraham's descendants**, but: "through **Isaac** your descendants will be named." 8 That is, it is not the **children of the flesh** who are children of God, but the **children of the promise** are regarded as descendants." (Jacob was Israel, Esau / Edom was Gentile.)

"16 So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy**.... 30 What shall we say then? That **Gentiles**, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but **Israel**, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works."

23

Romans 9-11 addresses the question - How does Paul's Gospel (which includes Gentiles) fit with the promise God made to Abraham (which Jews believed to exclude Gentiles)?

Romans 9 is not about individual election but about God's plan of salvation by faith.

Mark 16

"15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel **to all creation**. 16 **He who has believed** and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

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What is the take home of this lesson? Be a Berean

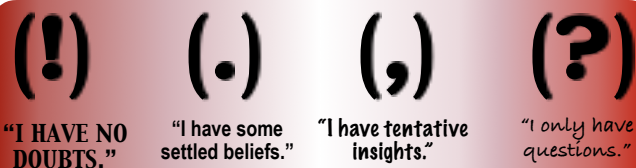
Calvinists point to the rigid decrees of God, while Arminians point to the relational dynamics of God.

Both are right in what they affirm but wrong in what they deny.

The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them.

Christian Historian - Philip Schaff (paraphrase)

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1 Corinthians 13:12

"For now we see in a **mirror** dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but **then I shall know fully** just as I also have been fully known."



We tend to see things, not as they are, so much as the way we are.

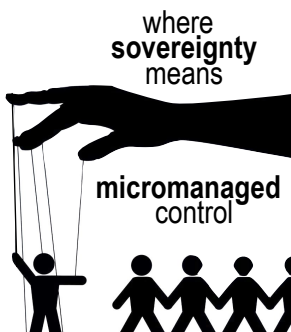
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God made man in His Image. Man tends to return the favor.

Romans 1

"22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man ...**"

Is our God too small?



27

Megyn Kelly claimed on her podcast that an article published by Jezebel (an American online magazine and blog) on Sep.8 2025 titled something like these words:

"We Paid Some Etsy Witches to Curse Charlie Kirk."

The parallels between this story and others (Jesus' & Paul's) are interesting.

Could this be another example of evil scoring a point but losing the war.

The Kirk's are devout, outspoken, Evangelical Christians associated with the highly respected "Calvary Chapel" association of churches.



Charlie & Erika Kirk

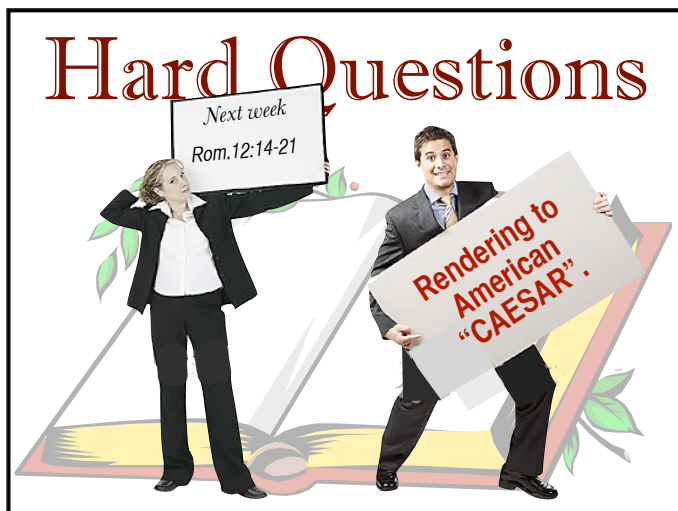
Will the "fall out" be spiritual or political?

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Hard Questions

Next week
Rom.12:14-21

Rendering to American "CAESAR".



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