

2 Corinthians 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Analysis

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us—The verb *pleonekteō* (πλεονεκτέω, "to take advantage, outwit, defraud") suggests calculated exploitation. The name *Satanas* (Σατανᾶς) means "adversary" or "accuser." Paul reveals that both unrepentant sin and unrelenting discipline serve Satan's purposes—the former through moral compromise, the latter through crushing despair and destroying community unity.

For we are not ignorant of his devices—The term *noēmata* (νοήματα, "schemes, thoughts, designs") indicates Satan's strategic thinking. Elsewhere Paul uses this word for "minds" (2 Cor 3:14, 4:4, 11:3), suggesting Satan's warfare targets human thinking. His "devices" include both temptation to sin and accusation after repentance. Wisdom recognizes both tactics: churches must address sin seriously while extending grace generously. Failing either way gives Satan advantage. Paul's pastoral balance thwarts demonic strategy.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish and Christian literature (Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Dead Sea Scrolls) recognized Satan's role as accuser and tempter. Paul's pastoral theology incorporates this cosmic conflict dimension—church discipline is not merely interpersonal but spiritual warfare, requiring wisdom to avoid Satan's traps.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Satan use both tolerance of sin and excessive punishment to harm churches?
2. What are Satan's "devices" in your church context that exploit either laxness or harshness?
3. How does understanding spiritual warfare inform church discipline practices?

Interlinear Text

ἵνα μὴ πλεονεκτηθῶμεν ὑπὸ τοῦ Σατανᾶ· οὐ
G2443 G3361 should get an advantage of us Satan G3588 G4567 we are not G3756
G4122 G5259

γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὰ νοήματα ἀγνοοῦμεν
for of his devices ignorant
G1063 G846 G3588 G3540 G50

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:8 (Parallel theme): Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

2 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Luke 22:31 (Parallel theme): And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

2 Corinthians 4:4 (Parallel theme): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Matthew 4:10 (Parallel theme): Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

2 Corinthians 11:14 (Parallel theme): And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Job 2:3 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Corinthians 7:5 (Parallel theme): Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

John 13:2 (Parallel theme): And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

2 Timothy 2:25 (Parallel theme): In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;