

Doctrine of the “God” of this Word

1. The Bible begins with the presupposition that God is. The first verse of Scripture contains the revelation of God.
 - *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.*
2. The Hebrew term for God is ‘*elohiym* (el-o-hee’) which is the plural of ‘*elowahh* (el-o’-ah) meaning, a deity, or, the Deity.
3. Elohim is specifically used in Scripture for the supreme God, though occasionally the term is applied by way of deference to magistrates (judges). It is sometimes used as a superlative meaning an exaggerative praise.
 - *Psalms 82:6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.*
 - *John 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*
4. In the New Testament, the term for God is *theos* (teh’os), a deity, especially with the definite article *ho* (ho), meaning “*the*” as in “*the God.*”
5. An exception to this is believed to be found in 2 Corinthians 4:4 where Paul speaks of “*the god of this world.*” The question is whether “*ho theos* (the god), should be understood as referring to the one true and supreme Deity, or to someone else such as the Devil.
6. Elsewhere, Paul speaks of the Devil in his letter to the church of Corinth.
 - *2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*
 - *2 Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*
 - *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.*
7. However, many Christians do not believe Paul is talking about Satan in 2 Corinthians 4:4 but about God Himself.

Arguments in Favor of God Himself

- Argument from Antiquity. Some early church fathers, such as Cyril of Jerusalem (c. AD 313-386), and Ambrosiaster (AD fourth century) believed Paul was talking about God Himself. D
- Argument from Scripture. There is only one God. *Isaiah 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.*
- Argument from history. The only God of the world (lit. Greek, *aion* (ahee-ohn; age), the only true God of every age, or period of time, is the Lord.
- Argument from theology. Jesus is properly called *theos*, a word that should not be applied to Satan. Only Jesus is the true God.

Titus 1:3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; 4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Special Note.

Not everyone has been persuaded by these arguments, in large part because of what the “*god of this world*” is said to do, and that is to blind “*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*” (2 Cor. 4:4). The argument is that God would never do such a thing as to blind the minds of those who do not believe lest the light of the gospel should shine unto them.

This particular objection must be considered in light of other passages of Scripture.

Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Romans 11:7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

Isaiah 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

8. For those who are still unconvinced that the “god” of 2 Corinthians 4 is the God of the Universe, arguments are set forth that the “god” of verse 4 is Satan.

Arguments in Favor of Satan

- Argument from the language of Paul. Paul used the word “god” (*theos*) to refer to something other than the true God.

The belly “god” (*theos*). *Philippians 3:19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*)

Pagan “gods” (*theoi*). *1 Corinthians 8:5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)*

Special Note.

Later in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul, using the language of Deuteronomy 32:17, will refer to these gods as devils or demons.

1 Corinthians 10:19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

Deuteronomy 32:17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

- Argument from the dominion of Satan. Satan is declared to be the prince of this world (*kosmos*).

John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

John 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

John 16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Special Note.

Ephesians 2:1-2, and 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, explains why individuals do not come to faith in Christ and believe the gospel. The reason lies in the dominion that Satan is given over the minds of men except for those who are to be the heirs of salvation. Those whom the Father has chosen for salvation have been given to the Son, and to Christ they will come. *John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

- Argument from spiritual darkness. Darkness is associated with Satan.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- Argument from spiritual blindness. Blindness is associated with Satan.

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

1 John 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

- Argument from a contextual contrast. After referring to “the god of this world” in relationship to blinding the eyes of men, Paul sets forth a contrast in verse 6. The contrast loses its force of meaning if God is the one who is blinding the eyes of men.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion.

When writing to the church of Corinth, it is possible, and even likely, that Paul does have in mind the “god” of this world being Satan, all the while realizing that Satan himself is but a terrible instrument in the hands of God.

The testimony of Scripture and of human history is that, for His own mysterious reasons, God has allowed Satan to be an instrument to blind and bind individuals in order to plunge them into moral and spiritual darkness.

Eve was the first person to be blinded and bound by Satan through deception. Adam was the second person to be pulled into the spiritual abyss of darkness. Consequently, all the sons of Adam have plunged into the depths of total depravity, by nature and, by choice.

To the rescue God comes to redeem individuals according to the measure of His grace.

To be able to say what happens is not to say that humans can fully comprehend why things happen. Creation remains a great mystery but so does sin, salvation, Satan, and God Himself. The redeemed heart can only stand amazed at the goodness and mercy of the Lord, and rejoice that Jesus has authority over “*the god of this world.*”