

CHAPTER 4

The Temptation of Christ

Satan's Strategy

The temptation account is found in Matthew 4:1-11 (also in Luke 4:1-13 and Mark 1:12-13). Three specific temptations are described by Matthew and Luke:

1) The First Temptation--To Command Stones to Become Bread (Matthew 4:2-4) SATAN DOES NOT WANT US TO LIVE BY THE WORD AND WILL OF GOD.

Christ fasted in this barren wilderness for how long (Matthew 4:2)?

_____ How much did the Lord eat during this time (Luke 4:2)?

_____ Was it a partial or a complete fast? _____

Following these days of fasting, how was the Son of Man's physical condition described (Matthew 4:2)? _____

Does Satan often attack us at our times of weakness and weariness? Is the desire for food a sinful desire? Was it God's will for Christ to be hungry? Compare Matthew 4:1--Jesus was **led** to this place of trial by the _____. Would God the Father allow Christ to perish in the wilderness due to hunger (compare Matthew 4:11)? _____ Did Satan know that Christ had the ability merely to speak to the rocks and instantly they would be transformed into bread? (Matthew 4:3--the devil knew who the Creator really was!) Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3. Is there something more important than food? Is there something more to life than eating and drinking and seeking to survive? What is more important--doing God's will or satisfying our physical needs?

_____ If we put the Lord first, will He take care of all our physical needs (Matthew 6:33)? _____

2) The Second Temptation--To Throw Himself Down from the Temple (Matthew 4:5-7) SATAN DOES NOT WANT US TO TRUST THE LORD OUR GOD.

How is Jerusalem described in Matthew 4:5? _____ The "pinnacle of the temple" was probably that part of the temple known as Herod's royal portico, which overhung the valley (or ravine) of Kedron and looked down to a depth of 450 feet (the length of one and one-half football fields!).

Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in the first century A.D., wrote the following description of this pinnacle:

This cloister deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun; for while the [Kedron] valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, this further vastly high elevation of the cloister stood upon that height, insomuch that if any one looked down from the top of the battlements, or down both these altitudes, he would be giddy [dizzy!], while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth.

--*Antiquities*, Book XV, Chapter XI, Section 5

Are you surprised that the devil quoted the Scriptures (Matthew 4:6)? Are you amazed that Satan also said, "IT IS WRITTEN"? Can you think of examples of how Satan's children today (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10) are busy quoting the Bible and twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16)? Read Psalm 91 (the Psalm from which Satan quoted). Does this Psalm teach that God will protect and deliver those who trust in Him? What is the difference between trusting God and tempting God? If Christ had followed the devil's advice in Matthew 4:6, would it have been **faith** (doing what God says) or **presumption** (doing some daring thing that you were never told to do)? Satan wanted to make it look like **trust** when it was not really **trust** at all! Today, many people claim to be trusting the Lord when they may not be trusting Him at all! Can you think of some examples?

3) The Third Temptation—To Worship the Devil (Matthew 4:8-10)

SATAN DOES NOT WANT US TO WORSHIP GOD ALONE.

Was it God's plan for the Lord Jesus Christ to rule all the kingdoms of the world (Revelation 11:15; Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 2:8)? _____ Was it God's time for the Messiah to rule all of these kingdoms (John 18:36--notice the word "now")? _____ Though Christ rejected Satan's offer, will there be a future day when this offer will be accepted by another man (Revelation 13:1-7; compare John 5:43)? _____ Read Deuteronomy 6:13-15. Does God **alone** deserve our worship and love and fear? Can you think of examples where men or women have **compromised** with evil in order to gain power or position?

(1) The First Temptation—To Command Stones to Become Bread

Satan wants us to put our own physical needs above our spiritual needs, whereas God wants us to seek Him first, and then He will take care of all the needs that we have (Matt. 6:33).

(2) The Second Temptation—To Throw Himself Down from the Temple Pinnacle

Satan wants us to tempt God by doing what He never told us to do, and then to foolishly think that God will step in and protect us. God wants us to simply trust Him and do that which is right, leaving the results with God.

(3) The Third Temptation—To Worship the Devil

Satan wants us to worship and honor him in order to achieve a higher position or station in life, but believers must never bow down to anything or anyone except the Lord our God. He alone deserves and demands our whole-hearted allegiance. We must never seek to advance ourselves at the cost of abandoning God and that which is right.

The following is an exercise to help you to see how the three temptations of Christ relate to our daily life. Satan's strategy has not changed too much in the past 2000 years! In the following examples, read each sentence or quotation or Bible verse and decide which of the three temptations **best fits** each example (put either **1**, **2**, or **3** before each example). The first two are done for you:

_____ 2 _____ Some religious fanatics (especially in certain sections of the southern United States) handle poisonous snakes. They base this practice on Mark 16:17-18. There have been times when misguided people have even died from such practices.

_____ 1 _____ "I'm too tired to go to prayer meeting tonight."

Keep in mind, as you do this exercise, that the first temptation (1) entices us to put our own physical needs above our spiritual needs; the second temptation (2) entices us to tempt God by doing what He never really told us to do (hoping that God will take care of us as we do what He never told us to do); the third temptation (3) entices us to worship and honor someone or something other than God who alone deserves our wholehearted worship and service.

| | |
|----------|---|
| 1) _____ | "The Bible says, 'The Lord is my Helper' (Hebrews 13:6) and I know He has promised to help me in tomorrow's exam, so I'll just relax and get a good night's sleep. My non-Christian friends might need to study, but I'll just go into class without doing a great deal of study because the Lord will keep me from failing!" |
| 2) _____ | "I've been offered a wonderful position at the company where I work. My salary will be greatly increased and the benefits are great. It's too bad, though, that I'll have to miss Prayer Meeting each week and I'll have to work every other Sunday." |
| 3) _____ | Daniel's three friends had to choose whether or not to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar. |
| 4) _____ | "I like to sleep in. There is not much time before I need to leave for work. I'll do my morning exercises and have a big breakfast. Perhaps tomorrow I'll have time for prayer and Bible study." |
| 5) _____ | "I often pray that the Lord will keep me from getting cavities. This is an important prayer request for me because I eat candy almost every day." |
| 6) _____ | "My boyfriend and I know that God has given us a physical desire for each other, and since we believe that it's the Lord's will for us to be married some future day, we do not see any problem with beginning to get to know each other in this way now. Our burning desire for each other is too great and we just can't wait." |
| 7) _____ | Some of the early Christians had to decide whether to confess Christ as Lord and be killed or to acknowledge Caesar as lord and live. |
| 8) _____ | "God will keep me safe whether I drive over the speed limit or not." |

Can you think of other examples of how Satan seeks to **tempt us** (entice us to sin) today?

Let us now learn how to win the victory, even as our Lord Jesus did!

The Temptation Of Christ

Christ's Victory

When the Tempter came to the first Adam, he was totally successful and victorious (Genesis 3:1-6). When the Tempter came to the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), he failed miserably and was defeated (Matthew 4:1-11). The first Adam was tempted in a garden paradise (Gen. 2:7-15); the last Adam was tempted in a wild wilderness (Mark 1:12-13). The first Adam could freely eat from "every tree of the garden" (Gen. 2:16); the last Adam was famished with hunger (Matthew 4:2). The defeat of the first Adam brought woe and judgment upon all men (Romans 5:12-21); the victory of the last Adam brought hope and encouragement:

"For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our **infirmities** (weaknesses), but was in all points _____ like as we are, yet _____" (Hebrews 4:15; compare Hebrews 2:17-18)

How did Christ defeat Satan? Did He win the victory by His supernatural powers as the Son of God? Did He rely upon His divine omnipotence to put the devil to flight? If Christ had used His divine powers to defeat the devil, then this would be very discouraging to every believer who also must resist Satan's attacks:

It's great that Jesus won the victory over Satan, but it's too bad that there is no hope for me. After all, I'm not God, and I don't have any supernatural powers, so how could I ever defeat the devil? Certainly I'm no match for Satan!

But this is **not** what the Bible teaches. The Lord Jesus did **not** use His supernatural and divine powers to defeat the devil. Rather, He faced Satan as a **man** (compare Jesus' quote in Matthew 4:4, "**man** shall not live by bread alone"), and this gives great hope and encouragement to every believer. We can win the victory **in the same way** that Jesus won the victory! We can resist Satan just as Christ did! We can do exactly what He did! Yes, the temptation of Christ was a wonderful demonstration that **man, walking in the Spirit, using and relying upon the Word of God, is more than a match for Satan!**

The devil is a great enemy and foe. We dare not underestimate his power. He is diligently seeking to tempt and destroy believers (see 1 Peter 5:8), just as he was out to get Christ in the wilderness. How did Jesus resist Satan? How can I resist Satan?

In James 4:7 the believer is given this important command:

"_____ the devil"

The word "resist" means to "stand against." God never tells us to be afraid of the devil. Who should we be afraid of? See Matthew 10:28; 1 Peter 2:17. God never tells us to run away from the devil. What should we run away from? See 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Timothy 6:10-11; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; compare Genesis 39:12. God tells us that we must **STAND** against the devil and he will run away from us (see James 4:7, "Resist the devil and he will _____ from you.") As one believing child once said, "When Satan knocks at my door, I send God to the door, and when the devil sees God he runs away!"

Did the devil run away from Christ (Matthew 4:11)? _____

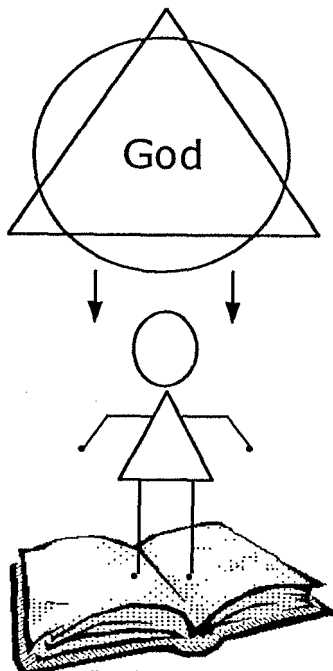
James 4:7 also says, " _____ yourselves therefore to _____." The word "submit" means "to rank under, to take my proper place **under** God, realizing that the One who is **over me** is my Lord and my Commander-in-Chief, and I must obey Him." Likewise, in 1 Peter 5:6 the command is given: " _____ yourselves therefore _____ the mighty hand of God." Believers must **stand** in that humble and submissive place **under** God! Once you are in that place, don't budge one inch! Keep your ground! Just **stand** there!

1 Peter 5:9 tells us that we are to **resist** (**stand** against) the devil "in the F _____." "The Faith" is that body of truth which we believe--namely the Word of God. We are to be steadfast in the faith, standing on the Word of God. If I am in the proper position, standing **under God** and **upon the Word of God**, then there is nothing Satan can do except retreat and flee away (and hope to find some believer who is **not** standing under God and on the Word, so he may devour him--1 Peter 5:8).

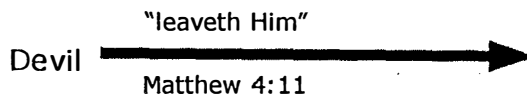
Read Ephesians 6:11,13,14. In verse 13 the word "withstand" means "resist, **stand against**." What word is repeated four times in these verses (this is the key word when it comes to resisting Satan)?

- Verse 11- _____
- Verse 13- WITH _____
- Verse 13- _____
- Verse 14- _____

How did the Lord Jesus **stand** against the devil?

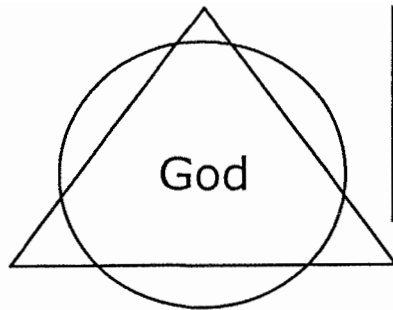


Matthew 4:1-11
 The obedient Lord Jesus was under the Holy Spirit's control (Luke 4:1) and was standing firmly on God's Word.



"It is written"
 Matthew 4:7,10

Resisting the devil involves two things:

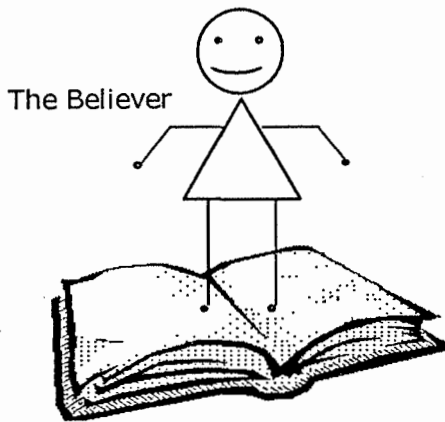


- 1) STAND under God (trusting Him, obeying Him, looking to Him to help us overcome Satan, "sending Him to the door" as the child did)
- 2) STAND upon God's Word (believe what God says and do what God says)

THE RESULT:

Satan

The Devil flees — James 4:7

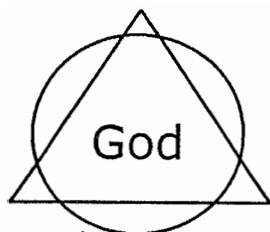


WARNING:

- 1) DON'T MOVE OUT FROM UNDER GOD!
- 2) DON'T MOVE OUT FROM UPON GOD'S WORD. IF YOU DO, SATAN WILL GET YOU!!!

How did Eve fail to *STAND* against the devil?

GENESIS 3:1-6 (1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Cor. 11:3)



Eve failed to stand! She moved away from that good and safe position (and she was no match for Satan!).

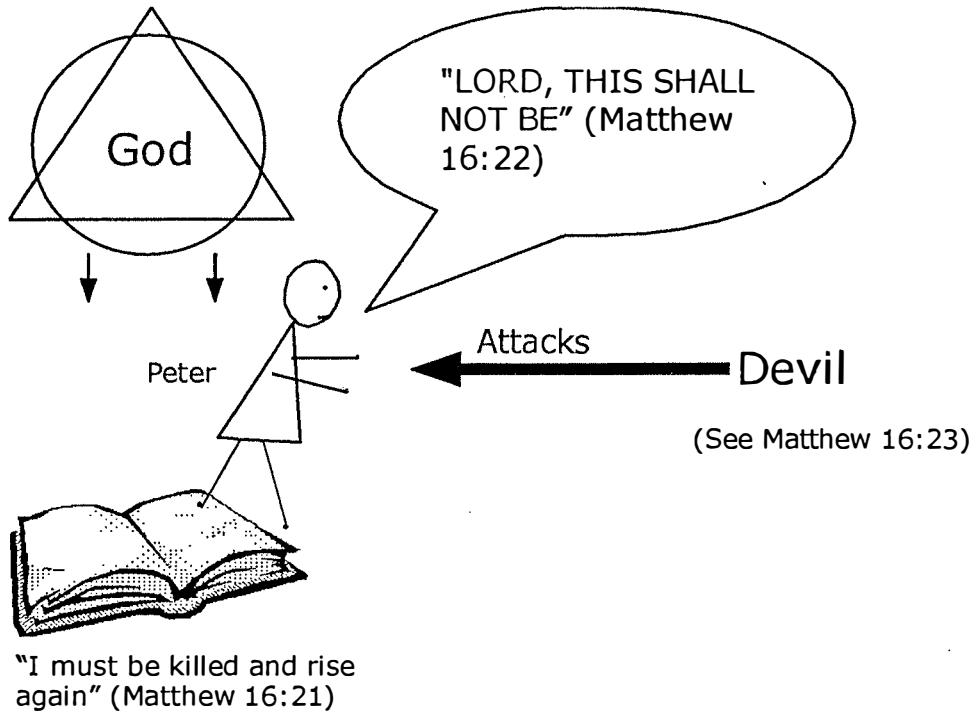


The devil attacks Devil

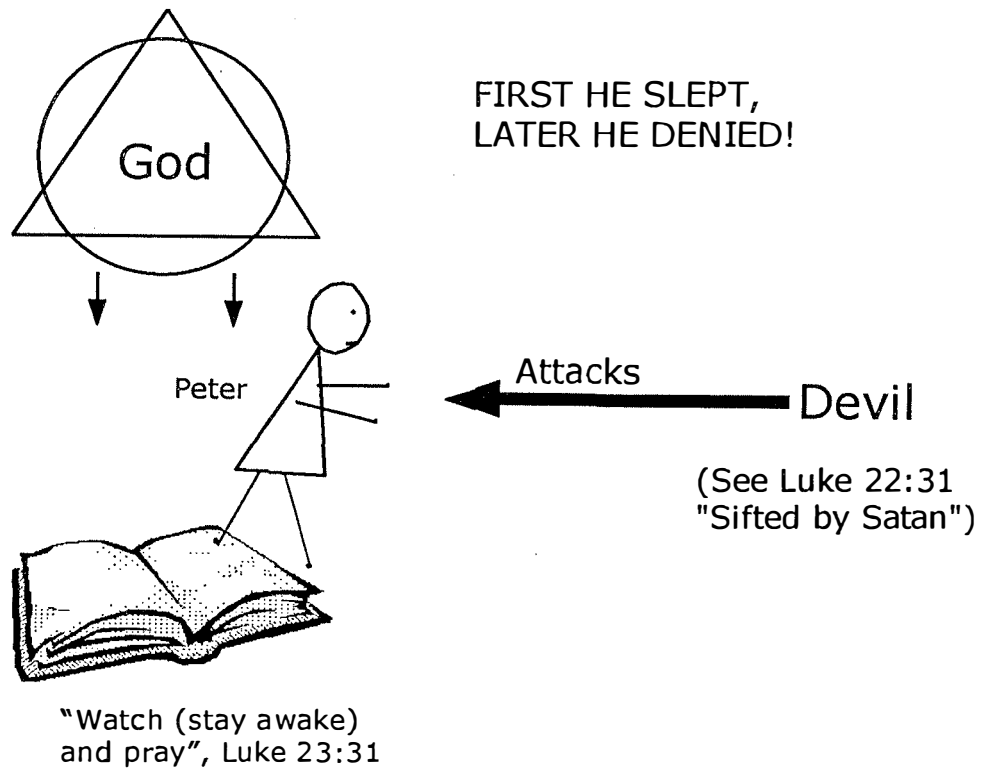
"Hath God Said?" Gen:3:1 ("Come on, don't stand upon What God says!")

How did Peter fail to STAND against the Devil? Let's look at two examples:

1) *MATTHEW 16:21-23*

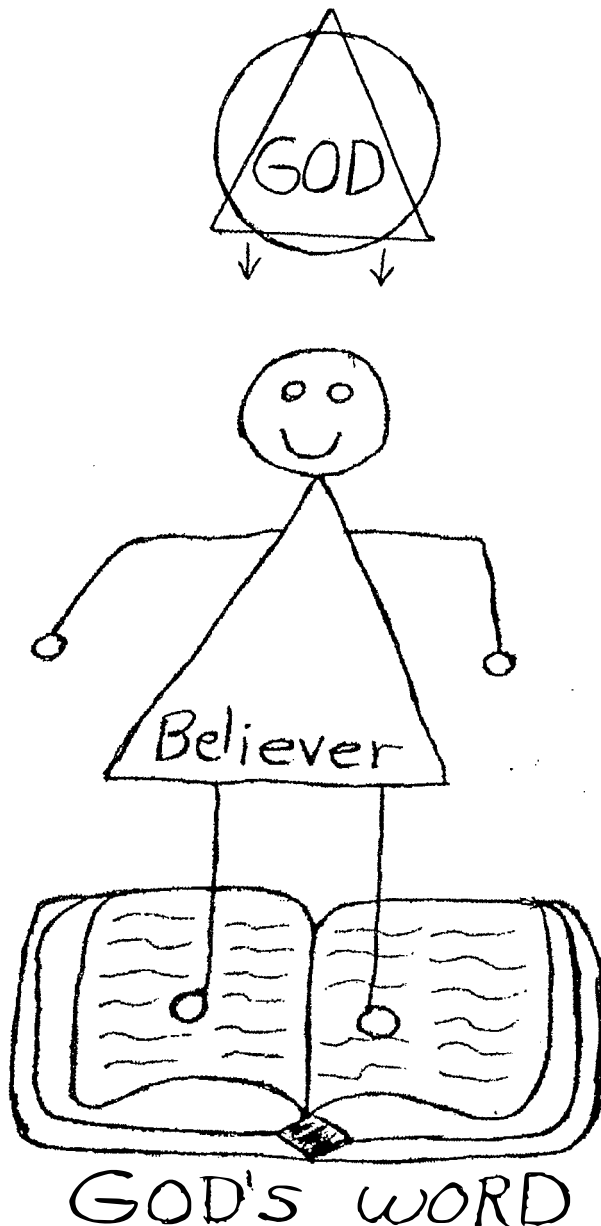


2) *LUKE 22:31-32,39-46,54-62*



2 Peter 3:16-18

Peter, in his last epistle, encouraged all believers to stand firmly on the Word of God, in submission to the God of the Word:

**GROW IN GRACE:**

Humble yourselves UNDER God and realize that He is everything and you are nothing. I'm no match for Satan, but my great God is! Therefore, I must submit to Him and take my proper place UNDER His Lordship.

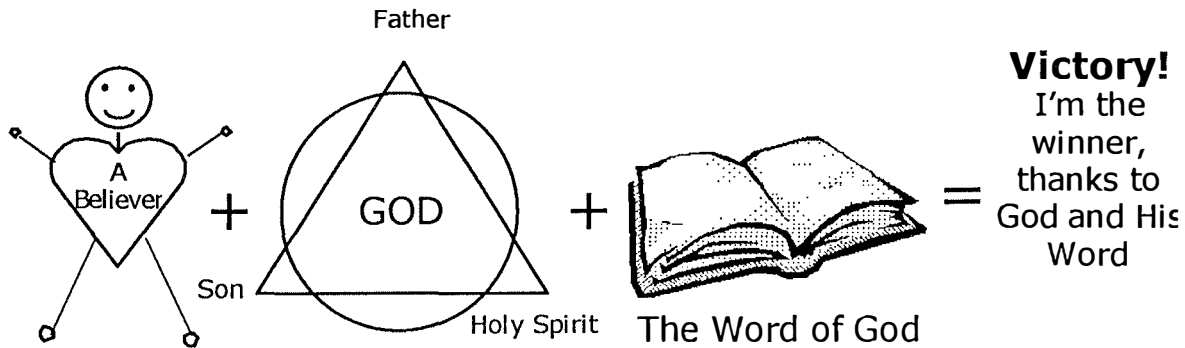
DEVIL →

He runs away!

GROW IN KNOWLEDGE:

Grow in the knowledge of Christ and His Word and stand upon it! Satan will then have no choice but to flee! Don't twist and corrupt the Scriptures like those wicked men described in 2 Peter 3:16-17.

Remember, the believer who walks in the Spirit (**STANDS UNDER GOD**), and who uses and relies upon the Word of God (**STANDS UPON THE WORD**), is more than a match for Satan!



C. H. Mackintosh has written the following about the manner in which Christ overcame temptations:

Yes, blessed be His name, and there for man,— there to show man how to meet the enemy in all his varied temptations, there to show man how to live. We must not suppose for a moment that our adorable Lord met the adversary as God over all. True, He was God, but if it were only as such that He stood in the conflict, it could not afford any example for us. Besides, it would be needless to tell us that God was able to vanquish and put to flight a creature which His own hand had formed. But to see One who was, in every respect, a man, and in all the circumstances of humanity, sin excepted,—to see Him there in weakness, in hunger, standing amid the consequences of man's fall, and to find Him triumphing completely over the terrible foe, it is this which is so full of comfort, consolation, strength, and encouragement for us.

And how did He triumph? This is the grand and all-important question for us,—a question demanding the most profound attention of every member of the Church of God—a question the magnitude and importance of which it would be utterly impossible to overstate. How, then, did the Man Christ Jesus vanquish Satan in the wilderness? Simply by the Word of God. He overcame not as the almighty God, but as the humble, dependent, self-emptied, and obedient Man. We have before us the magnificent spectacle of a Man standing in the presence of the devil and utterly confounding him with no other weapon whatsoever save the Word of God. It was not by the display of divine power, for that could be no model for us; it was simply with the Word of God, in His heart and in His mouth, that the Second Man confounded the terrible enemy of God and man.

And let us carefully note that our blessed Lord does not reason with Satan. He does not appeal to any facts connected with Himself—facts with which the enemy was well acquainted. He does not say, I know I am the Son of God; the opened heavens, the descending Spirit, the Father's voice, have all borne witness to the fact of My being the Son of God. No; this would not do; it would not and could not be an example for us. The one special point for us to seize and learn from is, that our great Exemplar, when meeting all the temptations of the enemy, used only the weapon which we have in our possession, namely, the simple, precious, written, Word of God.

Notes on Deuteronomy, see his discussion under Chapter 8.

Supplemental Section on the Temptation of Christ

The following material was prepared by Alan Lewis and is used here with the author's permission.

Today, we are going to talk about temptation. All of our life we face temptation. It is a fact of life. No one is exempt. Baby Christians are not exempt. Mature Christians are not exempt. Pastors are not exempt. Missionaries are not exempt. Even the Lord Jesus was tempted, and obviously it is not a sin to be tempted, since He was tempted.

The Bible says that He was *in all points tempted like as we are* (Heb. 4:15), and He was tempted more than these three times. If you just read Matthew, you might get the idea that Jesus was only tempted after His forty day fast. Mark and Luke tell us that He was tempted the entire forty days.

Mark 1:13 says, "*and He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.*" He was tempted throughout the forty day period. Jesus was tempted many times after these forty days as well. For example, He was tempted not to go to the cross and after He was on the cross, He was tempted to come down from the cross. Jesus was tempted repeatedly by Satan.

Before we look at our topic today, I want to make a few general points about temptation.

First, Temptation is Multi-Sourced.

It does not always come from the same place. Temptation does not always come from Satan. Most of the times we are tempted, we are not tempted by Satan. We are tempted by our sin nature. Jesus did not have a sin nature. He could only be tempted by Satan.

Our sin nature tempts us most of the time. We are "*dragged away*" by our own "*evil desire and enticed*" (James 1:14).

Second, Temptation is Individual.

Temptation is tailor-made for us. What is a temptation for you may not be a temptation for me. What is a temptation for me may not be a temptation for you. All of our temptations are different.

I have never been tempted to turn stones into bread. I have never been tempted to jump off of a tall building. I avoid them. I am afraid of heights.

I have never been tempted to fall down and worship the Devil. Devil worship is not something that I struggle with. It is not something that I have ever struggled with, although I have been tempted to put other things before God in my life.

We are going to look at the three temptations of Jesus. How did Jesus overcome the temptation? What lessons can learn from His experience? What are some principles of overcoming temptation? Which one can you relate to the most?

We are going to look at Jesus' three desert temptations. What were Jesus' three temptations? My outline is that the first temptation had to do with a **DRIVE**. The second temptation had to do with a **DARE**. The third temptation had to do with **DOMINION**.

The first one had to do with a natural **drive**, the drive for hunger. The first temptation had to do with food. Satan tempted Adam and Eve with food, and he tempted Jesus with food (turning stones into bread).

The second temptation had to do with a **dare**. It was the Devil's dare. It involved some risky behavior (jump off of a tall building). The third temptation had to do, not with a dare or with a desire but with **dominion**. It was a temptation for world domination (all of the kingdoms of the world).

Vance Havner gave a different outline. He said that the first temptation was **physical** (stones into bread). The second temptation was **spectacular** (jump off of a building). That would have turned the Messiah into a superhero, like Superman who can leap over tall buildings. The third one was **political**, to have dominion over the entire world.

Havner said that the first temptation put Jesus in the bread business. The second one put Him in show business and the third one put Him into politics. Let's look at all three a little closer.

The First Temptation

After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (Matt. 4:2-3)

The first two temptations begin with the words, "*If you are the Son of God*" (Matt. 4:3,6). Is Satan questioning if Jesus is the Son of God? It looks like that from the English text but not from the Greek.

This is a first class condition in Greek which is a condition of assumed reality (e.g., Matt. 12:27; Col.3:1). It is assumed to be true.

Satan does not have any doubts that Jesus is the Son of God. He knew Jesus before He was born. The demons know He is the Son of God. They know His true identity. They even know that He is their Creator (Col. 1:16).

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." (Mark 1:23-24)

Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the Messiah. (Luke 4:41)

Satan is saying, "Since you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread." The first temptation is to turn stones into bread. How was the first one even a temptation?

This was something that Jesus needed. It was a need, not a want. Jesus has gone over a month without eating. Jesus was not exempt from real physical needs. He got hungry. He got thirsty.

He had the power to do this. If Jesus could turn water into wine, He certainly could turn stones into bread.

There was no command against it. There is nothing wrong with eating bread. It is not forbidden. There is no explicit command in the Bible against turning stones to bread.

Furthermore, it was not flashy or showy. No one would have seen it. Jesus was alone in the wilderness.

What is the harm of making some bread in a moment of hunger? What is wrong with turning stones to bread? There are many things wrong here.

Jesus is in the middle of a fast. Satan is asking Jesus to break His fast. Jesus was hungry because He was fasting. It was all voluntary.

This was a temptation for Jesus to misuse His powers. Satan is asking Jesus to do a miracle outside of the will of God. None of Jesus' miracles were for Himself. All of His miracles were for others and every miracles He performed was done in the will of God.

Jesus provided food for other people who were hungry but never when He was hungry. Jesus was getting ready to start His ministry. He had not performed a miracle yet. Satan is asking Jesus to perform His very first miracle for Himself.

Jesus **never** did any miracles for His own personal needs, even if the needs were legitimate. That was never God's will. This was a temptation to fulfill a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. There is a right and a wrong way to meet any need.

It was also a temptation to doubt God's provision and love. It was a temptation not to trust God's providential care. Satan is asking Jesus not to trust God to provide for Him but to take matters into His own hands.

Satan is tempting Jesus to allow His physical cravings to rule Him. We are tempted to allow physical cravings to rule us and not to trust God to provide for our needs.

Jesus responded with Scripture. Satan asked Him about bread, so Jesus quoted Scripture from Deuteronomy about bread. *It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Matt. 4:4)

The problem today is that many in our society do live on bread alone. The whole focus is on physical and material needs and not spiritual needs. Man is not just a physical body. We also have a soul. We need more than physical food.

The Second Temptation

Then the devil took Him to the holy city and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command His angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." (Matt. 4:5-6)

What is this temptation? It was a temptation for Jesus to put Himself in danger. "If you are the Son of God, jump off of a tall building. If You have faith, You can do anything. You can jump off of a tall building and God will protect You. You won't get hurt." It sounds like some faith preachers today.

Satan uses Scripture with this temptation. Since Jesus quoted Scripture, Satan quotes his own Scripture. The Devil knows the Bible. He is an expert at quoting it out of context to confuse people. His ministers also quote it frequently. Cultists are very good at quoting and twisting Scripture. They are really good at taking verses out of context to support unbiblical doctrines.

That is why we need to know the Word well. There is very little Bible teaching these days done on Sunday morning and most Christians do not know the Word very well. Some of them have been in church for twenty or thirty years and they still do not know it.

Satan quotes Psalm 91. It says that if you trust in God, He will protect you from all kinds of bad things that are happening. He protects God's people from disease and pestilences. He protects God's people from wild animals (lions and snakes).

This passage is not saying that God will protect you if you deliberately put your life in danger as an act of faith. It is not saying that God will protect you if you choose to drink poison or shoot yourself in the head.

It is not saying that He will protect you if you jump out of a plane without a parachute or drive recklessly down the highway. It is not a promise of invincibility if you deliberately put yourself in danger or act stupidly. Trusting God is one thing; presumption is another.

What Satan suggested was just plain stupid. It was an attempt to manipulate God. It was an attempt to force God to act in a certain way. It was testing God.

The first temptation was not trusting God enough. "Don't trust Him. Take care of your own physical needs in the desert." The second temptation involved presumptuous faith. Doing what God never told us to do in a way that God has not sanctioned in His Word is not genuine trust. Rather it is sheer stupidity.

Jesus did not argue with Satan. He did not tell him that he was quoting verses out of context. He just quoted another verse, also from Deuteronomy. *Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* (Matt. 4:7)

The Third Temptation

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give You," he said, "if You will bow down and worship me." (Matt. 4:8-9).

The third temptation also involved taking Jesus to a high mountain, but this time Satan did not ask Him to jump. He tried to make a bargain with Him. This was the only temptation where Satan tried to give Jesus something.

Satan offered Jesus something. He offered Him fame. He has offered many other people the same thing and they have sold their soul to the Devil. What kind of temptation was this?

It was a temptation to wealth. It was a temptation for power, fame and prestige, having all the kingdoms of the world (world dominion). It was an appeal to the pride of life.

It was also a temptation to idolatry. It was a temptation to worship Satan, which involved idolatry.

This was a temptation to compromise. It was a temptation to take a shortcut. Jesus was offered the crown without the cross. That would be appealing. He could get what He wanted without having to suffer, without having to be tortured on a cross and without having to die in shame as a criminal.

Once again, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture, another passage from Deuteronomy: *Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.' "* (Matt. 4:10-11).

Basic Principles of Spiritual Warfare

1) After a period of great blessing may come temptation.

This is interesting. When was Jesus tempted? He was tempted immediately **after** His baptism. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. He got out of the water, looked up and the heavens opened up. The Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove and God the Father said in a loud audible voice from heaven, *"This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."*

That was an incredible experience. God was speaking audibly from heaven and publicly endorsed His ministry. People could visibly see this dove and the dove landed on Jesus. The entire Trinity was there.

This phenomenal experience was followed with great temptation. First came the **dove**; then came the **devil**. Temptation can come after blessing. There are many examples of this in the Bible. Immediately after Elijah's great victory over the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal was his great trial. He was so depressed that he wanted to take his own life.

2) Satan often tempts us when we are at our weakest point.

Satan does not usually tempt us when we are strong. He tempts us in our weaknesses. Jesus was perfect. He did not have any weak points, but He was physically weak from fasting for forty days and that is when He received these three temptations.

Asking Jesus to turn stones into bread was a temptation for a hungry man. Bread was a great temptation for a man who had not eaten anything in forty days.

3) Every temptation, no matter how strong, can be resisted.

This temptation shows that Satan can be resisted. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve, they gave in quickly. It was easy for Satan to get them to sin. We give in to all kinds of temptations. We often are just like Adam and Eve.

Satan tempted Jesus three times and Jesus was extremely weak. He had gone forty days without eating anything and He still did not give into any of Satan's temptations.

Temptations can be resisted. James 4:7 says, “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*”

Satan is stronger than us, but he can be resisted. He cannot do anything to us against our will. We don't have to give in to him. The Devil only has as much power over us as we give him.

Satan could not force Jesus to do anything. All he could do was to tempt Him. He could not force Jesus to do anything. Even when he took Him to the highest part of the temple, He could not push Him off. All he could do was to ask Him to jump off.

The Bible teaches that Satan can be resisted and there is power in resisting. James says the Devil flees when we resist him.

4) We can't defeat Satan in our own strength.

Where was Jesus when He was tempted? He was alone with God in the desert. He was away from all people. He was away from all food for forty days. He spent time alone with God. He relied completely on God. He meditated on Scripture. He prayed. He was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1). He was led by the Spirit (Matt. 4:1; Luke 4:1).

That is how He was able to deal with Satan. Jesus was alone in the desert with Satan for forty days. Mark says that Jesus was with all of the wild animals (Mark 1:13). That is not mentioned in Matthew or Luke.

It was rather terrifying, but Jesus did not battle Satan in His own strength. He relied completely on God. We should not try to do spiritual warfare on our own, but rather in the power of His strength (Eph. 6:10). The battle is the Lord's!

5) God's Word has power over temptation.

This is very interesting. Jesus received three temptations in Matthew 4. When one temptation did not work, Satan tried a second one. When the second one did not work, he tried a third one. Each time Jesus responded in the same way. He said, “It is written; It is written; It is written” (Matt. 4:4,7,10).

God's Word is our final authority. It is the final authority for living. It is the final authority for doctrine. It is the final authority for spiritual warfare. For spiritual warfare, the Bible is our weapon, our sword and our shield. It is a weapon that can be used to overcome temptation.

Paul called it the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). The NT describes the Bible as a sword and not just a dull sword, but a sharp sword (Heb. 4:12). Hebrews does **not** say that the Bible is a two-edged sword. It says it is sharper than a two-edged sword. A sharp sword only cuts on the outside. God's Word cuts on the inside. It penetrates hearts.

Jesus is a model for us today. How He responded to Satan is the same way we should respond to Satan. Jesus didn't try to reason or argue with the Devil. He did not try to debate him. Instead, He did three things. He knew the Word, even passages in Deuteronomy. He meditated on it. He applied the Word.

He applied it to His own situation. He took passages dealing with Israel being hungry in the wilderness for forty years and applied it to His situation. He was in the desert and was hungry for forty days. Jesus not only knew the Word, mediated on the Word and applied the Word. He also quoted the Word.

God's Word keeps us from sinning. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." If there is an area of our life in which we are weak, we might want to memorize some Scripture on that subject.

Most Christians do not know the Word very well. They do not know the Book of Deuteronomy. They do not read it too much. They could not quote any verses out of it. The OT is too unfamiliar to most Christians. How we need to study God's Word in a serious way, each and every day.

It's not enough to have the Bible. You may have a whole stack of Bibles at home and never read them or know what is in them. That's like having a nice sword on your wall at home for decoration. It is like having some weapons that you own which you don't know how to use. Those weapons are completely useless.

If we are going to be like Jesus, we need to KNOW the Word from Genesis to Revelation. We need to MEDITATE on the Word. We need to MEMORIZE the Word. We need to APPLY the Word to our own life situation. We also need to QUOTE the Word, especially when we are under attack from the enemy.

That is what our Lord did. Jesus was perfect. He was sinless. If the sinless Son of Man needed to overcome the temptations of the evil one, how much more do we?

