

*1Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2being tempted (tested) for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. Luke 1:1,2*

Jesus began His public ministry, in isolation (*in the wilderness*), *being tested by the devil*. He has been baptized by John to *fulfill all righteousness*. He was *filled with the Holy Spirit*. At the Jordan the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him. God the Father has spoken in confirmation of His ministry, *You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased*. All this fanfare and then the Spirit leads Him into the wilderness. His public ministry was beginning and yet the Spirit led Him first into the wilderness, a private place, to be tempted.

We from this we must understand that the work of the Spirit is done by God, His plans not ours. David in the Psalms stated, *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. Psalm 20:7* Jesus knew the battles He was to fight were not fleshly but had to be won by prayer, *in the name of the LORD*. Jesus knew the power to overcome the devil, the enemy of mankind, was not by arguing, convincing, or even fighting with men but were to be accomplished by the power of God's Spirit, *'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Zech 4:6*

Jesus knew what was in the hearts of man. A week before the Crucifixion there was a processional into Jerusalem for Jesus. Multitudes crying out, *"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"* A week these multitudes turned against Him. Such is carnal affection, it is easily swayed, both individuals and crowds. Jesus knew this about man, He knew of man's fleshly nature. He didn't trust Himself freely to men, *24But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, 25and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. John 2:24* Matthew tells of the crowds worshipping Him,

*9Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" Hosanna in the highest!" 10And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" 11So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee." Matt 21:9-11*

This is true for the Church. We need to be careful in laying too much responsibility on new believers. Paul stated, *Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, 1 Tim 5:22* Christianity is a spiritual battle. We are to *bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.

*3For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4For the weapons of our warfare are not [a]carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. 2 Cor 10:3-6*

This was what Christ had to do, He was to be tempted by the devil (for forty days) and He would prove faithful to God by resisting him. *7Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7* Luke gives us insight Jesus spiritual battle in the wilderness. We see three epic battles between the forces of heaven and hell.

*3And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, [c]but by every word of God.'" Luke 4:3,4*

The devil begins, *If You are the Son of God*. We recall Jesus had heard His Father declare, *"You*

*are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.*” Now the devil raises the question, *If You are? The Greek strictly means “Assuming that Thou art,” Cambridge Bible* How often does the devil confront us in similar fashion, *If You are* born again or if God really loved you He wouldn’t let you be in this situation or allow this to happen to you. Think back to the garden of Eden, the first tempting. What did Satan ask the woman? *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” Gen 3:1*

The question put doubt into the woman’s mind. Did God really say that? Here the devil uses a similar tactic, he would have Jesus doubt what He knows to be true. *If You are the Son of God.* We see this same statement is directed mockingly to Jesus when He was on the cross, *If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.*” This is sort of a dare, *“If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”* Come on if you who you’re said to be prove it. Use your powers to satisfy your physical hunger. But Jesus could only do what He saw His Father doing, showing off and using His powers to meet His own need was not how God’s kingdom works. Remember how disappointed Herod was that Jesus wouldn’t do some miraculous sign for him.

*8Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Luke 23:8*

Jesus replied, *“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” Luke 4:4* Jesus knew that He was the *true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*” *John 6:32,33* Jesus knew what the true bread was *every word of God* and He was that bread of life. For Him to be tempted carnally, with physical food as Adam and Eve were, would have been a denial of His very essence, He was *the bread of life.* *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. John 6:35*

The second temptation is maybe the most egregious, the devil says I will give you authority over *all the kingdoms of the world, if You will worship me. You shall worship the Lord your God.*

*5Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” 8And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”*

This is goes to the heart of what true followers of God believe, believers are to worship no other gods than the one true God. This was true for the Jews in the OT but it is equally true of Christians. Here is the devil attempting to have the Son of God rebel against the command of God His Father. *4“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Deut 6:4,5*

*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. “You shall have no other gods before Me. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. Exodus 20: 2-5*

We may not be tempted to carved images and bow down to them but think of what the devil was offering Jesus. The devil, *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And said to Jesus, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me.* The devil claims that authority for all the kingdoms of the world have been given to him.

Much of the trouble in our world today is do to the devil's present authority, and power over the kingdoms of the world and men siezing the opportunity. Power, wealth, pleasure, and immorality, all of these idols, these graven images attach themselves to men's hearts and make them slaves and captives to the evil god of this world. There is a legend in blues music circles that a young man named Robert Johnson went down to the Crossroads to sell his soul to the devil in exchange for his prowess on guitar. All have sinned and fall sort of the glory of God. All persons are tempted in some way, we have our prices. Jesus when He was temped quoted the Word of God, *'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*

*34When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Mark 8:34-37*

The only way of overcome the temptaions we face in this world is for us to *deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Jesus, to worship the Lord our God, and only shall Him.* Paul declares, *7But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; Phil 3:7-9*

For the third temptation the devil brought Jesus to Jerusalem, to the temple, the center of Jewish worship. The devil quotes the Word to Jesus, *God shall give His angels charge over you.* This is the in the Bible but it is a misuse of scripture

*9Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. 10For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,' 11and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' " 12And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' " 13Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. Luke 4:9-13*

This was a test, maybe to Jesus pride, it is like the devil was saying, *I dare you.* If Jesus were to fall for this it would have put God to a test. Beyond the Law of Gravity, God would have had to intervene to save Jesus. He could have done this but it would have been foolish. Jews that would have seens angels holding up Jesus may have followed Him because of this great sign but that was not God's plan. Jesus said later, *This evil generation keeps asking me to show them a miraculous sign. But the only sign I will give them is the sign of Jonah. Luke 11:29* Jesus had a purpose for His life and it wasn't to draw attention to Himself, it was to give His life as a ransom for sin, *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Mark 10:45*

*14Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you. 15For the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God. Otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth. 16Do not test the LORD your God as you tested Him at Massah. Deut 6:14-16*

We see from these experiences of Jesus with the devil that temptations are not sin. Even Jesus was tempted yet without sin. To face our temptations we must resist the devil and like jesus use the Word, *Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin.*

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Cor 10:13*