

### Three Temptations Of Jesus

'Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and later He was hungry. The tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command these stones to be turned into bread."

But Jesus replied, "It has been written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

The devil took Him into the holy city (Jerusalem) and placed Him on a pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, He will give His angels charge over you, and they will bear you up on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Again the devil took Him up on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to Him, "I will give You all these things if You will fall down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve."

Then the devil left Him and behold, angels came and served Him' (Matthew 4:1 to 11).

'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River and was led by the Holy Spirit. For forty days in the desert where He was tempted by the devil, He ate nothing during those days, and when they were completed, He was hungry. The devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, order this stone to turn into bread."

Jesus replied to him, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word of God."

The devil took Him up to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and said to Him, "To You I will give all this power and their glory, for it has been given to me, and I give it to whomever I choose. Therefore if You will worship me, it will all be Yours."

Jesus replied to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."

Then he took Him to Jerusalem and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here for it is written, He will give His angels charge over you, and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus replied to him, "The Scripture says, You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

When the devil had ended every temptation, he left Him until another time. Jesus returned full of the power of the Holy Spirit' (Luke 4:1 to 14).

The first temptation of Jesus was when He was tempted with food. He had been fasting for nearly six weeks and was understandably very hungry. The first temptation of Adam and Eve was also food. 'The serpent was more sly than any living creature of the field which the Lord God had made, and the devil said to Eve, "Can it really be that God has said, You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?"

Eve said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees of the garden, except the fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden. God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."

But the serpent said to Eve, "You shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil."

When Eve saw that the tree was good for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some to Adam, and he ate' (Genesis 3:1 to 6).

There was more to this temptation than merely food. It was one of the three deadly sins. Scripturally there are three deadly sins, not seven, and from those three, comes all other sin. 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These do not come from the Father but are from the world' (1 John 2:16). Lust of the flesh can take many forms. In Eve's case, she lusted or craved for the sensual gratification the sight of the tree, gave her. Eve did not need the fruit off that tree – she had hundreds of other plants and trees from where she could obtain food, but she wanted – not needed, the fruit off it. Lust comes when we want something we do not really need. Standing against lust whatever the form it may take, is something we can only do with the help of the Holy Spirit. The devil tried to tempt Jesus into giving place to the lust of the flesh; to give in to the powerful desire for food after He had been fasting, but Jesus stood His ground and did not give into the temptation. He quoted the Old Testament verse with the prefix, 'It is written ... Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord' (Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus said, "All of you must keep watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). We must understand, temptation is not sin; giving into temptation is sin.

The second and third temptations are swapped around in Matthew and Luke, so we will go with the second temptation as written in Matthew. The second temptation of Jesus was when the devil tried unsuccessfully to tempt Jesus into provoking God with an act of foolishness and pride. The devil suggested Jesus jump off the top of the temple's pinnacle in Jerusalem and expect the angels to catch Him. Once again, Jesus overcame the temptation by quoting scripture. 'It is written ... You shall not tempt the Lord your God' (Deuteronomy 6:16). Jesus was tempted with the 'pride of life', which is the belief in one's own ability, or the incorrect assurance of the stability of worldly things. We notice that the devil actually quoted scripture (Psalm 91:11 & 12) to tempt Jesus. The fact that the devil knows the Bible, shows us that we have to be very careful when we believe God is telling us to do something. It may not be the Lord at all. It might be the devil acting in a sly manner to deceive us and tempt us into doing something that is offensive to God. Before we take a step in faith, we must be sure it is God Who is speaking to us.

The third temptation of Jesus was when the devil desperately tried to entice Jesus to worship him. The devil showed Jesus kingdoms around the world and offered the kingdoms to Jesus, trying to tempt Him to give into the lust of the eyes, which are greedy longings of the heart. For the third time Jesus quoted scripture to overcome the devil. 'It is written ... You shall fear the Lord your God and you shall serve only Him' (Deuteronomy 6:13). What we notice here is, the devil tried to deceive Jesus when he showed Him the kingdoms of the world and said, "To You I will give all this power and their glory, for it has been turned over to me, and I give it to whomever I will. Therefore if You will worship me, it shall all be Yours." The devil is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), he rules the kingdom of darkness (Colossians 1:13), he is a liar (John 8:44) and is crafty and sly (2 Corinthians 2:11) but that is the limit of his power. God the Father has never given any glory to the devil and the only power he has is what the Lord allows in any given situation. For example, the devil had no power to inflict calamity on Job until the Lord gave him permission to do it (Job 1:12; 2:6). The devil had no power to inflict trouble on the disciples because the Lord refused permission (Luke 22:31). The devil had no power to have Jesus crucified until God granted that power (Luke 22:53), and Jesus said the only power Pilate had over Him was what God had given to him (John 19:11). We have been given power and authority over all the power the devil had. 'Jesus called to Himself His twelve disciples and gave them power and authority over unclean spirits' (Matthew 10:1). 'Jesus called together the Twelve apostles and gave them power and authority over all demons' (Luke 9:1). 'Behold! I (Jesus) have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power that the enemy had, and nothing shall in any way harm you' (Luke 10:19). 'All things have been given over into My authority by My Father' (Luke 10:22).

We can see by these verses that the devil was trying so desperately to entice Jesus to worship him, he tried to give Him the kingdoms of the world, something that already belonged to Jesus. God the Father has already promised the earth to His Son. 'Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession' (Psalm 2:8). The devil could not give to Jesus what God has already promised to give Him. The whole earth, and that includes earthly kingdoms belong to the Lord our God. 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it, the world and they who dwell in it' (Psalm 24:1). No one can give away what does not belong to them, and that is what the devil tried to do.

There are three more things we should take notice of. (1) The devil knew full well Who Jesus was, but still he said, "If You are the Son of God" showing extreme pride, arrogance and a mocking spirit. The devil was trying to entice Jesus to turn the stones into bread and break His fast before the forty days were complete. When the angels came and served Jesus, they would have brought food and water for Him. (2) Jesus did not have any problems with the devil until after He was baptised in water by full emersion and the Holy Spirit had descended on Him. (3) Jesus was not full of the power of the Holy Spirit until after He had spent forty days fasting, had been tempted by the devil and won the victory over temptation.

Amen and God bless you.

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