



The Temptation of Jesus

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The devil's strategy is to first attack us with the temptation to **doubt the goodness and love of God**. And that is the same tactic he tried with Jesus.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. (Matt 4:1-3)

The devil begins with the word "if". The devil begins his temptation by trying to plant doubt. He used the same tactic with Adam and Eve.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden.'?"

What did God actually say? ***Gen 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."***

God says that you may ***freely eat of any tree in the garden***. But what does Satan say God says? ***"Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden.'?"***

The devil is trying to get Eve to begin to suspect that God is not good, He is holding out on you. All sin begins with the suspicion that God is not good and does not really care about you.

Now, back to the temptation of Jesus. The devil knew Jesus was God's Son. But if you are the Son of God why would the Spirit of God lead you out here and not give you any food?

You see, the point of the temptation is not in feeding His hunger; the point of the temptation is in distrusting His Father and taking matters into His own hands.

Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" That's the principle that must rule our lives. I will live on the promises of God. What God says is true no matter what my circumstances look like.

Jesus continues to believe in the goodness and love of God even in the worst of circumstances.

Well, Satan listens to that. He's very subtle, so he moves to a **second temptation**.

So, you trust God, do You? Ok, let's see about that.

Matt 4:5-6 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

You say You trust God, do You? Well, then You certainly believe that God's going to take care of You no matter what. Then fine, jump!

In the first temptation, a real problem existed, hunger. The hunger was real. Here Jesus is asked to create a problem, and then presume on God to deliver Him from it. To do that is sin.

But Jesus won't do it. ***Matt 4:7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the LORD your God to the test.'***

Had he fallen to this temptation He would have sinned, and He would have had lovers of sensation and not lovers of God. And He would have had people who wanted to follow Him for His power not who wanted to come to Him in repentance and seek His forgiveness.

Jesus wouldn't give into this second temptation and put God to the test. Never put yourself deliberately into a threatening situation, doing it recklessly and needlessly, and then expect God to rescue you from it.

Satan wasn't done. Rebuffed the second time, he came back with a **third temptation**.

Matt 4:8-9 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship Me."

All subtleties are gone now. He takes Him to a high mountain, and he says, "All these things will I give you if you fall down and worship me." Why is that a temptation? Because according to Ps 2, Jesus has a right to all the kingdoms of the world.

Ps 2:8 Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. That's the Messianic promise from God to the Messiah.

The devil is saying, "I'm just offering you what God offers You, minus the cross.' The devil says, "You can have what you want, just a little compromise. Just one short bow and the crown is yours.'

Matt 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only."

Three times Jesus quoted Scripture. What did the Psalmist say?

Ps 119:11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You. It is the word that gives us victory.

Matt 4:11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

The Father does take care of Him. He is a good, good Father. But He did it in His time and in His way, after accomplishing His purposes.

Don't doubt His goodness and His love. Hold unto His Word. **He will come through for you in the best time and in the best way.**