

## Jesus' Temptations in the Wilderness

For nearly thirty years the Lord Jesus lived in his home in Nazareth. Not a lot is known about his early life, apart from the fact that the Lord worked as a carpenter alongside Joseph, his stepfather. We take care to say that Joseph was his stepfather because Jesus' real Father was the God of Heaven. God Himself stated this truth very clearly. After the Lord Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, God the Father announced in a loud voice from heaven, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** That was a wonderful thing to say. Jesus was not just man, He was God's Son.

This truth of Jesus' Sonship became the crucial point in His life and in all that he did. We can only say that he is perfect because He is God. We can only say that he is all powerful because he is God. This became the battle ground for all the opposition that the Lord Jesus endured and it started with the devil.

Immediately after the Lord Jesus was baptized, He was led of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, into the wilderness. He was led there so that the devil would tempt him. A battle took place between the Lord Jesus, who is the Son of God and the devil, who is the continual enemy of God.

The Lord lived in that dry howling desert place for 40 days with no food. He must have been so hungry and would have been so weak in body. It was at that time of bodily weakness that the devil appeared before the Lord in the wilderness to tempt the Lord Jesus. The devil wanted to make the Lord Jesus to disobey God and to obey him. The devil wanted to make the Lord a slave to His evil ways. So, when the Lord was so hungry after fasting for 40 days the devil tempted the Lord Jesus to serve him. The devil suggested that the Lord use His power to turn stones into bread so he could end his hunger.

Could the Lord do that? Yes, Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread, but it was not the right thing to do. It was not the will of God. So, the Lord Jesus answered very boldly, No, **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"** (Matthew 4:3). Jesus was going to obey His Father. He would not obey the devil. No matter how nice it would be to have fresh bread made from stones that looked like loaves of bread, Jesus was not going to listen to the commands of God' enemy, the devil who is a liar and a deceiver.

The Lord strongly resisted the devil. By quoting those words from the Bible, **"Man shall not live by bread alone."** The Lord used the Bible as his weapon to fight against the devil. We should do the same. We should resist the lies of the devil with the truth of the Bible. The Lord Jesus believed the Bible and turned it against the evil One. That is why we are to hold fast to the Bible. We should learn key Bible verses, which are always filled with truth, and use them to withstand the suggestions of Satan, which are always lies.

Having failed in his first attempt to make the Lord serve him, the devil tried again. This time he took the Lord up to the very highest point of the Jewish temple and challenged the Lord to cast

himself down and trust in the angels to save him from harm. This time the devil even quoted a Bible promise that the angels would not fail to keep him safe.

Many people would be confused by the devil quoting a Bible promise to have them serve Him. They might fall for the devil's trap and start to listen to the evil commands of the devil because he was using or misusing the Bible. Do you think that the Lord Jesus fell for this trap? No way! The Lord was too wise and too obedient to rebel against His Father's will. Jesus was not going to serve the devil no matter what part of the Bible he quoted. Jesus knew to resist the devil with a clear Bible text, **"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"**. The Lord followed the principle that if its wrong before God His Father then it is always wrong no matter who says it. Jesus would not become the slave of the devil.

So, the devil tried another way to make the Lord serve him. He took the Lord Jesus up into a high mountain. He had him look out over the lands around to show him the kingdoms of this world. Then the devil tried to trap the Lord Jesus again, by saying, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Aha! That is what the devil wanted all along. He did not just want the Lord Jesus to show his power or to enjoy fresh bread when he was hungry. The devil wanted to have the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, fall down at his feet to worship him.

That was wicked and horrible thinking. Who does the devil think he is? The devil was created by God. The devil rebelled against God trying to make himself like God. It was his pride that made the devil so determined to make a slave out of the Lord Jesus. Pride, that thinking that you are better than anyone else, is so wicked, and to think that a fallen sinful creature can be given the same honour as God and be worshipped by the Lord Jesus, is crazy. But that is the way the devil thinks. He is crazy and will try anything to have people serve and worship Him.

The devil wants to make you his slave. He want's you to love him and to give your whole life to serve Him. So many young people and older people too fall into the devil's trap and end up his slave. The devil hates to see you worship the Lord Jesus and honour Him. The devil can't stand the honour and worship that Christians give to the Lord Jesus. He will seek to bring people into his trap. Will you let him? If you do, he will ruin your life and destroy your soul.

On that third attempt also, the Lord did not fall for Satan's trap. He quoted another Bible text. The Lord said, **"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."** The Lord commanded the devil to get away from him. He would not bow down to the devil. He would not listen to the clever talk of the devil. The Lord Jesus fought him with the truths of the Bible.

For that the Lord got the victory over the devil and for that the angels of heaven came and sang praises to the Lord Jesus. They honoured Him for His faithfulness to God by resisting the devil.

When you are tempted, you should also turn to the Bible saying, "It is written". Then you can pray for the Lord to deliver you. Jesus can deliver you from the devil's attacks because Jesus defeated the devil at every point, and on the cross the Lord totally broke the devil's power. Now you can say that the devil is a defeated foe. He is on the run. The Lord calls on you to also resist the devil, and He promises that the devil will flee from you. Hold fast to the Bible. Live in the promises of the Lord. Then pray for the Lord to defeat the devil in your life. That's the victory every Christian is promised when they refuse to serve the devil. Resist the devil but cling to the Lord, as your Lord and your Saviour trusting in His power to deliver you.

Matthew 4:1-11

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