

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

MARK 1:12-13

"RESISTING SATAN'S ATTACKS"

The 3rd great event in the earthly life of Christ was His Temptation. This event is perhaps one of the most vital as we seek to love and follow Jesus all our days. Why? Jesus met and defeated Satan as a man. And against the bleak panorama of the Judean Wilderness we see this beautiful sight, a totally obedient servant who wins the battle because He obeys the Word of His Father in Heaven. So can we!

Satan the enemy of God and man is alive and well on planet earth tonight. This evening his silent invaders are swirling through the air. All our lives they lurk around us as the infernal warriors of the Kingdom of Darkness. As we see in Mark's Gospel record, Satan's attack is clear. Like hideous locusts Satan and his demons swarm to nourish their horrible appetites upon on the filth of spiritual wickedness. They find resistance only from those few and far between warriors of the kingdom of light. That's right, you and me this evening are enemies to Satan and his hosts.

God's Word assures us that we are "more than conquerors through Christ". As we enter the realm of spiritual warfare lets pray for peace. As we learn and grow we will find Satan is a defeated foe, a weakened adversary and crushed enemy. We have the victory through Jesus who lived the perfect life. Jesus left the perfect example. God's Word records the ultimate method for resisting Satan's attacks - the model Jesus left for us. Tonight that model is the 3rd great event in Christ's life.

The Gospels build the Life of Christ around seven key events. Seven special geographic sites which together frame the entire earthly life of Christ! Remember them?

His Birth: Bethlehem
His Baptism: Jordan River
His Temptation: Wilderness
His Transfiguration: Mt. Hermon
His Crucifixion: Golgotha
His Resurrection: Garden Tomb
His Ascension: Mt. Of Olives

So, the Gospels may be distilled down to the seven highlights, or key events in the life of Jesus. Those seven are His birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. Tonight we are going to plunge into the 3rd key event in the life of Christ, His Temptation. And most importantly for us tonight, in this event we learn the secret of how to resist the attacks of Satan like Jesus did.

As you turn to our text in Mark 1:12-13 let's stand and listen to God.

Now with this event in our minds, may I give you a modern biography of someone who did not resist Satan's attack? This biography is of a man who would be opposite our Lord Jesus. Jesus faced Satan and at every level as we will see, said NO to Satan. Adolph Hitler, our modern example, at every level said YES to Satan.

Adolph Hitler's Occult¹ Connections

One of the primary characteristics of those who get involved in the occult is a refusal to submit to God ordained authority. This **rebellion** against authority always becomes evident in the lives of those heading away from God! This rebellion is usually evident in one or more of the following three areas --

1. **Rebellion against parents**
2. **Rebellion against society**
3. **Rebellion against religion/Christianity.**

There is a frightening destination for many of those who rebel against parents, society and Christianity. That destination often leads them into involvement in the occult. Of course all who know God's Word can

¹ Adapted from an article by David L. Brown, Copyright © 1992. <http://www.execpc.com/logos/hitler.html>

see the connection. According to I Samuel 15:23 rebellion and occult involvement are linked. The verse says, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft..." KJV.

Rebellion gives Satan an open invitation to establish a beachhead in the rebel's life. Here's why! Lucifer was the original rebel. According to Ezekiel 38, he was "the anointed cherub (angel)." He was "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." His response to his endowment by God was one of pride & rebellion. In fact, Isaiah 14 further reveals that he wanted **power** and **worship** for himself. He demanded equality with the Lord God almighty. God rejected his power play and promised his doom in Hell in the future. But, until that time Lucifer or Satan is on the prowl, seeking likely candidates he can lead into occult worship. Understand, occult involvement is actually worship of his infernal majesty, Satan.

REBELS ATTRACT REBELS

Lucifer was the original rebel. He is looking for rebels to enlist for his own selfish purposes. Rebellion against authority makes a person a prime target for satanic attack.

Let's consider a prime example of the *rebellion-occult connection*, **Adolph Hitler**.

Hitler's early life could be characterized by one word, "failure." He eked out a meager existence by living on his dead mother's limited savings and an Orphan's Pension, which came from his father's service in the Customs Department. His attempt at higher education was thwarted. He wanted to be an artist and so applied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. They refused to accept him because his sketches were not up to the standards they required. Next, he applied to the School of Architecture and was refused. Author Treavor Ravenscroft says

"...unable to make friends, Hitler became day by day a more solitary and embittered figure."

To make a long story short, Hitler was angry at God and society because of his plight in life, therefore he rebelled against God and society. In his quest for power to change his plight young Hitler turned to the occult. He began by spending all his free time in the Hofberg Library in Vienna, Austria reading books on the history of the occult

and Eastern religions. The occult seemed to offer the power Adolph was searching for.

In that library there is a ancient spear, believed by many, to be the one used to pierce the side of Christ. Erwin Lutzer, pastor of Moody Church in Chicago says in his book **The Antichrist's New Age Roots**,
"One day when Adolph Hitler was in his early twenties, he overheard a tour group guide point out the spear to a group of guests and say, 'This spear is shrouded in mystery; whoever unlocks its secrets will rule the world.' Later Hitler said that those words had changed his whole life."

After four years in Vienna, Hitler left and went to Munich. There he got involved with others who were dedicated to the pursuit of occult powers. History is filled with the record that Hitler was used by Satan to destroy a million plus of God's chosen people. Multiplied millions more were destroyed in war. Then in mockery of Hitler himself, Satan motivated him to commit suicide, destroying himself. Listen young people, rebellion against your parents, rebellion against God or rebellion against authority is **Dangerous** with a capital "D." It is an open invitation to Satan to destroy your life!

And that is why we need to follow Christ's example when Satan attacks us with a desire to rebel, to resist! We need to follow Christ's perfect example, and like Him resist the attacks, and as James said see Satan flee! James 4: 7 So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

So Satan is out to destroy us, but Christ, on the other hand offers us an abundant life. If you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, I would urge you to receive him today. When you call upon Christ to save you from your sins, God delivers you from the power of darkness and brings you into the wonderful kingdom of His Son. If you have, then anew and afresh offer your life yielded and submitted to Christ!

NOW TO CHRIST'S TEMPTATION

So Jesus began His ministry in the Wilderness of Temptation in Mark 1:12-13. He ended in the Luke 23 in the Garden of temptation. In a moment we will see how He triumphed, and how we can too!

TEMPTATION comes in Three Dimensions², packaged in varied shapes, sizes, and colors...but most of them fall into one of three categories:

- 1) *Material Temptation*. This is lust for things. The things may be as large as a house or as small as a ring, as bright and dazzling as a new sports car or as dull and dusty as a two-hundred-year-old antique dresser.
- 2) *Personal Temptation*. This is lust for status. Special recognition. The status of fame, fortune, power, or authority. Having a title that makes heads turn, like "top executive" or "president" or "executive director" or even "doctor".
- 3) *Sensual Temptation*. This is lust for another person. The desire to have and enjoy the body of an individual, even though such pleasure is illegal and/or immoral.

1ST THE ARENA WAS THE WILDERNESS (Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4)
Christ was with wild beasts (Mark 1:13); He was 40 Days without food (Matthew 4; Luke 4)

How unlike the 1st Adam is this last Adam³.

"The Devil challenged the first man. The Last Man challenged the Devil. The Devil ruined the first Adam. The Last Adam spoiled the Devil. The First Adam involved the Race in his defeat. The Last Adam included the Race in His victory. The First Adam stood as the head of the race and falling, dragged the race down with him. The Last Adam stood as the Head of the new race, and being victorious, lifted that race with Him."

2ND THE ADVERSARY WAS SATAN. Christ met the Devil, that Dragon and slanderous fallen Lucifer, the father of sin, lies, murder, death and hell. The very powerful King of Darkness.

3RD THE ACCOUNT IS CHRIST'S PERSONAL AND PRIVATE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT. It is so special because only He was there. The fact that we have it speaks to His personal desire that we have it to help us as we face the same adversary. May we likewise conquer in His power! From the manger to the Tomb the Holy Spirit empowered Him to do the will of God. All Jesus did was through the Spirit. Christ accomplished a life of devoted obedience in the power of the Spirit. **WHAT HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH YOU?** The Holy Spirit asks: Have

² Swindoll, *Sensuality*, p. 4.

³ Morgan, *Crises of the Christ*.

you met Him? Identified with Him? Been approved by Him?
Accomplished His plan?

THE ATTACK WAS TEMPTATION TO SIN. In the Gospels we have Satan tempting Christ. The 40 days were filled with a spiritual struggle. The climax of Satan's attack is given in Matthew and Luke 4. In Matthew 4 we have the chronological order.

- I. Physical Attack: Stones to bread was literally Satan saying will you fulfil your legitimate desires in an illegitimate way. Therefore Christ shows us we need to totally depend on GOD'S PROVISION.
 - A. CHRIST'S APPETITES WERE TARGETED, HIS HUMAN DESIRE TO ENJOY (Mt. 4:2-4; Luke. 4:2-4; I John 2:16 'lust flesh').
 1. In the Bread into stones temptation Satan attacks Christ at the point of submission to the will of God. Would Christ submit and obey the Father at all costs or not.
 2. This attack was the temptation to satisfy a legitimate desire by illegitimate means. This is the whole realm of sensual things, drugs, and alcohol. Trying to get what only God can give. Filling that God shaped vacuum in our lives with pleasure over worship.
 3. Therefore Christ shows us we need to totally depend on GOD'S PROVISION.
 - B. Christ's ANSWER: Deuteronomy 8:3 "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every [word] that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. (NKJV)
- II. Mental Attack: Cast self down was literally Satan saying will you produce spiritual results in an unspiritual way. Therefore Christ shows us we need to totally depend on GOD'S TIMING.
 - A. CHRIST'S AMBITIONS WERE TARGETED, HIS HUMAN DESIRE TO ACHIEVE Mt. 4:5-6; Luke. 4:9-11; I John 2:16 'pride of life'.
 1. In the jump temptation the Devil was attacking Christ and His reliance upon God and His timing.

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- Stunts, dazzling displays and presumption are all contrary to God's plan.
2. This attack was according to J. Oswald Sanders the temptation to produce spiritual results in an unspiritual way. This is the whole realm of rivalry, externalism, pride, haughtiness and self-reliance.
- B. THE ANSWER: Deuteronomy 6: 16 You must not provoke him and try his patience as you did when you complained against him at Massah. Therefore Christ shows us we need to totally depend on GOD'S TIMING.
- III. Spiritual Attack: Bow down was literally Satan saying will you obtain lawful heritage unlawfully. Therefore Christ shows us we need to totally depend on GOD'S METHOD.
- A. CHRIST'S VALUES WERE TARGETED, HIS HUMAN THE DESIRE TO OBTAIN Matthew 4: 8-11; Luke 4: 5-7; I John 2: 16 'lust of eyes' In the bow down temptation the Devil was offering the possibility of Christ circumventing the Cross and Calvary.
1. This was the escape pain and suffering route. Again this was the temptation to obtain a godly heritage in an ungodly way!
 2. This is the whole realm of materialism, greed, possessiveness, trust in riches and worldliness.
- B. THE ANSWER: Deuteronomy 6: 13 "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. (NKJV). Therefore Christ shows us we need to totally depend on GOD'S METHOD.

THE PERFECT ANSWER OF CHRIST TO TEMPTATION

- ✓ **His answer was Simple**: Christ used a simple method when facing temptation: His response was not clever, novel or sophisticated. Even a child could understand exactly what He said.
- ✓ **His answer was Scriptural**: Christ used a scriptural method when facing temptation: For each temptation He had discovered an appropriate Scripture. For each temptation He quoted an appropriate Scripture.
- ✓ **His answer was Successful**: In relation to Christ = TOTAL TRIUMPH He is absolutely seen as pure and empowered by the

Spirit. He goes on in ministry enables and strengthened. In relation to Satan = TOTAL DEFEAT he is absolutely exposed as being in line for his final defeat and destruction in the lake of fire forever. In relation to Believers = TOTAL ASSURANCE because x met and conquered Satan, through Jesus we are more than conquerors. No temptation but God is able to give us an exit!

What was the path to victory? Quote Scripture like Jesus! Use the Word (that's what Christ did). He planned and prepared. Note the 1st word Christ spoke "Man shall not..." this is an insight into the most powerful truth in this passage: JESUS MET AND MASTERED SATAN AS A MAN! He did not face him as God's Son that would not have been a match. Jesus met Satan with the same two, and the only two resources we have – the Word of God and the Spirit of God. If the Word of God is hidden in our hearts we will say with the Psalmist (119:9-11) how can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You! (NKJV)

So Jesus did not zap Satan with His deity, He flattened him with totally obedient humanity. Now we know Jesus had no evil desires Satan could attach to (John 14:30) "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. NKJV. But the real battleground of the devil is our will. Jesus had already proclaimed His life's direction as DOING THE WILL OF God and not his own (Hebrews 10:7, 9) Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.' " then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. NKJV. Doing God's will is another way of saying Walk in the Spirit.

Jonathan Edwards, one of the great preachers of early American history, once made this resolution: "*Resolved*, Never to do any thing, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."