

Temptations of Jesus—Bow the Knee

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Matt. 4:1, 8-11 We've been looking at the temptations of Jesus.

I want you to notice the 3 ways that Satan tempted Him.

1st temptation—to not trust God

2nd temptation—to have false trust in God.

Today we'll look at the 3rd temptation—to trust Satan instead of God.

A mother asked her son how Jesus got rid of the devil when He was tempted. The boy said, "He told the devil all His memory verses!" It's true, we've got to know God's Word if we're going to overcome Satan and his temptations.

Matt. 4:8-9 says, 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 will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."

Some of you may remember the old TV Show called, "Let's Make a Deal." The host, Monty Hall, would give a person in the audience some cash. Then he would say, "You can keep it, or trade it in for whatever is behind door #1, door #2, or door #3. Usually there would be either a really great prize or something worthless behind the door. The contestants would give up what they had, thinking they could get something much better.

After Jesus overcame the first two temptations, Satan says to Him, "Okay, let's make a deal. You give me what I want, and I'll give you what you want. I'll even show you what's behind door #3." So the devil takes Jesus to a very high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world—and their glory.

Think about it—you can't see every nation on earth from the peak of any mountaintop. You also can't see those nation's treasuries. The only way the devil could have done this is by playing a movie in Jesus' mind. Luke 4:5 adds that he showed Him all the kingdoms "in a moment of time," so this must have been an overwhelming and impressive experience.

In a split second, Jesus saw all the kings of the earth and their thrones. He saw their palaces, and their crowns, and the gold and precious jewels in their treasuries. He saw all of the cities in the world, along with all the buildings and multitudes people.

This was the winning lottery ticket. This was the Powerball jackpot of all temptations—the whole enchilada! Luke 4: 6 adds that Satan said, "It has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." He said, "I'll give all the kingdoms of the world to you, if you'll take just a few seconds to worship me."

Psalms 2:8-9 says the Son of God would be given the nations as an inheritance and He will rule them with a rod of iron. Ruling the world was His destiny. Of course, Jesus knew He first had to die on the cross before He could rule the earth. But the devil didn't want Him to go to the cross, so he offered Him a shortcut. If Jesus would fall down and worship Satan, He could inherit the world

without having to be rejected by men, and wouldn't have to experience that horrible death on the cross.

When someone approached a king in those days, they would humble themselves by falling down flat on their face before the king, symbolizing their submission to the king's authority. Remember in the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matt. 18:26, the servant throws himself flat on his face before the king. This is what Satan is asking Jesus to do—to throw Himself down on His face and worship the devil as God! It would only take a few seconds, and in return, Satan promised to give Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

As I said before, you have to think Jesus had to at least consider it for a brief moment. After all, these temptations were Satan's most cunning, deceptive attempts to trick Jesus into sinning. But Jesus didn't yield to the temptation. He knew that Satan is the father of lies and this was a trap.

Satan attacked three different aspects of God.

1st temptation was to doubt the Word of God.

2nd temptation was to presume upon the Will of God.

3rd temptation was to compromise the Worship of God.

Satan used three different tools to tempt Jesus.

1st temptation, he tempted Jesus with a rock.

2nd temptation, he tempted Jesus with Scripture.

3rd temptation, he tempted Jesus through imaginations.

Imaginations are not the same thing as vision. Vision comes from God. Prov. 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." God plants positive pictures in our minds about good things that will happen in the future.

Imaginations are just the opposite. Satan plants negative images in our minds. Imaginations aren't real, but they appear to be real. Just like the devil played a movie on Jesus' mind, he will try to play movies in our minds. And the reason he plays these movies is to get us to react to what we see.

In 1994, three men robbed a store and killed a clerk. All of them had watched the film *Menace II Society* several times and were acting out what they had just seen.

In 1995, a 15-year-old boy watched the movie, *Natural Born Killers* and then murdered his unsuspecting parents. He had acted out what he had just seen in the movie.

In 1998, a woman on a cruise ship off Sweden climbed out on the bow and spread her arms, imitating a scene in the movie *Titanic*. What happened next wasn't in the script. She lost her footing, fell overboard and drowned. Nearly two dozen copycat incidences of people reenacting this movie scene on ships' bows caused the Passenger Vessel Association to issue a "Titanic Alert" to its cruise operators.

It's easy for people to act out what they see on the movie screen. Satan knows this, so he gets out his movie projector and plays different kinds of movies in our minds. He wants us to react to what we see. Here are a few of his flicks:

Angry Movie Do you know people who always angry and upset about everything? They've been watching the "Angry" movie. The devil starts playing a movie in their minds. They have imaginary arguments, even though the other person hasn't actually said a word. And the more they watch, the angrier they get.

One man was driving his car at night and had a flat tire in front of a farm house. He didn't have a jack in his car, but he saw a light on in the house. As he walked toward the house, he said to himself, "That farmer will be mad at me for knocking on his door at night, so he probably won't lend me his jack. I'll offer to rent it for \$5." He walked a little further and got more annoyed. He thought, "Even though I'm stranded on the road, he's not going to want to help me, so I'll offer him \$10 to use his jack."

He walked a little further. The more he thought about the farmer, the more upset he became. "If I wake him up, he's really going to be cranky, so I'll offer him \$20 to use his jack—but not a penny more! This guy is just trying to make money off of me!"

When he knocked on the door, the farmer opened it and said, "Could I help you?" The man said, "Well, if that's the way you feel about it, you can keep your stupid jack!" That's the Angry movie. Is anybody here watching that movie?

Jealousy Movie. Satan played the Jealousy movie on Joseph's brother's minds, and they accused him of things that weren't true. The devil likes to play this movie in the mind of people who are dating. He gets out his projector and plays false scenarios on the screen to send people into a jealous rage.

Fear Movie. The devil plays this movie on people's minds to keep them from fulfilling God's will. Fear stops people from stepping out in faith. Faith makes us strong; fear makes us weak. When we become afraid, we become powerless and the devil can easily manipulate us.

Lust Movie. Many people have dirty minds because they keep watching dirty movies. Matt. 22:37 says to love the Lord your God "with all your mind." A clean mind doesn't permit dirty thoughts. Your mind will clear up if you stop watching the movies.

Pessimist Movie. This is the movie the devil plays on our minds where he points out the negative side of every situation. People who frequently complain and are critical have been watching the pessimist movie. Of course, the devil has edited out all the good parts that bring glory to God.

Worry Movie. Have you ever imagined bad things that might happen to you in the future? That's the Worry movie. Satan gets out his movie projector and starts playing this horror movie in your mind. He'll keep showing you all kinds of diseases and tragedies until you stop the movie and cast down the imaginations.

2 Cor. 10:5 says "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." God instructs us to cast down those imaginary movies in our minds, by commanding the thoughts to leave in Jesus' name. If we will resist the devil, he will leave and will take his movie projector with him.

After showing Jesus the movie, the devil tempted Him to compromise.

Compromise—is when the devil promises to reward us if we will ignore God’s standards. Of course, the only way Satan rewards people is through torment and heartache.

When we compromise, we never win. It’s like the soldier in the Civil War who couldn’t decide whether he wanted to be on the North’s side or the South’s side. So he wore a gray shirt for the Confederates and blue pants for the Yankees. The Yankees shot at his shirt—and the Confederates shot at his pants!

We can’t have it both God’s way and Satan’s way, but that’s what this temptation was. The devil wanted him and Jesus to reach a compromise . . . “Let’s make a deal!”

What would have happened if Jesus had yielded? What if Jesus had done the unthinkable—and bowed down to Satan?

If Jesus would have bowed to Satan:

1. Satan would not have given Him the kingdoms. Jesus said in John 8:44 that Satan is the father of lies and there is no truth in him. He’s a liar and you can’t trust the word of a liar.

In 1891, a man named Desjardins confessed to committing a murder. Shortly after that, he renounced his confession and claimed to be innocent. He went to trial, and Desjardins defended himself by claiming to be a notorious liar. He called dozens of witnesses to the stand who vouched for his bad character and his reputation as a liar. The court found him not guilty because no one could believe a word he said!

The devil is a liar by nature, and would not have fulfilled his promise of giving the kingdoms to Jesus.

2. Satan would have become ruler over Jesus. That’s a horrible thought, isn’t it? 1 John 5:19 says, “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” But Satan only has control of the earth for a little while. If Jesus would have sinned, it would have been for all eternity.

3. Jesus would not be Savior and every person would end up in hell. The only way that Jesus could be our savior is if He was a perfect, sinless sacrifice. The only reason we can get into heaven is because the Father accepts us through the sacrifice of Jesus. If He had sinned, He couldn’t be the sacrifice for our sins. And that means you and I would never have a chance to get into heaven. All of humanity would be destined for hell.

The only chance we had of getting into heaven was hanging on the outcome of these temptations. Aren’t you glad that Jesus overcame the temptations and didn’t yield?

Here is how Jesus responded to the last temptation:

Matt. 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

Whatever you worship, you will also serve! If you look at what anybody is serving, you will also find what they are worshipping. Jesus knew if He worshipped the devil, He would end up serving him for all eternity.

Jesus quoted Deut. 6:13—“You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.” The only one worthy of worship of God alone, and certainly not the arch-enemy of God. So Jesus told the devil to leave, and he went running with his tail between his legs! If we will resist the devil, he will flee from us as well.

How are you doing in identifying temptations and resisting the devil? Let’s follow Jesus’ example and live victoriously!

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