

Lesson 3 – 15 August 2010

Temptations of the King

Lesson Scope: [Matthew 3:13-17](#) chapter 4 and chapter 16:21-24

Lesson Focus

When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, God for the first time voiced His approval of Jesus' earthly life. Immediately following this glorious experience, the Holy Spirit directed Jesus to the wilderness for a severe spiritual battle with Satan.

Behind the scenes a great conflict was raging. Satan was intensely determined to destroy the redemptive work of Christ, which would keep the souls of men in his grip. On the other hand, the Father was preparing His Son for the great work of providing redemption. This experience of temptation filled an important role in Jesus' learning obedience "by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

The threefold temptation Of Jesus, the temptation of Eve in the Garden (Genesis 3), and the description in 1 John 2:15-17 are all similar. Jesus faced temptation on a similar plane as did Adam and Eve—as a man without the fallen nature. The contrast with Adam and Eve lies in Jesus' response.

The account in chapter 16 closely followed Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ and preceded Jesus' transfiguration several days later.

Satan aggressively attacked Christ in his determination to test God's plan of redemption. The victory of our Lord assures us that our victory is possible as we avail ourselves of His grace and follow His example.

Temptation is a real experience in the life of every Christian. Satan uses his agents to deceive the very elect, if possible. It is important to be familiar with his tactics and to learn from the mistakes of others.

More important, however, is to be aware of the One who faced temptation victoriously and to understand the methods He used. Because Christ was without sin, Christians continue to experience victory. Let us emphasize the positive methods Jesus employed and make practical applications how we can do the same and enjoy day-by-day victory. We also see a call of attention to some of the many promises in the Word for every Christian. There is no need for anyone to live in defeat.

Lesson Aim: To glean truths about temptation.

Theme Verse: [2 Corinthians 11:14-15](#). And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Lesson Text

Empowered by the Spirit

[Matthew 3:16-17](#)

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ¹⁷And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Tempted by the Devil

[Matthew 4:1-10](#)

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. ³And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. ⁵Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. ⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Rebuked by Peter

[Matthew 16:21-24](#)

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. ²²Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. ²³But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

²⁴Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Questions for Study

Empowered by the Spirit

1. Why do severe temptations often directly follow rich spiritual experiences?
2. How should the spiritually mature Christian view temptation?

Tempted by the Devil

3. How did Satan use the Scriptures to tempt Christ?
4. Was Satan able to deliver to Christ all the kingdoms of the world?
5. What is really behind all temptation?

Rebuked by Peter

6. What do Jesus' statements of Matthew 16:21 indicate?
7. Why was Peter so adamant in rebuking Jesus?
8. What is involved in self-denial and cross bearing?

Analyzing the Passage

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for the express purpose of being tempted of Satan (Matthew 4:1). Mark 1: 12, 13 and Luke 4:2 indicate that the temptation was ongoing throughout the forty-day span of fasting. Perhaps the three recorded temptations were the climax of this prolonged conflict.

The first temptation appealed to Jesus' physical need of hunger (Matthew 4:1-4). Satan enticed Jesus to consider the physical as top priority. Jesus countered Satan by stating that nurturing the spiritual man is truly most important.

The second temptation appealed to Jesus to presume on God by expecting protection in spite of disobedience. (Matthew 4:5-7). Satan in essence was saying: If You are God's Son, You should prove Your trust in Him.

Satan quoted Psalm 91:11, 12 but omitted the end of verse 11, "to keep thee in all thy ways." (Matthew 4:6). Jesus' reply was a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16. He was declaring that for Him to do as Satan suggested would be to tempt God.

The third temptation appealed to Jesus to acquire the kingdoms of the world without enduring the shame of the cross. Jesus' answer indicated that to worship Satan would be to become his servant. Satan really did not have the ability to deliver what he claimed. Daniel 4:17 states: "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

In Matthew 16:22 the thought of a Messiah who would die was repulsive to Peter. Offence (Matthew 16:23) is "a snare or cause of displeasure." Savourest (Matthew 16:23) suggests holding an opinion.

Principles and Applications

Empowered by the Spirit

1. Living under the power and blessing of God is essential to face temptation victoriously (Matthew 3:16-17). The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit provides power to overcome temptation. This power is indispensable in the life of the Christian.
2. Satan's most fiery attacks may follow a rich spiritual experience (Matthew 4:1). Satan sees a mountaintop experience as a time to catch the Christian off-guard. It is important to be continually diligent, always resisting Satan's efforts. We must be especially on guard when things seem to be going well.
3. Temptation itself is not sin (Matthew 4: 1). Christians are admonished to resist the devil. Even though temptation does not constitute sin, we must cultivate a serious outlook toward temptation. It is always wrong to deliberately place ourselves in the way of temptation or to follow the suggestions of Satan.
4. Satan often tempts men in their weakest moments (Matthew 4:2). Jesus had fasted for forty days. He was in a weakened physical condition. At such times the devil's offers may appeal as a way of satisfaction. We must especially be on guard in our weak moments.

Tempted by the Devil

5. Satisfying legitimate desires in a wrong way is sin (Matthew 4:3). Man's desires are God-given. God has also given direction how these desires can be lawfully satisfied. Motives and methods outside this direction con-

stitute sin.

6. Questioning God's Word is a much-used tactic of the tempter (Matthew 4:3). Satan began using this method with Eve in the Garden when he asked, "Yea, hash God said'?" Statements such as "It only matters what is in the heart" or "The veiling was just for Paul's day" indicate that Satan still is questioning God's Word. Let us be on guard lest we be overcome of the tempter and begin to doubt God's Word.

7. Properly applying God's Word is a key to victory (Matthew 4:4-7, 10). The "sword of the Spirit" is the Christian's only offensive weapon. Its precepts and principles help us discern right and wrong. Its warnings reveal the enemy's tactics. Its promises reveal the source of strength and courage.

8. Satan often uses Scripture out of context to break down the Christian's defenses (Matthew 4:6). Wrestling and misapplying Scripture often results in false doctrine and can lead to many strange beliefs. Let us be sensitive to consistent Scriptural applications by the direction of the Holy Spirit and a spiritual brotherhood.

9. The Christian overcomes temptation by maintaining a strong allegiance to the Lord (4:10). Peer pressure or pressure to accommodate worldly practices may never dictate the Christian's life. Keeping one's love for the Lord foremost will be a strong deterrent against the wiles of the devil.

Rebuked by Peter

10. God fortifies the Christian to face temptation by warning of danger and suffering (Matthew 16:21). Christ never promised His followers an easy life. True Christians have never enjoyed majority support. Consistent living always brings a certain disdain and reproach from those who do not share the same commitment. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed:'

11. To overcome, we must reject human reasoning and embrace the way of the cross (1 Matthew 6:22-24). Worldly wisdom and Scriptural cross hearing have never been compatible and never will be. The flesh naturally cries out to be satisfied and to be allowed to express itself. The spiritual man, however, overcomes the sinful nature by denying self through the power of God. This brings victory over temptation.

Important Teachings

1. Living under the power and blessing of God is essential to face temptation victoriously (Matthew 3:16-17).

2. Satan's most fiery attacks may follow a rich spiritual experience (Mat-

thew 4:1).

3. Temptation itself is not sin (Matthew 4:1).
4. Satan often tempts men in their weakest moments (Matthew 4:2).
5. Satisfying legitimate desires in a wrong way is sin (Matthew 4:3).
6. Questioning God's Word is a much-used tactic of the tempter (Matthew 4:3).
7. Properly applying God's Word is a key to victory (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).
8. Satan often uses Scripture out of context to break down the Christian's defenses (Matthew 4:6).
9. The Christian overcomes temptation by maintaining a strong allegiance to the Lord (Matthew 4:10).
10. God fortifies the Christian to face temptation by warning of danger and suffering (Matthew 16:21).
11. To overcome, we must reject human reasoning and embrace the way of the cross (Matthew 16:22-24).
12. We overcome temptation by exercising sincere trust in the Father (Matthew 4:6-7).
13. Satan brazenly promises the crown without the cross (Matthew 4:8-9).
14. God ministers to our needs in times of temptation (Matthew 4:11).

Answers to Questions

1. Why do severe temptations often directly follow rich spiritual experiences?

In a rich spiritual experience, the possibility of temptation and failure may seem far away. Satan uses this illusion to his advantage to take one off-guard. It is therefore imperative that we give speck attention to our spiritual condition at such times.

2. How should the spiritually mature Christian view temptation?

Temptation is an experience common to man (1 Corinthians 10:13) Temptation is not sin. Temptation is to be feared lest we should yield. Temptation is to be faced victoriously because Christ was victorious

3. How did Satan use the Scriptures to tempt Christ?

Satan used Scripture out of context to make it appear to be saying that God would keep Christ regardless of how reckless He would be

4. Was Satan able to deliver to Christ all the kingdoms of the world?

No. Even though Satan to some degree has control of those who are in command of the kingdoms of this world, he has restriction Daniel 4:17

states, "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Satan has only the limited contra that God allows him.

5. What is really behind all temptation?

Satan desires the worship of man (Matthew 4:9). When man yields to temptation, he is in essence acknowledging Satan as his god instead of the God of heaven.

6. What do Jesus statements of Matthew 16.21 indicate?

Jesus indicates that He was about to give Himself to those who desired to destroy Him. He also indicated that God's plan of redemption was about to be fulfilled.

7. Why was Peter so adamant in rebuking Jesus?

Jesus' statements about dying did not fit with Peter's idea of Jesus as Saviour. Peter was not ready, at this point, to identify with one who would die, especially as Jesus had described.

8. What is involved in self-denial and cross hearing?

This involves a daily self-crucifixion. Everything self desires is contrary to God's will and Word must be renounced. The praise of God must be loved more than the praise of men. There must be practical, daily expressions of living as strangers and pilgrims. In short, one must desire all of his life to bring glory to God.

Summarizing the Lesson

Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He used the sword of the Spirit to overcome Satan. As Jesus was victorious, He provided victory for His followers. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12: 11).

Research Guide

1. In *Doctrines of the Bible*, read and study "Why Souls Are Taken Captive" on pages 214, 215 and "Temptation" on page 221.
2. Read and study Genesis 3:1-13 and 1 John 2:15-17.
3. Read and study parallel passages in Luke 3:21, 22; 4:1-13; Mark 8:31-35.