

Satan

The Temptations of Satan on The Lord - Part 4

The Confrontational Character of The Temptations The Temptation to Make the Stones Bread (Matt. 4:2-4)

Matthew and Luke change the order. Mark does not deal with the temptations but records that the Lord was in the wilderness with the wild beasts (Mk. 1:13). Apparently it was written that there were times in the life of the Lord when He was afraid. This is error, the Lord was never afraid? Does anyone really think He was afraid when He walked on the waters, or when He spoke at Lazarus' grave in case it did not work, or when He slept in the wilderness with the wild beast? Perfect love casted out fear and because He trusted in God and knew the purpose He had been sent into the world for, therefore no wild beast could devour or injure Him? The Lord knew full well the words of Psalm 4:8, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety".

Temptation is much harder to resist when one is in need. When Satan came with the first temptation of the triad, it was when He was alone. No human eye was watching Him but the eyes of His Father, and I expect celestial hosts as well as the government of his infernal majesty were observing every response no matter how little. The Lord had eaten nothing for almost six weeks, and as anyone knows who has long fasted, after an extended time without food the body is weak as is the mind. This is in contrast to Adam who had an unlimited supply of the best foods God could supply. It is plainly recorded, "He afterward hungered" (Lk. 4:2). (There are only two references to the Lord being hungry, Lk. 4:2; Matt. 21:18). Thus, the Lord being hungry was an ideal opportunity for Satan to tempt Him to ease His hunger. On the surface, the suggestion to make the stones bread seemed a very intelligent thing to do. The Lord saw a deeper motive for this "suggestion".

This was an attempt to cast a shadow on the character of God.

- a) The devil was seeking to question the love and truthfulness of God. If the Lord really was the Son of the Father, would a loving Father deprive his child of physical nourishment. The fact is nutrition is not a sin, for the Lord made the trees of the garden "good for food", and the Lord told a parable about a son asking a father for a fish etc. There is nothing wrong with caring for and nourishing the body, the sin would have been in acting out of the will of God.
- b) The heavens had been opened some six weeks before and God had declared that Christ was His Beloved Son, but words are cheap. If Christ really was the Beloved Son did this seem right? Where was the loving care? Was God not doing the same as in Eden, not giving all they could have had, for they were not allowed to eat of the tree of knowledge!
- c) Again, the Lord had the ability to do this and is it reasonable of God to give the ability to do something if it was not to be used for self preservation? The Lord saw deeper.
- d) The Lord saw this as an attempt to split the Godhead, and if that fellowship could be broken then the purposes of God would be nullified forever. If Christ had yielded to the tempter's voice of rationale and acting on it instead to the voice of God. Had that occurred, all hope of redemption and His glorification would be eternally gone. There would have been no need for any other temptations.
- e) How did the Lord then respond in this temptation and confrontation?
 - i) He did not debate with Satan concerning His deity or mock him for being so foolish as to try to make Him question that fact.
 - ii) He did not debate about the character of God or the question of His love.
 - iii) He did emphasize to Satan that life did not depend on the natural foods for sustaining, it depended on God. How easily the Lord could have reminded Satan that Moses went for forty days and nights without food or water (Ex. 34:28). Elijah went on the sustenance of a single meal for forty

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- days and nights (1 Kgs. 19:8). Neither of them died because as long as God had a work for them to do, He would sustain them. God had a work for the Lord to do.
- iv) In the Lord's response there is seen His devotion to God. He would not be turned aside by hunger. That which stopped this temptation was Satan knowing that when the Lord said "No", that was the end of all arguing. We often simply mean, "Not yet".
 - v) He used the truths of the scriptures as a sword against Satan.
 - vi) His will was to do the will of God (Jn. 4:34; 6:38; Heb. 10:7, 9).

The Temptation For The Lord To Cast Himself Down (Matt. 4:5-7)

Satan now takes the Lord to the Holy City and to the pinnacle of the temple. Just as fashion and romance is a characteristic of Paris and beautiful mountains and ocean characterize Vancouver B.C., so holiness was ideally the characteristic of Jerusalem. The Lord was then accompanied to the pinnacle which apparently was referred to as Herod's royal portico, a lookout having a sheer drop of 450 feet.

This was a brilliant rouse on at least three avenues:

- a) Do a great exploit which men shall marvel at.
- b) A subtle attempt to cause the death of the Lord before His work was done.
- c) "Put pressure on God" to act because of a presumptuous activity.

Humanity has the yearning to be recognized for that which they do. Some are known for great exploits and without them, their names would never have been known. Without great victories, who would ever have heard of Lord Nelson, Alexander the Great, Columbus or Magellan? This was not the only time Satan tried this tactic, for later he will have the brethren say, "Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world" (Jn. 7:3-4). Again, "Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country" (Lk. 4:23).

The Lord had responded to the first temptation with, "It is written" (Matt. 4:4). Satan took that expression and used it saying, "For it is written" (Lk. 4:10), so using the scriptures to support his suggestion.

How does the Lord respond?

- a) He does not point out to Satan that he is misusing the scriptures by taking them out of context. Neither does He remind Satan that in a short time He will fulfill the greatest exploit eternity will ever know. He will do it to the delight of the Father. That exploit will be to "destroy him that had the power of death" (Heb. 2:14); "destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8); to judge the prince of this world (Jn. 16:11); "to take away our sins" (1 Jn. 3:5); and He will do this by his mighty resurrection.
- b) Of course the evil one would want to intimate that this was an activity of faith, depending on God for life. The Lord will manifest to Satan and his entire government that He depends on God for life, for He will enter death's domain and depend on God, putting His faith in God to bring Him back from the dead. He will say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46) and then give up His spirit. To this temptation the reply is, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7; Lk. 4:12).

The Temptation to Receive the Kingdoms of the World if He Worshipped Satan (Matt. 4:8-10)

There is a difference between Matthew and Luke regarding this temptation. In Matthew the devil says, "Fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9), but in Luke it is, "Worship me" (Lk. 4:7). The wording is interesting for in the Gospel where Christ is presented as King, Satan wants Him to renounce His kingship and fall down and worship him, and in Luke he wants the perfect man under God to worship him.

Satan ignores but knows God's time and way to give the Lord universal dominion seeks to present to the Lord an "easier" way to receive it all, by worshipping him. There is no quoting, "The LORD hath said unto me Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy

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possession” (Psa. 2:7-8). Nor does He remind Satan of the words of Daniel, “One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days . . . and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13-14). The Lord does not answer, nor does He debate Satan on how he got control or his rights over them. Such things are irrelevant at this time.

Man yearns for authority and the prestige that this world offers, and Satan never offers such for nothing. The Lord later, in His ministry, put things and a purposeful human life in perspective when He says, “If he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul” (Matt. 16:26, Mk. 8:36). In that context the soul is the life, fulfilling the purpose for which God made man. The wealthiest persons in the world are as homeless vagabonds when living without Christ and God’s purpose for their lives.

. . . To be continued

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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