

A DEVIL OF A DEAL

The devil makes sin so appealing! It is made to look good! It is made to feel good! It strokes the ego! The devil has a strategy – what the Bible calls “the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). We see how he works in how he tried his best to bring down Christ.

Matthew 4:8 (NKJV)

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

How and where this happened, we are not told. The devil is a “supernatural being,” and for His sovereign purposes, as seen in verse 1, God allowed this to take place.

Somehow supernaturally from this HIGH vantage point, the devil was able to SHOW Christ all the glory of all the kingdoms of the world in one gigantic panoramic view. It was impressive to behold! This appealed to the lust of the eyes.

Temptation through the Eye-gate

Gen. 3:6 – “pleasant to the eyes”

Matt. 4:8 – “showed Him all the kingdoms”

1 Jn. 2:16 – “lust of the eyes”

The great “Messianic prize” (if you will) is the nations of the world which God had already promised to His Son in due time (cf. Num. 25:15-19; Ps. 2:7-8; Dan. 7:13-14).

Psalm 2:7–8 (NKJV)

7 “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

8 Ask of Me, and **I will give You The nations** for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

Revelation 11:15 (NKJV)

15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “**The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!**”

But here Satan was promising the glory of all these kingdoms to Christ right then – prior to the cross – without the cross - without anymore waiting. Just one condition...

Matthew 4:9 (NKJV)

9 And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

Footnote: Satan is called “the ruler of this world” (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4); who has the whole world under his sway (1 Jn. 5:19; also see Eph. 2:2; Dan. 10:13). Jesus did not contest this. However, he is really a usurper whom because of the fall God has allowed to rule in a very limited capacity for a limited time only.

God ever remains SOVEREIGN over all ruling in the kingdom of men (cf. Dan. 4:17). God gave the dominion to mankind, but mankind lost it to Satan in the fall. We need a HUMAN being to take it back! In Rev. 5 John wept because no one was found worthy. But then John was told not to weep, because the LION of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has prevailed. That’s Jesus, the GREAT representative of mankind, and in the judgments seen in the book of Revelation He is about to take the world back for mankind from Satan!

But here was Satan offering it to Jesus on the simple condition that Jesus fall down and worship him. This is really the ultimate thing and Satan wanted it. Satan as a fallen being has always wanted what ONLY belongs to God. He has always wanted to be in the position of God (cf. Isa.14:12-15). The ultimate issue is about LORDSHIP – about WORSHIP! Jesus is Lord but Satan wanted Jesus to worship him as Lord! He wanted the top position which belongs to God and God alone!

Satan tempts with immediate gratification whereas God promises those who humble themselves under His mighty hand that He will exalt them in due time (cf. 1 Pet. 5:6). Satan tempted Christ with instant food, instant fame, and instant fortune – but at what price? The devil offers “short cuts” but with long term consequences. Satan is a deceiver and a liar! He promises the glory of the world, but then those who follow him are given eternal HELL! That is a “devil of a deal”.

Matthew 4:10 (NKJV)

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ”

This was the climactic clash in this spiritual challenge, which ended with Jesus commanding Satan to go away, which he did as seen in verse 11. The name Satan means “**adversary**”. In the surrounding context note three titles for the devil.

v. 1 **Devil** – “Slanderer”

v. 3 **The Tempter** -“Entices to do evil”

v. 10 **Satan** – “Adversary”

Satan is really not on your side. He desires nothing but BAD for you. It’s what is in his future and misery loves company – he wants people to join him in his ego-war against God.

Here yet again Jesus quoted what is written in the OT as He applied Deut. 6:13 to the situation. Note Jesus tied worship to service. What you worship is what you serve as the one involves the other. Worship is only to be rendered to God and not to any other!

Note how Jesus in His humanity battled the devil. On all three occasions He referenced the Word of God as the ultimate authority which is the final argument against any and all temptations. We cannot improve on this! In our battle with Satanic temptation standing on the Word is the KEY to victory.

The KEY to spiritual warfare

v. 4 “It is written...”

v. 7 “It is written...”

v. 10 “For it is written...”

“Jesus repulsed the mightiest blows of Satan not by a thunderbolt from heaven, but by the written Word of God employed in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, a means available to every Christian.”

– Wycliffe Bible Commentary

The word is POWERFUL, and Satan cannot stand against it. He must yield to the Word. If you are in a temptation battle, there is no greater weapon than resolutely quoting Scripture, meaning you are not just mouthing words, but taking your stand on them. Quoting them must be your confession of faith. This is powerful!

In the midst of temptation, our recourse is the Word of God. But we can only benefit from this weapon to the degree that we know the Word. This is why it is so important to hide God's Word in our hearts. When we are under siege in spiritual warfare, if we know God's Word, we can depend on the Holy Spirit to bring to mind what is needed when it is needed. The more of the Word you have in your heart, the more equipped you are.

Matthew 4:11 (NKJV)

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

The devil gave it his best shot but he came up empty with Jesus because Jesus gave Him the Word against which he was defenseless. Truth triumphed over deceptive temptation. And so, at the command of Christ (showing who really was Lord) the devil left him. However, Luke 4:13 notes it was only "until an opportune time."

And then the angels came and ministered to Him. Exactly how they ministered we are not told, but the word "minister" can mean "to serve as a table-waiter" and therefore many commentators think the angels at this time came and ministered food to Jesus.

What can we learn and apply from this section in the area of temptation? As Christians, we all wrestle with being tempted.

First, it is good to know that when the devil comes knocking at your door he usually doesn't tap lightly. Temptations tend to come in waves rather than drips. This is what Paul meant when he spoke of having on the full armor so that you can "withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13). The evil day is when Satan throws everything he's got at you.

Second, in spiritual warfare, prayer is very important. Fasting and prayer denote concentrated focus on God, which is key to walking in victory.

And finally, Jesus shows us HOW to resist the devil in such a way that he will flee. The devil is powerless against those who resist Him with the Word! Want to resist successfully? Learn the Word! Saturate your soul with the Word! Memorize the Word! Meditate on the Word! Be a walking Bible! Live the Word, and the devil will never have his way with you.

James 4:7 (NKJV)

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

You submit to God by submitting to the Word – that’s what Jesus did. You resist the devil by resisting him with the Word – that’s what Jesus did!

Whatever the world throws at you, respond with “It is written.” Whatever the flesh throws at you, respond with “It is written.” Whatever the devil throws at you, respond with “It is written.” This is what Jesus did, and it cannot be improved upon!

All the forces of HELL cannot stand against what God has written. “It is written” shall stand forever! God help us to faithfully stand on what is WRITTEN!