

Satan's Steps To Temptation

Matt 4:1-11; 1 Jn 2:2-17

Introduction:

- A. Satan's rebellion is a challenge to the authority of God. It challenges God's right to rule over His creation. It challenges God's right to be obeyed. It challenges God's right to be believed.
- B. Throughout the unfolding of human history Satan has continued to perpetuate his lie. The lie that he has the right to rule. The lie that he has the right to be obeyed. The lie that he has the right to be believed.
- C. Ultimately the issue has to be settled, man cannot serve two masters (although he tried). Two cannot sit on the throne at the same time. Two cannot have authority in the same sphere. Two divergent views cannot both be true at the same time. Two cannot claim to have the right to be worshipped at the same time.
- D. Satan recognized that he was a created being and that God was Eternal, possessed of uncreated life. He understood that he would have to acknowledge that God is creator. But he sought to delay this direct confrontation. In the economy of God the time comes when the battle cannot longer be postpone; when the conflict must be settled. So Satan went "too and fro throughout the earth" until that time should come. Matthew 4:1-11 records that day of confrontation.

I. *Christ's Temptation - The First Test Was His Relationship To God – Matt 4:1-4*

- A. The subtle temptation which Satan put before Jesus was the temptation to depart from the will of God.
 - 1. Jesus, in the wilderness, was being sustained by His obedience to the Spirit of God; the physical hunger that He endured was part of God's will for Him.
 - 2. The hunger was part of God's design.
 - a. Had Jesus exercised and independent power to meet His present needs, it would have been disobedience to the will of God.

- b. Satan's suggestion is that Sonship permits independence from God.
 - (1). Meet your own need without thinking about what God wants.
 - (2). The first thing then that Satan wanted Christ to do was to disobey and depart from the pace of perfect obedience to the will of God.
- B. Obedience is what God want of us.
 - 1. He has a plan for us and His plan is made known through the Word.
 - 2. God has revealed it with remarkable clarity so that one who turns to the Scriptures can know step-by-step what God has for him, what God expects of him and what God's will is for him.
- C. Some believe that the Sonship which we have because of Jesus Christ gives us the right to sit in judgment upon the will of God, to decide whether we will submit to the will or God or not, to continue on our own way if it pleases us and ignore the commands of the Scriptures when it suits us, in other words, to do as we please.
 - 1. Satan comes with subtle suggestions that, since you are a son because of your faith in Christ Jesus, you don't have to do what He says.
 - 2. Satan's first temptation to Christ was to depart from the will of God and to listen to him instead.
 - a. This is Satan's first great desire for you.
 - b. That you should ignore the will and God and become an independent thinker, separate and apart from God's Word

II. *The Temptation To Doubt – Matt. 4:5-6*

- A. Satan took Christ "into the Holy City" (Jerusalem) and set him on a pinnacle of the temple.
 - 1. The city of Jerusalem was built on tip of a hill, and around the city was thick, high wall built for protection. The corner of Solomon's Temple was some 400-700 feet above the floor of the Kidron valley.
 - 2. Jesus was placed there by Satan.

3. Satan directed His gaze downward into the valley some 400 feet below and said to Christ “I want to see how much confidence you have in your God. You’re the Son of God, cast yourself down, for it is written “He shall give his angels charge over You and in their hands they shall bear You up lest you dash Your foot against a stone.”
- B. This sounded quite reasonable and logical.
1. Behind this was the subtle temptation to doubt the Word of God.
 - a. “It is written” - even Satan knows how to quote scripture
 - b. The promise that Satan quoted, however, were only to those who were obedient to God’s will, those who were walking according to the Word of God
 2. For Jesus to put God to the test was to say that He would not accept the fact simply because God said it, but only if He demonstrated it for Himself.
 3. When God has made a statement and we put it to a test, we say in effect that we don’t believe God.
 - a. An individual who puts God’s Word to the test is saying that he won’t believe Him until He does something to prove Himself.
 - b. That is exactly what Satan wants you to do.
 - c. You are succumbing to Satan’s second test in which Satan’s desire is to lead you to doubt the Word of God.

III. *Worship Me – Matt 4:8*

- A. When Christ did not succumb to Satan’s second temptation, he put a third one before Him.
1. Authority over the earth was deposited by God in the hands of Adam, and when Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan’s temptation they surrendered the scepter that God had given them into the hand of Satan and Satan became the ruler of this world.
 2. Satan has existed as a usurping ruler from the time of Adam’s fall to the present time.

3. It was God's purpose that he would wrest that scepter from Satan and restore it to Christ, the Son of Man, Who is also King of Kings and Lord of Lords - Psa 8:1-9; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16
- B. The subtlety of this temptation was that the one who has the right to be worshipped also has the right to be obeyed. If Jesus Christ should give Satan one act of worship, reasonably and logically He must obey the one whose right to receive worship he has just acknowledged.
1. This is what Satan wants from you and me - Rom 6:16-17
- C. The world has walked in disobedience.
1. The world by submitting to Satan's authority has echoed Satan's claim that God ought to be deposed and that Satan ought to be enthroned.
 2. It was not until Jesus Christ came into this world that there was one who obeyed the will of God perfectly.

IV. *The Ultimate Mind Game* - 1 Pet 5:8

- A. 1 John 2:15-17
1. The avenue through which Satan assaults the spirit of each individual.
 2. There are ONLY THREE.
- B. When Satan comes to tempt an individual he will appeal to one of these three basic characteristics of our human nature.
1. It's carnal capacity
 2. It's self-interest
 3. Or it's pride
- C. Satan plants a seed in the mind that then germinates that seed so that affection for that this is produced since what a man loves ultimately he will serve - Matt 6:24
- D. This process may be spread over an extensive period of time.
1. The seed may be planted and then left over a long period until a man eventually come to love what Satan has propose and then finally obeys Satan's bidding.
- E. In the wilderness temptations Christ used the Word of God to resist Satan's attacks.

1. In the area of appeal to the Lust of the flesh, Jesus replied “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” – Matt. 4:4
 2. To Satan’s appeal to pride Jesus said: “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.” – Matt 4:7
 3. In the final temptation He met it with it with: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve”. – Matt 4:10
- F. Many go down in defeat, not because of lack of respect the Word of God, but because we don’t know what is in the pages of God’s Word and we are unable to apply the specific word to a given situation.

Conclusion:

- A. Keep our hearts and minds in the word. Remember, when we yield to Satan He becomes the Lord of our lives and the longer we yield to Satan the stronger His hold on us can become.
- B. James 4:7