

The Temptation of the Messiah, Part 2

Scripture: Luke 4:9-13

Code: 42-51

We return at this time to our study of the gospel of Luke and chapter 4, the first 13 verses, together. As I progressed through the study of Luke, having in the past years spent many, many, many weeks going through the gospel of Matthew, in fact it took us about eight and a half years to get through Matthew, it took us about three years to get through the gospel of John, I suppose if we added all the years together, including the writing of the commentaries, probably 20 years of my life I have spent studying the gospels. And I've come to a conclusion that the person of Jesus Christ is probably the single greatest evidence of the inspiration of Scripture.

When people talk about...how do we know the Bible is true?...they might say, "Fulfilled prophecy," where there are things predicted in the Bible that did come to pass exactly as they were predicted. Somebody else might say "because of its historical accuracy." That is the Bible says certain things happened, then we find from archeological discovery that they happened exactly as the Bible records them. Others might say, "It's scientific accuracy in a non-scientific world." For example, the oldest book in the Bible, Job, written in the patriarchal period says, "He hangs the world on nothing." And so some would say the great evidence of the veracity of Scripture is "Its scientific accuracy in a non-scientific age." And there might be some other suggestions as well...its miraculous element, etc.

But I think the most compelling thing about Scripture is the person of Jesus Christ. Every character devised by the human mind is somehow flawed. Somehow every thing we touch comes out like us to one degree or another. It is beyond possibility that mankind could invent a person like Jesus Christ as He is portrayed on the pages of Scripture.

His person is so perfect. His wisdom is so profound. His response to every single event so perfectly consistent with divine nature that it is inconceivable that a man or men could invent Jesus Christ. Far less possible that demons should invent Him and pull some monumental deception on the human race in the form of Scripture. Jesus Christ as a person is so compelling, so profound, so perfect as to be beyond the possibility of human invention.

His perfection shows up everywhere. We've seen it again and again and again in every point in the gospel of Luke. And we come now to the section on the temptation where His perfection reaches a new level, as He engages Himself in conflict with His archenemy, the enemy of God Himself, the fallen anointed cherub by the name of Lucifer who has become the devil and Satan and who engages in conflict with Jesus with the purpose of destroying Him. Jesus having initiated that conflict with the

purpose of validating His Sonship. And here we see the majesty of Jesus Christ again and we have a long way to go in the gospel of Luke, all the way through the twenty-fourth chapter, although there are more chapters in Matthew, there are more words in Luke. Here is the long treatment of the character of Jesus Christ and by the time we get to chapter 24, should the Lord tarry, you will have seen the majesty of Jesus at every point, at every sermon, in every verse in this gospel. And I trust that as we go you will come to the same conclusion that I come to, that the revelation of Jesus Christ on the pages of Scripture is the most compelling argument for its authenticity.

Now in John Milton's famous *Paradise Regained*, the author expresses the purpose of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and he does so in the following words, as though spoken by God His Father. Milton writes as if God is speaking, "But first I mean to exercise Him in the wilderness. There He shall first lay down the rudiments of His great warfare, ere I send Him forth to conquer sin and death, the two grand foes by humiliation and strong suffering," end quote.

Well, the wisdom of John Milton is obviously legendary and Milton had it right. When he penned those words it was God sending forth His Son for His exercise in the wilderness in which He would defeat the devil and then demonstrate there the power for the great warfare in which He would on the cross conquer sin and at the grave conquer death. If Jesus would triumph in the wilderness, then He would triumph at Calvary and He would triumph in the garden. He would triumph at the cross and triumph at the tomb. And if Jesus could conquer Satan, then we can be assured of that triumph and that there will be paradise regained. And as we are learning from Luke chapter 4, He did triumph in the wilderness and later He triumphed at the cross where He bruised Satan's head with a fatal wound, where He destroyed sin, where He provided escape from hell for all who believe. And then we know He conquered death, rising the third day, now ascended to heaven He continues to conquer all sin and all accusation laid against His people because He ever lives to make intercession for us. So that in His securing love, in His conquering grace we are more than conquerors for whom nothing can ever separate us from His eternal love.

Now His ability to conquer is first demonstrated right here. Oh we understand that for 30 years He was tempted in all points like as we are, but we never had an insight into any of those experiences. Now for the first time we see His conquering power in a most formidable conflict with the enemy and it sets in motion all the rest of His conquerings, at the cross, at the tomb and now in heaven where He conquers by grace and mercy extended toward His own, all sin and all accusations so that we are more than conquerors in His eternal love.

That's not all. In the future He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, returning to earth at which point He will conquer all ungodliness. He will conquer all the ungodly. He will destroy all unredeemed sinners. He will send them to the Lake of Fire. He will send all demons to the Lake of Fire. He will send the beast and the false prophet, the Antichrist and his henchmen to the Lake of Fire. He will send the devil himself to the Lake of Fire. He will then destroy the sin-stained universe.

It will literally go up in an atomic holocaust, the elements will melt with fervent heat and in its place He will recreate a new heaven and a new earth of holiness and righteousness alone which will last forever. That will be His final great conquering of evil.

So you see, what happens here in the temptation is a foretaste of what is to come through all of the great events of the life and ministry of the King, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. We believe that He will conquer in the future because He conquered in the past, and this is where it all began. It's as if the guarantee of His future conquerings was established in the event of His temptation in the wilderness when Satan came and hit him with the full fury of his best assaults. Jesus withstood them all triumphantly.

Let me read this text to you again, it's such a monumental one. "And Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days and when they had ended He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written man shall not live on bread alone.' And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and the devil said to Him, 'I will give You all this domain and its glory for it has been handed over to me and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is written you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.' And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here, for it is written He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You and on their hands they will bear You up lest You strike Your foot against a stone.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is said that you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."

Not only is this proof and a guarantee of Jesus' power, but as I said last time, it is also the evidence that He is in fact the Son of God. You remember that in the prior event to this, which is indicated to us back in chapter 3 verses 21 and 22, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John. And at the time of His baptism, His Father said to Him, verse 22, "Thou art My beloved Son in Thee I am well pleased." God had affirmed Jesus as His Son. Now this is a monumental statement by God. This is not a common statement, this is an uncommon statement. This is absolutely unique. And I have pointed out to you that already Luke has let us know that Jesus is the Son of God. Back, of course, in chapter 1 when the angel Gabriel came to Mary, he said, "The Son whom you will bear you will name Jesus," verse 31. And verse 32, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, the Son of the Almighty God, the Son of God." Verse 35, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God." And then in chapter 2 verse 49, Jesus affirms that He had to be in His Father's house. And then in the baptism, "This is My beloved Son in Thee I am well pleased."

So already we know that this is the Son of God. Now maybe just a little bit of background. Jesus is called the Son of God about 80 times in the New Testament. It is a very common title for Jesus, about 80 times. Fifty-one times in the first three gospels and over 100 times, a total of 151 times in the four gospels, Jesus speaks of God as His Father. So this is a...this is a very, very common expression, Son of God, and Jesus referring to God as His Father.

Now let me just tell you. This is a very remarkable thing. For Jesus to claim to be the Son of God was very remarkable. For Him to call God "My Father," was remarkable. It expresses eternal deity, it expresses sameness of nature as we have told you in the past.

Let me just kind of put it in perspective for you. Two times in the Old Testament, two times in the 39 books of the entire Old Testament, God is directly addressed as Father, that's all, only two times. Fifteen times the term "Father" is used to describe God indirectly. But never is any of those expressions of God as Father made by an individual. Whenever God is referred to as Father, it is as the Father of the nation Israel, never as the Father of an individual. There is no example in existence in Jewish history of anyone addressing God as "My Father" in a personal way. Jesus did it all the time. Jesus had a relationship to God that no one had ever had.

To the Jews, to say "God is my Father," would be to say "I have the same nature as God, I share the same essence as God," just as in the human realm a son shares his father's nature genetically. But constantly did Jesus call God His Father, 151 times such relationship is indicated in the gospels.

And furthermore, Jesus not only called God His Father, but He used the term "Abba" which means papa, or daddy, which is a more intimate, endearing title that has less austerity to it, maybe features rather than respect and honor the intimacy of that relationship. And to the Jews, for anybody to say God was his Father was blasphemy and they accused Jesus of being a blasphemer because when He called God His Father, He was making Himself equal with God. That's exactly what He's doing. And for Him to speak to God as Abba was beyond tolerance. To the Jew, you remember now, the most formidable doctrine in Judaism is the Shema. The most formidable doctrine in Judaism is the Deuteronomy 6, "The Lord our God is one." This is what sets Judaism apart from the polytheism of the world. It is theistic, it is monotheistic and that is what the Jews have always celebrated, that the Lord God is one. And for someone to come along and say, "I am Son of God," would be to the Jew the idea that God was more than one. Unthinkable and blasphemous and yet in John's gospel we read this in the very first verse, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," speaking of Christ. In the fifth chapter of John in verse 23, it says, "In order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

Now this is just beyond imagination. To honor the Son as you honor the Father is to say the Son is equal to the Father is to say Jesus is equal to the one true living God of Israel, and that is outside

their understanding of monotheistic theology. And so it is what set their teeth on edge against Jesus. They could not accept that. And yet Jesus continued to say it over and over, chapter 10 of the gospel of John, verse 30, listen to this, "I and the Father are one." The next statement, "The Jews took up stones again to stone Him."

Why? Because they perceived that as blasphemy. In John 14 Jesus says, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," another of the same kinds of statements. In John chapter 15 verse 22, "If I had not come and spoken to you, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me, hates My Father also." And so it goes. John 17, He says, "Restore Me to the glory I had with You before the world began." And the way the gospel of John comes to its culmination in the twentieth chapter and verse 28 is just as clear as it can be, John 20:28, Thomas said unto Him, to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." And verse 31, "These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you might have life in His name."

Now listen, there is one great reality in the gospel, and that is that Jesus is the Son of God. That is to say He is equal in nature with God. He possesses the same divine nature as God. When He claimed to be the Son of God, the Jews knew exactly what He was claiming, He was claiming to be equal with God and it was for that that they wanted to destroy Him.

Satan tempted Jesus then. He was not questioning whether Jesus was the Son of God. When you read the text in verse 3, "If You are the Son of God," or you read it again down further in verse 9, "If You are the Son of God," I told you last time, that is a first-class conditional with a particle *a* that permits no doubt. It is better translated, "Since." The devil doesn't question whether Jesus is the Son of God, he knows who He is. He knew Him when he was the unfallen Lucifer. He knows him as Satan and the devil. He knows exactly who Jesus is and so do all the demons. And I've told you, there never is an occasion in the Bible when demons ever questioned Jesus as the Son of God. I said last time only liberal theologians do that, demons don't do that, the devil doesn't do that. They know the facts.

The force of the temptations was not to make Jesus doubt His Sonship. It was not to make Jesus prove His Sonship. For us it proves His Sonship. The force of the temptations was to make Jesus step out of His humiliation and act on His own, apart from the will of the Father and the power of the Spirit, therefore putting a breach in the trinity. That was the temptation.

I've said this in past years and I'll say it again. The devil's theology is orthodox. He believes in the trinity. He believes in the deity of Jesus Christ.

And what the devil was trying to do here was not only destroy Jesus, but destroy the trinity by creating rebellion within the trinity. Remember now, the Father sends the Son into the world to humble Himself and condescend. The Son comes, sets aside the independent use of all of His divine

powers. He is still God, He has not diminished, He is still God, God and man at the same time, but He sets aside the independent use of those powers and He literally yields to the work of the Holy Spirit under the will of the Father. And so He functions as a man would function, even though He is the God/Man, He limits His own use of the deity and submits only to what the Spirit does under the will of the Father. What Satan wants to do is get Him to resist the Father's plan and the Spirit's power and grab satisfaction and act on His own, and therefore put a breach in the trinity which would throw the entire universe into chaos. This is not some small thing happening here. This is a battle directed right at the essence, not only of the deity and the perfection of Jesus Christ, but of the unity of the trinity. The force of the temptation then was to rend the trinity, to fracture the trinity, to create rebellion and disobedience and create a breach in the Godhead.

And Satan couldn't do it. And that's encouraging, isn't it? The conflict was critical for the Messiah to prove His deity and it does again prove His deity. He must be able to conquer Satan if He's God. He must be able to conquer temptation if He's God. And He certainly must be able to conquer sin and Satan if He's going to conquer sin and Satan for us. How is He going to rescue sinners from sin and death and hell if He can't defeat Satan Himself?

Well He can, and He did. He must in the words of Hebrews 2:14, "Render powerless him who had the power of death," that is the devil, "and deliver those who were subject to slavery all their lives." Jesus must to deliver us demonstrate power over Satan. He had to conquer him in the wilderness. He had to conquer him at the cross. He had to conquer him at the tomb. And He is still conquering him by ever living to make intercession for us. He will conquer him when He comes back in destruction and casts the devil and all of his demons along with all the ungodly into the Lake of Fire, and then destroys the present universe and recreates the new one. He will conquer him at every turn, and this is where He puts that power on display for the first time. This is a monumental passage of Scripture.

Now I remind you of the preparation for battle, verses 1 and 2. We did this a couple of weeks ago. Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan where He had been baptized by John, was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days. Being tempted by the devil He ate nothing during those days. When they had ended, He became hungry.

Mark 1:12 says, "He was expelled," it's a Greek word *ek ballo*, and the Spirit was purposely sending Him out into the wilderness. It wasn't that He put Himself in a compromising position and Satan came after Him, is that He went after Satan. The Holy Spirit literally cast Him out, literally expelled Him, *ek ballo*, into the wilderness. Mark 1:13 says, "An area of wild beast," that I described for you before. He went into that wilderness. He had 30 years waiting for His ministry to start. He had been announced to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Father had said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It was time to launch his ministry but before He could start the ministry, even after 30 years, He had 40 more days, 40 days of wandering in that God-

forsaken, desolate, Judean wilderness where life cannot survive. And for 40 days He was tempted, it says, for 40 days Satan couldn't succeed because John 14:30 says, "Satan has nothing in Me." There's nothing in Jesus, there's nothing in His nature that can respond to sin. So all the barrage comes and hits the outside and He's impervious to it because of His wondrous impeccability. Now we saw some of those details.

Now the second thing we looked at is the pattern of the battle. Forty days of temptation very clearly were going on. And for 40 days it says, in verse 2, Jesus didn't eat. After the 40 days He became hungry. Now all of a sudden, Jesus has a physical need. For 40 days apparently He wasn't aware that He was hungry. For 40 days He was in this battle against Satan. Satan was hitting Him with all kinds of temptation. We don't have the nature of it revealed to us in Scripture. Jesus defeated it all. He was perfect. He was sinless all through it. But there's a new vulnerability that Satan perceives because Jesus now feels hunger. And so Satan in his subtlety and his deception thinks that because there is now a hunger on the part of Jesus, He can be seduced at this point in maybe ways He prior couldn't be seduced. He's going to feel hunger and hunger is a real experience for a real man, and Jesus is a real man and Satan is going to move in to seduce Jesus to use His divine power inconsistent with His humiliation. To not submit to the Spirit's power, to not submit to the Father's plan but grab some bread on His own, He has the power to make it, He can do it if He wants, just like at the cross. If He wanted to He could call for a legion of angels to deliver Him, as He said. This is the time when Satan wants Him to act independently, and that's how you breach the trinity, that's how you shatter the unity of the trinity, you set the Son against the Father and against the Spirit.

The demons, they know He's the Son of God, as I said, I mean, that isn't even a question. Look down in verse 31, "He came to Capernaum," we'll see this in a bit, city of Galilee, and He was teaching on the Sabbath, they were amazed at His teaching. Verse 33, "There was a man in the synagogue possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon. He cried out with a loud voice, 'Ha, what do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us?' Listen to this, "I know who You are, the holy one of God." Listen, the demons never questioned who He is, never.

Satan didn't question and he was tempting Him as the Son of God. I mean, would he have gone to someone who wasn't the Son of God and asked him to turn stones into bread? No, not at all. The temptation, first of all, was to distrust God's love, look at verse 3 and 4. "The devil said to Him, 'Since You're the Son of God, tell the stone to become bread.'" What are You doing out here starving? You've waited 30 years, You've been 30 years humiliated in Nazareth working in a carpenter's shop, 30 years You've been waiting...why all this time You've been a nobody and You're the ruler of the universe, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, You're the eternal second person of the trinity, that's enough humiliation. Now on top of that You've got 40 years(means days) here in the desert and You've gone through all of this and now You are here and You're hungry, You don't even have food, and You're the Son of God...that's the implication...You're the Son of God. Look, God even fed disobedient Israel in the wilderness. God fed those people who complained and griped and all died in

the wilderness and never entered the promised land because of their complaining and here You are the perfect, sinless Son of God and God doesn't even feed You. Are You sure God really loves You? Are You sure God really trusts You?

And that's the first category of temptation, to distrust God's love. And that, you see, is his effort to drive that fracture into the trinity to get the Son to stop trusting the Father's love and the Father's care.

Doubt God's love, doubt God's care. He didn't ask Him to doubt His Sonship or even prove His Sonship but to doubt His Father's love and His Father's care, to be fed up with the deprivation, fed up with humiliation, fed up with condescension.

But, you know, it just was the opposite. The more suffering Jesus went through, the more deprivation, the more condescension, the more humiliation He went through, the stronger He became. Hebrews 5:8, "Although He was the Son...although He was the Son of God He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." Boy, what a great statement. Although He was the Son of God, as a man, as He suffered through those 30 years being tempted in all points like we are, as an infant, as a child, as a young man, as an adult, all that temptation. And then those 40 days in the wilderness, they didn't break Him down, He learned obedience through the things that He suffered. He was a man stronger now than He had ever been. He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man up until the age of twelve when He became fully aware of His mission as the Son of God and the Messiah and said He had to be in His Father's house doing His Father's work. And then as it grew and developed through the years of suffering in His humiliation and His condescension, His strength became greater and greater and greater because it was a life of unbroken and perfect obedience and it just made Him stronger and stronger and stronger. So here He is at the age of 30 and when Satan comes and said, "Haven't You had enough humiliation?" The fact of the matter is that the 30 years of humiliation, the 40 days of humiliation in the desert hadn't made Him weaker, they had made Him...what?...stronger...stronger.

Times of obedience, the hard times of deprivation taught Him to trust God...trust God. You know, without ever internalizing the temptation, Jesus responds immediately in verse 4 and says, "It is written, man shall not live on bread alone." He refuses to doubt God's love. And what He's saying...He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, I told you last week, He's simply saying a man doesn't live because he eats bread, a man lives because he obeys God and God provides his bread. And that's the principle. I will trust God, God will let me live as long as God wants me to live. My life is in His hands. I am under His control. I am under His power. I will not act independently of God.

You know, I mean the Jews who died in the wilderness died in the wilderness not because they didn't have bread, they had manna. They died in the wilderness because God left them there and wouldn't let them enter the promised land because they disobeyed Him. And Jesus is playing off of that. The implication of Satan is...I mean, God fed the people in the wilderness, and look what they were like

and He won't even feed You. What kind of a deal is that?

And Jesus responds by saying, in effect, the people in the wilderness didn't die because they didn't have bread, they had bread. They died because they didn't obey God. You obey God, you'll live as long as God wants you to live. That's how you live. You live obediently, you seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and what happens? Everything else gets added.

The second temptation was to distrust God's plan. And he comes back to Him in verse 5 and he says...he takes Him up into a high mountain, Matthew adds that, shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. We don't exactly know how this happened. They were both supernatural beings. Jesus, of course, occasionally acted in very supernatural ways, like walking on water even before His resurrection body. Jesus demonstrated His supernatural character on the Mount of Transfiguration when He pulled back the flesh and revealed the glory of God shining through Him. So this may have been some way in which they were transported supernaturally, it may have been...we don't know the structure of it. It may have been that they went to the highest mountain and a sort of simulated view of the kingdoms of the world. That's not important.

But the devil said to Him in verse 6, "I'll give You all this domain and its glory for it has been handed over to me and I give it to whomever I wish." Boy, did he have delusions of grandeur. He had a small opportunity to rule as the king of this world for a very brief time, but the only thing he rules over is evil. It is God who determines the boundaries of the nations, according to Acts 17. It is God who causes nations to rise and fall. The devil, however, tries to deceive Christ into believing that he has control of everything. And the point again is God's got this plan, but you know what this plan is? The plan is Your humiliation gets worse. You know the plan, right?

I mean, Satan knows the Old Testament. He knows the Messiah is going to die. He knows the Messiah is going to be a sacrifice for sin. He understands the sacrificial system. He knows where all the lambs are pointed to and he's saying to the Son, "You don't like being out here in the wilderness 40 days, You don't like being out here deprived, You don't like being out here without any food, wait till You see what is to come. How do You feel about the future suffering that You're going to have to endure? How do You feel about that, things that are yet to come that You haven't even experienced that are prophesied in the Old Testament?"

Believe me, Satan has a very accurate understanding of the Old Testament prophecy. So he's saying You could miss the cross if You want, You can miss all that further humiliation, You can miss that Psalm 22, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" that's going to come, You can miss all of that, I'm telling You, You can bypass the whole thing, all You have to do is recognize that I own all the kingdoms of the world and I will give them to You, verse 7, if You worship me, just fall down and worship Me. And you can skip the cross and go right to the crown, all You have to do is make me Your sovereign.

Well, first of all, Satan couldn't do that. Second, if he could he wouldn't right? Because what did Satan want more than anything? He wanted to be above God, didn't he? That's why he fell. He wanted to be worshiped by everyone, including God, including Christ. Jesus' response was immediate. Jesus said to him, "It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only," and He quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. He has no doubt in God's plan, "I will worship God and God alone, I will trust My God's love and care. I will worship My God unwaveringly. I will take no shortcut to the fulfillment of His plan."

Categorically we experience these kinds of temptations, temptation to distrust God's love. God, if You really loved me then why is it working out this way in my life? This doesn't look like You love me. Or, God, I don't know about Your plan, this isn't the way I would work it out. I mean, I know there's a crown out there somewhere but it seems like the cross is more than I can bear. Can't I take a shortcut and skip the cross and get to the crown quicker?

We face the same categorical struggles. It's not that we could be tempted specifically to do what Jesus was tempted to do because we can't do that. We're not entitled to rule the world, nor can we make stones into bread. But categorically we can and are constantly tempted by Satan to distrust God's love. Oh, things aren't working out in my life, you know, my kids aren't what they ought to be, life isn't what it ought to be. I've got all kinds of trouble, illness, trouble, job trouble, whatever it might be. And, Lord, I'm just wondering if You really care for me and really love me and, Lord, I don't know if the plan is really what I would like it to be. And so you murmur and gripe and complain just like the children of Israel did. "God, do You love us? If You love us, 40 years in this desert doesn't look like love to us, and all of the trouble and all of the pain and anxiety and deprivation doesn't seem to be the plan we hoped for," etc., etc.

So that's how he came to Jesus. And the idea was, as I said, to breach the trinity and turn Jesus against the Spirit and against the Father. He won't move, He quotes the Scripture. You don't live because you have bread, you live because you obey God. And there's only one plan and that's God's plan and I'll worship God and God alone.

One final assault, and Satan twists this one in his clever way. Verse 9, "And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God...or Since You're the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.'" That's a strange thing, isn't it? Now again as supernatural beings they could move out of the wilderness and they moved out of the wilderness apparently to the pinnacle of the temple.

I've been to the temple mount many times. There is a point on the temple mount in Jerusalem that is the dizzying height. You know, if you have any kind of fear of heights, you don't want to go near this corner. It's the southeast corner. The temple mount, of course, is a massive, massive patio kind of

thing, a massive place where today is the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of Omar, as it's called, two great Muslim places. And up at the north end of it is where they believe the original temple was, and it's surrounded by a wall and it's up on what is really Mount Moriah, Moriah where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac. And so it's been flattened out and you ascend it long stairs from the southern side, the gates, by the way, and the stairs there are the very ones Jesus went in and out of the temple of in His lifetime. So it's a remarkable place. I've preached on those very steps.

But on the southeast corner there is a corner of the temple ground that sinks down into the valley, the Kedron valley where the Kedron stream goes through and it is a dead, straight drop of 450 feet to the ground. Tradition, Eusebius, tells us that the brother of our Lord, James, who was the leader of the Jerusalem Council was thrown to his death from that corner. They threw his...they threw him alive off that 450 foot edge.

Now Satan says...Look, You trust God, do You? You only want to obey His Word. You trust His love. You trust His care and You will only do what His Word says to do, right? Fine, okay, let's go over to the temple, dive off.

Why? And look here, Satan quoting Scripture, verse 10, "For it is written..." He says exactly what Jesus had said, "It is written..." Oh, You want to go by Scripture, well it is written, and he quotes Psalm 91 verses 11 and 12, "He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You and on their hands they will bear You up lest You strike Your foot against a stone." Oh You want to go by the Scripture, do You?

If Jesus will not prove He is the Son of God by doing what God has not said, namely use His divine power independently to make bread, if He will not prove He is the Son of God by doing what God has said not to do, worship anyone other than Himself, maybe He will prove He is the Son of God by doing something to prove the truth of what God has said. Did you follow that? Sort of.

Oh, You want to do only what God said, well let me quote Scripture. Since You are the Son of God, since that is the reality of who You are, why don't You just throw Yourself down and then You will do a wonderful thing, You will demonstrate that God's Word is true, that God keeps His promises because it says in Psalm 91 that He will give His angels charge concerning You, to guard You, on their hands they will bear You up lest You strike Your foot against a stone.

This is a messianic Psalm, Psalm 91, and it pledges protection for the Messiah, that the Messiah will be protected. So go up there and throw Yourself down and therefore You will give God an opportunity to have His Word proven. Create a serious...well, create a deadly peril.

Now remember, Jesus is a man and He cannot survive such a fall. He couldn't survive the cross. Once He had lost His blood, He was dead. What Satan wants to do here, His wicked purposes, is to

kill Christ, he wants Him dead. But the deception of it is woven through...Oh, so You only want to do what the Scripture, so You're in to "what is written...it is written," well it is written that He's going to protect You and now You can give an opportunity to God to fulfill His Word, won't that be wonderful? You can allow God to put His power on display and at the same time You can prove You're the Son of God because as You go flying down, at some point the angels are going to come along and they're just going to gather You in their arms and You're going to come down to a soft landing and then everybody will know You are the Son of God. And then God will have demonstrated His Word is true, won't that be wonderful? And this would be spectacular, this would gain You the amazement of the world. And You won't have to go through any more humiliation, You do this and folks are likely to say...Yep, He is the Messiah.

But that isn't what Jesus wanted. He didn't want popularity. He didn't come to be popular. He didn't come to be accepted. He really came to be hated. It was really essential that He be hated and rejected in order that He be...what?...killed. And He was to die by crucifixion and no other way.

Well look what Jesus said in response in verse 12, "And Jesus answered and said to him, 'It is said you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Now, first there was the temptation to distrust God's love and care. And then there was the temptation to distrust God's plan. And then the twist, the temptation to trust God presumptuously, to literally back God into a corner. That was the temptation.

And by the way, Jesus...Satan knew that Jesus was a man and that a fall like that would kill Him as a man. He told Eve, "You'll not die," but she did. And so would Jesus. And this would...this would mess up the whole plan because He was to die shedding His blood on the cross, to be lifted up. He wanted Jesus dead. He wanted Jesus dead then and there. But he wanted Jesus to do this thinking He would show faith in God's Word.

Listen, the devil quotes Scripture and he usually quotes it fairly accurate. This time he quoted the Septuagint. The devil knows the Bible, he knows it very well. And, you know, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons and all the other isms and chisms and all the other cults and occults throw the Bible in and around all the time because the devil knows the Bible, he knows the Bible as well as you or better. So the devil rebuffed by Scripture quotes Scripture. Jesus doesn't move. One thing He won't do, He won't presume on God. He will not act independently. This is not the plan. This is not God's purpose. He will not become some kind of a flying hero. He will not force God's hand to do something presumptuous. This is like saying...Okay, God, You promised to watch over me and protect me, so I'm going to go stand in the middle of the freeway to see You vindicate Yourself. He won't do that. He will only do what the Father wills Him to do. He will follow the plan to the very letter, only as the Spirit of God empowers Him to do it for He has set aside any independent use of His attributes. And there is no internal solicitation for Him to violate that because there was nothing in

Him that had the capacity to sin.

Again categorically, Satan will try to tempt you to distrust God's love, to distrust God's plan and then to trust God presumptuously. Well, God, You know, You promised to meet all my needs, so I'm going to do this and here I go... You go wandering out on the end of some rickety branch and then it breaks and then you blame God.

I was on Hank Hannegraff's program this week, I don't know if any of you heard it, The Bible Answer Man, Monday and Tuesday. And, you know, there are so many bizarre things that go on in the world, he said, "I want to play some tapes for you, John." He said, "I want to play some Benny Hinn quotes."

I said, "Okay." And this is on the air, this is on this national program and I don't do a very good imitation, but it's something like, Benny Hinn comes on and he plays the tape and he says, "I'm tellin you, Pol, I'm tellin you, Jan, Jesus told me," and then he goes on to say Jesus told him that He will be appearing bodily and physically at his meetings on the platform. He will be appearing and He will be appearing...my first meeting is going to be in Nairobi, Kenya and Jesus will be appearing there. I think that Jesus has told me He will be appearing and then He will be appearing at my other meetings on the platform, literal, physical Jesus will be there. I know it's hard to believe, he said, but He will be appearing.

At the same time we pulled off the news wires while the broadcast was going on a Roter's news clip that said in that Nairobi meeting of Benny Hinn, there wasn't any report of anybody being healed but four people died because they had come out of hospitals and they were severely ill, couldn't take the situation and they perished.

Later on he played a tape and the tape said...this is beyond belief...he said, "Jesus has told me," and this is almost as directly as I can quote it, "Jesus has told me that people will be raised from the dead through TBN. They will be raised from the dead through TBN." And he said several times Jesus had told me this. He said, "Now what I want you to do, people, is when somebody dies in your family, you bring them to the TV, in front of the TV and you leave them there for 24 hours." And he said, "You put their arms on the TV."

You know, you laugh at that, but the presumption of that...so Hank gave me a report about a father whose little baby died and so he packed the baby in ice and carted it across the country to a Benny Hinn meeting. What are you doing with people's emotions? And who...and if the baby doesn't get raised from the dead and if all these bodies hanging over the TV don't arise, who gets blamed? This is blasphemy, folks, this is nothing...this is nothing to do with Christianity. That kind of thing has absolutely nothing to do with Christianity.

He said to me, "Why do you think he does this?" I said, "To get rich." Plain and simple. This is ludicrous behavior, outrageous behavior and it needs an outrageous response and that's why I'm saying what I'm saying. You can't...people at the greatest moment of sadness taking a dead body and putting it in front of a TV set, and leaving it there for 24 hours in the hopes that somehow God is going to raise the dead through TBN? And then it's one thing if Benny Hinn said, "This is what I think," but it's another thing if he said, "Jesus told me this," isn't it? That's what makes it blasphemy. That's terrible presumption.

God will raise the dead in His own time, won't He? The devil will always tempt people to presume on God, and then when God doesn't come through the way they think, guess what? God's history.

Well enough about the temptation. The postmortem. We saw the preparation for the battle. We saw the pattern of the battle. And we see the postmortem of the battle in verse 13. "And when the devil had finished every temptation, or all temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."

When the devil had finished this whole 40 days and then in the time of Jesus weakness the devil had hit Him with these three major ways to try to destroy the trinity, he departed. The devil, by the way, this is a very important thing to realize, is not omnipresent. He's not omnipresent. He left and he left in defeat. But he only left temporarily. He came back and, believe me, he came back after Jesus later and often. He came back later and often. Listen to Luke 22:28, Jesus talking to the disciples, talking to the Father, I should say, about the disciples, "And you are those who have stood by Me in My temptations." And here Jesus referring to the disciples, yes He's talking to the disciples there, and He says, "You have been with Me during My temptations." You know, the whole time they were together for those three years was a time of temptation. The devil came back again and again and again after Jesus unsuccessfully. One time he came through Peter, remember that? In Matthew 16:23 Peter said, "Ah, You're not going to die, Lord, that's not going to happen." And Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Again Satan trying to get Jesus to avoid the cross, that's Matthew 16:23.

In John chapter 13 and verse 27 Satan entered into Judas and brought about the betrayal. I mean, Satan was coming after Jesus through many different circumstances. But Jesus crushed him at the cross, crushed him at the tomb. And in the end, of course, will destroy the entire world of sin.

In conclusion, just quickly, what do we learn from this? A few lessons, Satan's strategy. He will tempt us to distrust the love of God. He will tempt us to distrust the plan of God and thus to compromise with sin to get what we think we need and deserve and want. And then he will tempt us to presume. If we're going to say no, I trust God, no, I want to follow God, then he'll get us to presume on God and act foolishly out of pride and self-will, presuming on God's grace we do things foolishly. That's his strategy.

His conditions, when does he come at us? Watch out for the high points in your life because just as soon as you've had your high point and you've heard from God, "This is My beloved Son," you're liable to get hit with the biggest temptation. Be alert when you're physically weak. Be alert when you're in evil surroundings. And watch for those who twist the Scripture to justify some act of presumption.

How do you defeat Satan? How did Jesus defeat him? Three times, what did He do? Quoted...what?...Scripture. Be committed to obey God's Word. First of all, you have to know God's Word and you have to obey God's Word. Know the Scripture. Not only know it in your head, know it in your heart and be committed to live it. When Satan challenges your loyalty to God and your confidence in God's love and your confidence in God's plan, and when Satan challenges your will to act in a proper manner toward God's promises, what's going to anchor you is your knowledge of the Word of God and your devotion to obey it.

The same thing, Jesus shows us here a pattern to follow in our own struggles. Trust God's love. Trust God's plan. Don't presume on His promises and His grace. And you do that by being anchored in His Word.

In 1 Peter 2:21, Christ suffered, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin. Isn't that great? And the reason He committed no sin was because He was anchored in obedience to God and refused to presume on His goodness. Let's pray.

Blessed God, we are so amazed that You have given us this insight into this very private encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ and the devil. We thank You for it because it is another one of those magnificent and majestic pictures that proves to us that Jesus is in fact the Son of God, the perfect sinless Savior who could conquer and did conquer the devil and temptation and sin. And here it all comes clearly into focus, it is His strength against the evil one and against evil itself that allowed Him to conquer here and at the cross and in the tomb and even today as He intercedes for us and some day when He comes back to destroy sin forever. We thank You for the glory of His power over sin. It's in that power that we rest and feel secure. May we never buy Satan's seductive lies. May we ever and always trust Your love, trust Your plan patiently and never presume on Your goodness, Your promise or Your grace. And may we always live in the knowledge of the Word and commitment to obey it that we like the Psalmist might hide Your Word in our hearts that we might not sin against You. May we follow the Savior's example who through His sufferings did no sin. We pray in His name. Amen.

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