

**The Temptations in the Wilderness & God's People in the Last Days**  
**Bible Study Notes**

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

**Hebrews 4:15**

The accounts of Matthew, Mark & Luke, all give us an account of the temptations that Jesus faced from the devil after His baptism in the Jordan river. Many have read these accounts countless times and have viewed them only as stories, failing to see the true spiritual application in our Christian lives. Jesus, *the Messiah*, gained the complete victory over sin during his time in the wilderness and we as Christians can look to Jesus as the great standard to which we should strive to emulate, for *"whoever claims to live in Him, must live as Jesus did"*, **1<sup>st</sup> John 2:6**.

Jesus is returning a second time, not to bear the sins of the world, but to collect all of those who have been patiently waiting for Him, to take them where He has been, for He has prepared a place for His elect. However, we must be found spotless and without wrinkle and blemish. All earthliness & sin must be purged out from within us, there must be a complete renewal of the mind, as we are changed day by day into His glorious character.

*"...and He will appear a second time not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him."*

**Hebrews 9:28 NIV**

*"...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."* **Ephesians 5:27**

*"I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, the LORD is my God."* **Zechariah 13:9**

Therefore, in this study, we will look at the temptations that Jesus faced, the ways in which the devil tempted Jesus and how all of this has an application in our lives as Christians, more so as we see the great day of our Lord Jesus approaching, for *"our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."*

## APPETITE

***"Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Matthew 4:3***

After Jesus was anointed, the Bible tells us that He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted. He had fasted for forty days and nights and naturally in His human nature would have been extremely hungry and thirsty, so it was only natural that the devil would have tried to use Jesus' appetite against Him, after all he did deceive Adam & Eve in the garden by gaining control over their appetite. Not only did he attempt to use His appetite against Him, but he also tried to get Jesus to doubt the Word of God, when he said, *"if you are the son of God."* We see this same example once more in the garden of Eden, where the devil insinuated doubt in the mind of Eve, causing her to doubt the Word of the Almighty.

***"Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" Genesis 3:1 (DOUBT)***

***"So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate." Genesis 3:6 (APPETITE & LUST)***

The devil seemed to think that because he was able to cause the downfall of Adam and Eve, that he would somehow be able to cause the downfall of Jesus. After all, Jesus would have been experiencing immense hunger and thirst after having fasted for more than a month.

However, Jesus, was well versed in the Scriptures and was thus able to overcome the temptation of appetite, by stating the famous words *"it is written."* This immediately shows us the power in the Word of God, for it *"is alive and powerful, sharper than any double-edged sword"* and also *"the grass withers, the flowers fades, but the Word of our God endures forever."*

***"But He answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4***

What we learn from this is two-fold:

1. The devil will attempt to gain the victory over us by tempting us in our appetite. He would rather that we not exhibit temperance but rather that we behave as gluttons when food is presented before us, even in cases of extreme hunger & thirst. Paul admonishes us that we are to glorify God even in our food and drink, **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:31**, however, the devil would tempt us to do otherwise. Notice the temperance Jesus exhibited, even though He had been fasting for forty days, He did not use His divine power to turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger, instead he proclaimed the importance of living on God's Word, i.e. *The Holy Scriptures*. Daily, we are to commit time to the studying of the Word, not just casually but by putting effort into the reading of the Bible and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us the truths found in God's Word.

2. From Jesus' response, *'it is written'*, we can see how important it is to store up the Word in our hearts and by doing this, we will be able to fight off temptation when it comes our way, as it will indeed come.

Says the Psalmist, *"Thy Word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you"* **Psalms 119:11**

This statement is even more powerful, when we consider that Jesus has warned us that in the last days there will be much deception, so much so, that, if possible, it would deceive His very elect. Only by having a thorough understanding of the Scriptures, will we be able to discern between truth and error in these last days. Deception is the name of the game for the devil, and those who do not take the time to study the Scriptures for themselves, will have no proper foundation to stand upon and as a result will end up being deceived into worshipping the devil and thus receiving the *'mark of the beast.'*

### PRESUMPTION

***"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down."*** **Matthew 4:5-6**

Here Jesus is taken to the highest part of the temple in Jerusalem and is tempted by the devil to jump off. Satan tells Jesus, that when He does this, God will command His angels to guard and protect Him so that no harm shall come to Him.

However, as Jesus shows us, this is tempting the Lord, this is presumption and being daring before God; one cannot purposely put themselves in harm's way with the intention that God will save them. One cannot wilfully sin against God, believing that God will forgive them. This is presumptuous.

There is a fine line between stepping out in faith and being presumptuous and we see the in the world today.

Says David, ***"Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression."*** **Psalm 19:13**

Notice David's plea to God asking the Lord to keep him from being presumptuous.

***"But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him."*** **Numbers 15:30-31**

Presumptuous sins are premeditated sins and sins committed with deliberation. Note that a sin of ignorance, when one does not know any better is not a presumptuous sin, unless that ignorance also be wilful. But when a man knows better, and sins in the very teeth and face of his increased light and knowledge, then his sin deserves to be branded with this dishonourable title of a presumptuous sin.

***"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."*** **Acts 17:30**

We see how the devil was therefore tempting Jesus into wilfully throwing himself off of the temple to be presumptuous in the eyes of the Lord. However, again we see how Jesus was able to fight off the temptations of the enemy by having a solid foundation and knowledge of the Scriptures by quoting **Deuteronomy 6:16**.

***"Jesus said to him, "It is written again, you shall not tempt the LORD your God." Matthew 4:7***

Sin is distasteful in the eyes of God, and it is a blemish upon our Christian character, however, the sin of presumption is even worse. We see that in the days of the sacrificial system, there was an atonement for all types of sin, but for the one who sinned presumptuously, he was to be cut off from the people, there was to be no atonement made for him or her, **Numbers 15:30-31**, their guilt would be forever upon them.

Let us therefore take heed and learn from this example left for us in the Word of God.

### **LOVE OF THE WORLD**

***"Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Matthew 4:8-9***

Once more the devil attempts to seduce Jesus by showing Him the riches and wonders of the earthly kingdoms in vision, claiming that if Jesus would bow down and worship Him, then all the kingdoms of the world would be given to Him. The devil claimed that because all of these kingdoms were given to him, that he was then at liberty to give them to whoever he wished, **Luke 4:5-7**. How were these kingdoms given to him you may ask?

Well to understand this we need to go back to the Old Testament.

In **Genesis 1:28**, we see that God gives dominion to Adam & Eve that they should rule over the earth and all that God had created. We also see in **Psalms 8:4-8** that this point is further confirmed. However, because they sinned against God and were cast from the garden, they lost this dominion, and it was now the right of the serpent to rule this earth.

Jesus calls the devil at different times in the Scriptures, *the prince, the ruler & the god of this world*. See: **John 12:31, John 14:30, Ephesians 2:2, John 16:11, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4**.

***"...Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:28***

***"What is man that You are mindful of him and the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels and You have crowned him with glory and honour. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep, and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas." Psalm 8:4-8***

Dominion and rulership were taken from our first parents and given to the devil as a result of their sin. He was technically within his right to offer the kingdoms of this world to whoever he wished; however, Jesus is the Creator of all things, **Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:1-2**, how then can a created being say to the Creator that he would offer Him all the kingdoms of this world?

Jesus had not a love for worldly riches nor the things in it and in the same way, He calls His faithful followers to also be of like mind. We are to be in the world but not of the world.

Notice the following Scriptures pertaining worldly love and lust:

***"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."*** 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15

***"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."*** Romans 12:2

***"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."*** James 4:4

***"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (money)."*** Matthew 6:24

As Bible believing Christians, we must separate ourselves from the love of this world, as this is what Jesus requires of us. We must know and understand that by being caught up in these worldly desires we make ourselves enemies of the Most High God. We are called to set our eyes not on the things of this world, but on heavenly things, on the things which are unseen, for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are unseen are eternal. Unfortunately, this is a major issue in the Church today, many professed Christians have not let go of their love of the world, they are still chasing after worldly riches, instead of seeking Jesus and focusing on the riches of Heaven, which shall never pass away.

The Apostle Peter tells us that at the Coming of Jesus, this earth and everything in it shall be burnt up by fervent heat, why then are we putting all of our time and effort into storing up earthly riches and persisting in engaging in worldly behaviour?

We must choose who we will serve, *'whether God or baal.'* 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 18:21

## **CONCLUSION**

The temptations that Jesus faced can teach us a lot if we truly study them in detail. Jesus is the great standard that we as Christians must seek to emulate and walk in His footsteps. He left us many examples of how we are to live our lives and gain the victory over sin, just as he gained the victory over sin in the wilderness. It is correct that in our own strength we can do no good thing, *"for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"*, yes, *"there is no one who does good, not even one."* However, by the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed unto us and by His grace, we can, day by day, gain victory over the enemy and live a life that is pleasing to God. Let us study the word and store it up in our hearts that we may not sin against the Lamb that was sacrificed for our sins. Let us seek His face and His grace, that we may gain the victory over presumptuous and non-presumptuous sin, and let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, that we may serve Him and love Him and not be caught up with the temporary things of this world. For the things of this world shall pass away.

Jesus is coming soon, the signs are clearer now than they ever were; let us be found ready!

# LOUD CRY COMPENDIUM

*"The present truth for this time"*

***"He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."***

**1<sup>st</sup> John 2:4-6**

