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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

The Temptation of Jesus.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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The Temptation of Jesus.

Topics.

- The temptation of Jesus in Matthew.
- The language of personification.
- The first temptation of Jesus (turn stones to bread).
- The second temptation of Jesus (jump of the pinnacle of the temple).
- The third temptation of Jesus (worship the tempter).
- The practical lesson to learn from Jesus temptations.
- Jesus power over the devil.
- Be gone Satan!

The Temptation of Jesus in Matthew.

Matthew 4:1 ----- ¹Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (diabolos).

The English word devil is translated from the Greek word diabolos and means a false accuser a slanderer or one who defames. The word devil is not found in the Old Testament it is from the Greek word diabolos which in the Greek language simply means someone that accuses or slanders another. The Bible translators have translated the Greek word diabolos into the English word devil, but that does not change the meaning of the word diabolos its meaning remains the same (i.e. a false accuser or slander).

It is important to understand that the original meaning of diabolos does not change with its translation to the English word devil to take on a meaning that implies some kind of powerful evil demonic spirit entity as depicted in many Hollywood movies and thought of by some in many circles of religion.

The language of personification: the French, Italian and the Spanish languages are all known as the romantic languages simply because any noun is personified as either masculine or feminine, the Hebrew and Greek languages are the same. The following is an example (there are many others) of the God's word being personified: -

- God sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly (Psalm 147:15).

In this verse God's word is pictured as a person running swiftly throughout the earth. In many verses of the Bible wisdom, understanding and patience are all personified and spoken of as woman even though they are not people and Jerusalem is spoken of as a mother with children. It is the common expression of the Greek language to personify words especially if they are an attribute of human character. Though it is common in Greek literature for nouns to be spoken of as persons, it is never the intention of the author using the Greek style of writing that a reader would embrace the personified word to mean a literal person.

This principal of personification also applies to destructive thoughts in the mind they like wisdom, understanding and patience can also be personified especially if they are so strong loud and clear because it seems like there is a real spirit entity in the mind. This thought or voice in the mind is often personified as an entity called the diabolos (devil) meaning false accuser.

For further information concerning personification see the title: -

- Personification in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The First Temptation of Jesus (Turn stones to Bread).

Matthew 4:2-4 ----- ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

NOTICE: the diabolos (devil) is referred to in verse one as the tempter. The word tempter comes from the Greek word (peirazo) and from Strong's Concordance means to test and prove in the context of these verses it carries the idea of tempting, scrutinizing, enticing and examining to prove to the true character.

The story: is a graphic personification of what was going on in the mind of Christ it is showing us in graphic and vivid picture form the battle between the mind of the flesh (self, ego and pride) and the mind of the Spirit and the battle between self-will and God's will. The diabolos (devil) is the personification of the mind of the flesh and it is with this that Jesus is battling against. Jesus has just been water baptised and God has declared him His beloved Son and poured His Spirit upon him without measure (meaning without limitation) making him ready to begin his ministry. Now Jesus is confronting those powerful tempting thoughts and voices that every Christian hears in their minds, to a lesser or greater degree.

Jesus had been fasting for almost forty-days and since he had the power of God without limitation he could have very easily turned the stones into loaves of bread just by speaking the words. Since he hadn't eaten for forty-days he would be enormously hungry so these thoughts/voices of temptation in his mind would not only be enormously powerful, but also very clear. Should anyone doubt this try fasting for forty-days and I'll bet the loudest thoughts in the mind are all upon food. These thoughts in Jesus mind personified as the devil are saying: -

- Use the power God has given you to satisfy your own needs.

But Jesus says, "There is more to life than food." Jesus is saying that God's word is far richer food than the food of this world and he will not use God's power to satisfy his own need. Some may be thinking, but what would be wrong with Jesus turning the stone to bread, especially since he was hungry. But consider this Jesus walked into the wilderness so he could have at any time walked to the nearest village and eaten the whole purpose of this temptation was not about food, but about overcoming the thought/voices of temptation that we all experience in the mind.

The lesson and moral we can learn from this first temptation of Jesus is that God's power and gifts are not to be used to satisfy ones own needs or to frivolously display to others when there is no need to do so.

The Second Temptation of Jesus (Jump of the Pinnacle of the Temple).

Matthew 4:5-7 ----- ⁵Then the devil (diabolos) took him to the holy city (Jerusalem) and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, " 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and " 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. " ⁷Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test (this is cited from Psalm 91:11-12) (Deut. 6:16) (Isaiah 7:12).

If the devil was some kind of evil demonic spirit entity, why would Jesus the Son of God spend anytime walking with God's so called wicked and evil enemy up an exceeding high mountain? This entire story is a personification of the spiritual battle that takes place in the human mind between God's will and our will and between good and evil. The tempter or powerful thoughts/voices in the mind of Christ are saying: -

- Go to the highest point on the temple and prove to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem you are the Son of God by jumping off. God won't let you die his angels will save you. This will prove to all the unbelieving and prideful hypocrites that you are the Son of God.

But since this was not the way Jesus heavenly Father planned and purposed that the Gospel would be spread and that people would believe in him or the way that Jesus would become the Saviour of the world. Even though the unbelieving and prideful hypocritical religious leaders may have believed Jesus was the Son of God if Jesus had obeyed the devil he never submitted to the logic and reasoning of the thought/voices, but rather held firm to the word of God.

The lesson and moral we can learn from this second temptation of Jesus second is that even though there are angels to protect does not mean it is OK for a Christian to deliberately put their life in harms way or do things that put their lives in extreme danger (when it is totally unnecessary). Testing God in this context is to deliberately do something that has the possibility to result in serious harm or even kill you and then trusting and believing God is going to protect you.

The Third Temptation of Jesus (Worship the Tempter).

Matthew 4:8-9 ----- ⁸Again, the devil (diabolos) took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Jesus is now tempted with all the power, authority, fame and riches of this world. The "me", Jesus is to bow down and worship is the personification of self, ego and pride. The devil (diabolos) is the personification of the thoughts/voices in the mind that arise up from self, self-gratification, self-satisfaction, pride and ego. These thoughts/voices of temptation can be enormously loud in the mind especially in the mind of someone who has the potential to reach the heights of enormous fame and power.

Many kings throughout history have gone to war or been brought to ruin simply because they did not recognise or resist the temptation of what these thoughts/voices of self, pride and ego were telling them to do. The powerful and very loud thoughts/voices of temptation are now telling Jesus all he has to do is bow down to self, pride and ego (personified as the tempter and the devil) and use his power in an enormously dramatic and spectacular way and he will become the King of the world.

This entire temptation is taking place in the Lord's mind, but depicted in story form so we can understand what Jesus is spiritually battling with. It is depicting the battle between the Spirit of God and the spirit of self and the mind of the Spirit and the mind of the flesh. Remember Jesus is fully aware that a brutal, bloody and cruel death at Calvary is his destiny if he follows the eternal plan and purposes of his heavenly Father. With this in mind it is most likely that the powerful tempting thought/voices resounding in his mind were saying something similar to the following: -

- Use your power to show people who you are, do it your way, bow down to me (self, ego and pride) (the devil) and you will have all the glory of the world and even more than this people will believe in you. Use the power God has given you according to your natural way of thinking after all God's way is going to cause you enormous suffering and pain so do it your way and avoid all that rejection and all that suffering.

The Garden of Gethsemane: remember Jesus in extreme anguish prayed the following prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). These words of Jesus shine a spotlight on the truth that Jesus had his own mind his own thoughts and his own will (it was in his power to say no). As he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane it appears that he hoped there would be an easier way to save us rather than suffer a brutal, bloody and cruel death, but he loved His heavenly Father and you and me more than his own life and was therefore obedient to the will of God. The Bible also says, Jesus was tested in the same way as we all are (Heb. 4:15), this story of Jesus three temptations is one example of that testing.

A practical example: the following example is a very similar scenario to what any Christian can experience in their mind especially those who have tremendous success in their ministry.

The thought/voices personified as the tempter and the devil (meaning false accuser) can be heard in a Christians mind saying something similar to the following, "Now you have all this global success with your ministry you can have everything the world offers, after all you deserve it, you have sacrificed far more than most Christians, you are entitled to a million dollar house, luxury cars, boats, gold watches, designer clothes and tremendous fame after all you are a child of God and even more than this you could be one of the most important and powerful people in the Christian world, imagine what you could do for God then?" It is though listening to these types of thought/voices and acting upon them that the glorious Gospel of Christ becomes distorted, twisted and perverted.

Mary and Jesus: Mary Jesus mother was a most godly woman there is absolutely no doubt she taught Jesus the Scriptures from early childhood and because of his own study of the scrolls and his unique relationship to his heavenly Father he knew the Scriptures and the words of the prophets inside out and would have fully understood all the prophecies concerning him, so he was fully aware that the religious leaders of his generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) were going to deliver him into the hands of the Romans and that he would be brutally and horribly crucified.

Clearly Jesus would not have been tempted with thought/voices in the mind to use God's power for evil. His temptation was not toward evil, but by the temptation of logical ideas and reasonable thoughts coming to his mind that at a human level seemed plausible and compelling. They were thought/voices on how he would be able to use his tremendous power, for his own benefit and in spectacular ways to extend the Kingdom of God and have people believe in him so as to avoid the horror and suffering of the cross.

Jesus three temptations were: -

1. Turn stones to bread so he could eat and satisfy his hunger.
2. Jump of the pinnacle of God's temple in Jerusalem and safely float down so that all the city of Jerusalem would have believed he was the Son of God when they saw such a spectacular and miraculous thing.
3. Give his life over to self, pride and ego and be the King of the world, without having to face the brutal bloody and cruel death of the cross.

These are not evil in themselves, in that had Jesus fallen to any of these temptations it would not have brought suffering, hurt and pain upon others and it is certain if he did become King of the world by giving into self, pride and ego he would have still been the best King this world has ever seen, but had Jesus given in to these temptations we would all remain in our sin and our only eternal destiny would be the darkness of the grave and death.

Jesus resisted these powerful thought/voices of temptation in his mind and of the thought/voices of self, ego and pride (personified as the devil) and always prayed to his Father to seek His will for his life and lived his life with the constant attitude, "Not my will, but thine be done."

The practical lesson to learn from Jesus temptations: the diabolos (the devil) comes with temptations that deceptively appear to the mind of the flesh (self, ego, pride and greed) to be doing something good especially for God. A good example of this is those who go to war in the name of God to protect what they believe to be the truth. They believe they are doing God's will and protecting God's truth by killing, torturing and imprisoning those who refuse to bow down to what they believe to be the truth.

This goes totally against Christs command to love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:37-40) (Mark 12:28-31) which is also called the royal law in the New Testament (James 2:8) and totally against his teaching in his Famous Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:38-48), but those who do not know the will and heart of God are easily deceived by the diabolos (the devil) and led by their own reasoning that is formed by self, ego, pride and greed and not by the Spirit and will of God. For further information concerning Jesus Famous Sermon, see: "Matthew 5" in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Jesus Power over the Devil.

Jesus always-quoted Scripture to resist the powerful thought/voices of temptation in his mind that were tempting him to go his own-way, but it is not just saying or quoting verses of Scripture that give power to resist these thought voices of the devil in the mind and temptations. The power comes when a person's primary desire in life is to love and honour God and desires to do His will, it is knowing what pleases the heart of God and being prepared to put God's will before self, ego and pride that gives power to overcome temptations.

It is when, love for God and His will is seated on the throne of the heart and not self, ego and pride that the words of Scripture being spoken are given power. If Christ is not seated on the throne of the heart and the mind it matters not how well Scriptures are memorised or many times they are cited or spoken as affirmations they just remain words to be blown away in the wind.

A beautiful mind: a film was made portraying the true story of a world famous mathematical professor. The movie was called, "A Beautiful Mind." The director of the film used real people to portray the real voices the conversations and the visions going on in the mind of the mathematical professor who suffered with schizophrenia. Some years later after seeing the movie I happened to be watching the T V program titled Sixty-Minutes in which the man (much older now) was being interviewed.

He said that he never actually saw real people, but only heard their voices and saw visions of them played out on the movie screen of his mind and told the Sixty-Minutes T V interviewer that the director of the movie used real people in place of the voices and the visions so the audience could know what was going on in his mind. Matthew is doing a similar thing in this story in writing, about Jesus and his battle between the mind of the spirit and the mind of the flesh (self, ego, pride and greed etc.).

This battle could also be called the battle between:-

- God's will and His ways against our will and our ways.
- Humbleness and giving against pride self, ego and greed.
- Selflessness against selfishness.
- Others first against me first.

The Greek word *diabolos* translated to the English word devil can apply to any thought, attitude, behaviour or action that is against the will and Spirit of God.

Be Gone Satan!

Matthew 4:10-11 ----- ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! (*satanas*) For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. ¹¹Then the devil (*diabolos*) left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

It is interesting to notice that in this verse Satan (*satanas*) is identified with the devil (*diabolos*) they are both the same entity. The devil is seen coming to tempt Jesus in the wilderness temptation and yet in verse ten Jesus rebukes Satan and after rebuking Satan verse eleven says the devil (*diabolos*) left Jesus, this shines a spotlight on the truth that Satan (*satanas*) and the devil (*diabolos*) are interchangeable terms and both the same entity.

SATAN: comes from the Hebrew word (*satan*) and the Greek word (*satanas*) and from Strong's Concordance means adversary, meaning one who opposes another in purpose or act, or who stirs up apostasy and encourages to sin. The word *satan* in its original Hebrew origin does not have a capital *S* and can apply to any man or woman, organization (religious or secular) government or nation that aggressively acts against God, against the Lord Jesus Christ and against those who faithfully follow him.

SUMMARY: The Temptation of Jesus.

The devil (diabolos) is presented as the personification of the thoughts and voices that rise up from self, pride, ego and self-will. At various times these thoughts can sound so loud and clear in the mind that they seem like real audible voices or an individual entity of its own. These thought/voices or entities in the Bible are personified as the devil (diabolos) and are spoken of as a tempter enticing people away from God and as a false accuser making false statements.

These thought/voices or entities are also personified as Satan an entity that is pictured as an adversary and as one that opposes and withstands God's will His purposes and God Himself. These two truths show that the devil (diabolos) and Satan (*satanas*) are interchangeable terms. The Temptation of Jesus is in (Matt. 4:1-10) (Luke 4:1-13) (Mark 1:9-13).

For further information see the titles: -

- Devil.
- Satan.
- Demons.

All titles are in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

End