

The Inscrutable Question: Evidence Testing: Lucifer's Temptations of Christ: (2) Test God, Matt 4:5-7; (3) Abandon the Mission; Matt 4:8-11

15) The second test from Lucifer if recorded in:

Matthew 4:5 - Then the devil took Jesus into the holy city and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

Matthew 4:6 - and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, [**Psalm 91:11-12**] 'He will give His angels charge concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"

v. 7 - Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

- a. The location of this test is said to be the "pinnacle of the temple." There is controversy among the scholars about the location of this site. The generally accepted solution correlates Malachi 3:1 with Lucifer's selection of a high point in the temple complex. The deduction is that it was the parapet on the temple's roof, its highest point being the southeastern corner, estimated to have been seventy cubits high. Note Lucifer's knowledge and use of Scripture in his challenge of the Lord.

Malachi 3:1 - "Behold, I [**God the Father**] am going to send My messenger [**John the Baptist**], and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek [**Messiah**], will suddenly come to His temple; even the messenger of the covenant [**offer of Plan A at the First Advent**], in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of the armies.

- b. The Lord quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," in his response to the first temptation. Therefore, Lucifer decides to counter with a Bible verse in his second challenge. He presents the temptation with a false interpretation of Malachi 3:1.
- c. In this verse, God prophesied that at the First Advent His Messiah would arrive suddenly before the people at the temple. Lucifer proposes that Jesus fulfill this prophecy by making a dramatic entrance before the people: to jump from the pinnacle and land unharmed right in front of them as they gather for worship.
- d. Lucifer in essence proposes, "Let's go up to the highest point of the temple complex where You can just swoop down in front of everybody and proclaim Yourself Messiah."
- e. In order to oblige the Lord to rely upon every word from the mouth of God, He then quotes a passage from Psalm 91:11-12. Lucifer's interpretation asserts that if the Lord truly desired to fulfill every word then He could jump from the temple roof to the ground below and the angels would see to it that He landed safely.
- f. There are a number of problems associated with this temptation that the Lord discerned immediately. Angelic surveillance and protection of human beings is not allowed to violate the rules of engagement which require man to function within the environment of divine creation and to make volitional decisions based on that environment.

- g. For man to do otherwise would be presumptuous and tantamount to testing God, therefore, the angels would not be able to intervene.
- h. Jesus Christ in His true humanity is being asked to test God. Lucifer's temptation asserts that if Jesus is the Son of God then He may claim Malachi 3:1, jump off the temple, and God will be forced to order His angels to preserve His human life.
- i. That this is testing God is clear from:

Pentecost, J. Dwight. *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1981), 103:

Satan's implication was that Jesus, as a Son, had a right to put His Father to a test. The one who puts another to a test is putting himself in a superior position. For Christ to put God to a test would be for Him to abandon His dependence on God. You test another because you do not have confidence in him. If you have full confidence, no test is necessary.

- j. Knowing, from Scripture, that jumping from the temple roof would be testing God, the Lord again rejects the temptation by quoting that passage:

Deuteronomy 6:16 - "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."

- k. The Lord did not need to identify Himself to the people of Israel by some dramatic entrance that defied the laws of physics. Other members of the human race could not do such a thing and thus for Him to do so would have been inappropriate.
- l. Further, He also caught the fact that Lucifer misquoted the Psalm 91 passage by leaving out a key phrase. The verse Satan quoted actually reads this way:

Psalm 91:11 - For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.

v. 12 - They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

- m. The phrase "guard you in all your ways" was omitted by Lucifer. The Person being guarded is the true humanity of Messiah. All His ways are in perfect compliance with the Father's plan for the Incarnation. Satan sought to tempt the Lord to violate that plan.

Under, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*. Vol. 1. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 881:

All Christ's ways as man were God's ways of implicit reverent faith and filial obedience and dependence, and so God's angels guarded His sinless humanity. Satan attempted to make Christ act presumptuously, out of God's will, and thus tempt God by needlessly testing His power and faithfulness.

16) The third temptation offered by Lucifer is found in:

Matthew 4:8 - Again, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory;

v. 9 - and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."



Matthew 4:10 - Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, [**Deuteronomy 6:13**] 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and [**Deuteronomy 10:20**] serve Him only.'"

Matthew 4:11 - Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

- a. There is a principle found in this passage that affirms the fact that Lucifer is the "ruler of this world": you cannot give what you do not possess.
- b. Lucifer's rulership of *cosmos diabolicus* is also confirmed by several other passages of Scripture: John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19; and Revelation 13:2.
- c. However here in Matthew 4:8-9 we see the first New Testament verification of this doctrine. And the things with which Lucifer tempts our Lord are "the kingdoms of the world and their glory."
- d. But the glories of the earthly kingdoms that Satan rules are not to be compared to the glory they will enjoy under the rulership of our Lord during His millennial reign.
- e. This has to be a last-ditch effort by Satan. Jesus Christ is going to conquer the world at the Second Advent and restore the environment to its pristine perfection prior to the Fall of Adam.
- f. However, Lucifer offers Jesus the world as it is without having to endure the requirements of the cross. The condition attached is that Jesus in His true humanity would worship Lucifer.
- g. In order for Jesus to accept this proposal He would have to be motivated by a lust to rule the world immediately rather than wait for the perfect timing of the plan of God at the Second Advent.
- h. In order to do this He would have to abandon His mission in the Incarnation which was to become a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the human race.
- i. Lucifer's scheme is logical for if it had been successful it would have decided the appeal trial in his favor.
- j. As was the case with the first two temptations, the Lord rebukes Satan and dismisses him with yet another appeal to Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:13, "You shall worship the Lord your God," and Deuteronomy 10:20, "and serve Him only."
- k. It is interesting to note the correlation between Lucifer's temptations of Jesus and Ishah. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck provide an instructive diagram on page 27 of their *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (Victor Books, 1983):

Satan's Temptations of Eve and of Jesus

Temptation	Genesis 3	Matthew 4
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Appeal to physical appetite.	"You may eat of any tree." (v. 1)	"You may eat by changing stones to bread." (v. 3)
Appeal to personal gain.	"You will not die." (v. 4)	"You will not hurt your foot." (v. 6)
Appeal to power or glory.	"You will be like God." (v. 5)	"You will have all the world's kingdoms." (vv. 8-9)

1. Unlike his original success in Eden, Lucifer was consistently rebuffed by the Lord in the wilderness, at the temple, and on the mountain. Jesus successfully passed evidence testing with reference to the plan of God by relying on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and the application of the Word of God.

Summary of the Three Temptations of Christ:

First Temptation: Asserts that the self-gratification of fleshly appetites is the highest good. It implies that man is biological life only. The suggestion is that the only reason for man's loyalty to God is that God meets every demand of his need as it arises. Here self-gratification is presented as greater than the will of God. But submission to the Word of God is equal to submission to the will of God.

Second Temptation: This is a temptation of arrogance. If you have confidence in God then no test is necessary. For Jesus to remove Himself from the will of God removes Him from His protection.

Third Temptation: This temptation seeks to elicit a lust for stuff. Christ's worship of Lucifer would fulfill his ambition stated in Isaiah 14:14, "I will be like the Most High."

1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

v. 16 - For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.