

Title: SATAN AND HIS DEVICES

Text: Matthew 4:1–11

Intro: Part of the Christian life is involvement in spiritual warfare. We are on God's side and God's greatest foe – Satan – is also our greatest adversary. Satan's pride was the main cause of his downfall from heaven (**Luke 10:18**). He was originally not a created devil but a cherub that guards God's throne. He rebelled against God (**Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:14–15**) and opposes everything that pertains to God.

The Bible teaches us to be alert of Satan's devices (**II Cor. 2:11**). Advanced knowledge of his tactics is the key to achieving victory. Let us now observe Satan's methods and learn from the Lord's encounter with him in the wilderness.

I. Satan's Bold Approach (vv. 1-2)

A. This mysterious event was a Spirit-led opportunity for the Son of God to have a face to face showdown with the devil who is the god and prince of this **world** (**II Cor. 4:4; John 12:31**). Cf. the Lord God of the **earth** (**Gen. 24:3**).

B. Notice that the devil did not hesitate to come near and tempt Christ. People imagine that the use of charms and rituals can drive away Satan but that is pagan superstition!

C. The devil dares to approach all flesh including God Himself manifest in the flesh in order to **steal**, **kill** and **destroy** (**John 10:10a**). He is our adversary whom Peter likens to a bold roaring lion seeking his prey (**I Pet. 5:8**).

II. Satan's Crafty Questions (vv. 3-6)

A. It's interesting to note that the first recorded words of Satan in the OT and NT were doubtful questions (**Gen 3:1** cf. **Matt. 4:3**). He always questions the Lord's integrity.

B. Twice Satan said to Jesus, "**If thou be the Son of God**" (**Matt. 4:3, 6**). The word "**IF**" suggests a condition which is doubtful and not 100% certain. By his use of the word "**IF**" the devil was casting doubt and issuing a challenge on the person and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Such is the device of the devil and all his followers. They question the truth and turn it into a lie (**John 8:44**;

Rom. 1:25). Praise God, we have a powerful weapon to resist all lies and doubts – the word of truth, the Holy Bible.

D. The devil's 2nd temptation involved an invitation to show off of Christ's power that very hour instead of dying and waiting for His miraculous resurrection (**vv. 5-6** cf. **Psa. 91:11-12**). Similarly, Satan wants us to do the **right thing** at the **wrong time** when God's timing seems out of synch!

III. Satan's Attractive Shortcuts (vv. 7-11)

A. The devil thought he could convince Christ to change stones into bread after his 40-day fast. But Christ would not work a miracle just for His mere comfort. We should likewise be careful of preachers who claim miracle after miracle to evade certain adversities and sufferings of the Christian life.

B. Notice that the devil tried to tempt Christ the 3rd time with instant present rule over all the kingdoms of the world instead of waiting for His future Second Coming (**vv. 8-9**).

C. The devil even proposed a shortcut to try to convince Jesus to avoid the cross as the means of our salvation. Jesus called Peter "**Satan**" when he suggested such a thing (**Matt. 16:21–23**). Fact is, "**without shedding of blood is no remission**" (**Heb. 9:22**). We must reject Satan's shortcuts no matter how good they seem (**Prov. 16:25**).

D. The devil knows that we humans are by nature impatient especially when our physical needs and comforts are upset. That is why he comes to tempt us at such a time when we are vulnerable physically, emotionally, financially and spiritually. He appeals to the lusts of the flesh and eyes and the pride of life as well – of which God strictly warned us against (**I John 2:16; I Pet. 2:11**).

Conclusion: In all three consecutive incidents of temptation by the devil, Jesus quoted scriptures from Deuteronomy when He said "**It is written...**" Compare the following: **v.4** (qt. **Deut. 8:3**); **v. 7** (qt. **Deut. 6:16**); **v. 10** (qt. **Deut. 10:20**). In all three occasions, He countered with the word of God (**Eph. 6:17**). Let us learn a lesson from Christ. In times of trials and temptations believe and apply the Bible!