

*1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.** 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, **It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.** 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.** 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*  
**Matt 4:1-11**

We learned in the preceding chapter that Christ had just been baptized by John. Baptism is a covenantal event. It symbolizes a new birth and a separation – a new standing in the family of God. This sacrament immediately reveals, if undertaken in earnest, the identity of the child of God. In this case, it also was the instrument whereby God gave evidence of Christ being His Son in whom He was well pleased. The added testimony of the Holy Spirit confirmed all to the observers. The one observer who was not well pleased was Satan. Satan became fully aware of the identity of Christ through this act. He often likewise assaults every child of God who stakes His claim in the Kingdom of God. Light and darkness cannot exist in the same space. A line was drawn in the sand much like that of Col William Travis at the Alamo. A battle must ensue. God never makes a truce with Satan. Immediately, the battle was joined by Christ. *“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”* Much like the unmerited suffering of Job, Christ must be deprived of the pleasing elements of life until there is a victory.

**Forty Days and Forty Nights:** Sound familiar? The rains gushed forth and the great fountains of the deep erupted for forty days and forty nights with poor Noah safely ensconced in the Ark. Moses was upon Mt. Sinai while the Law was being given for forty days and forty nights. Elijah was forty days and forty nights sustained on Mt. Horeb by the gifts of God. And the Children of Israel wondered forty years in the Wilderness..... We observe forty days and forty nights during Lenten Season (excepting Sundays) as a symbol of our fellowship of suffering with Christ (*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death*) Phil 3:10 Do we conscientiously fulfill this experience?

**“He was afterward an hungred”:** When Jesus had suffered every deprivation of bread and water, He was intensely hungry. Satan bides his time until he perceives the most vulnerable moment in executing his vile temptations. It was at this moment that the Tempter came to Christ.

**“If thou be the Son of God”:** Satan loves to question. His first temptation in the Garden was a question: *“Hath God said?”* He is not as concerned about total conviction of a lie as he is in simply creating doubt, for doubt makes faith null. *“Command that these stones be made bread”* The greatest physical need Christ feels at this moment is bread. How tempting to comply with Satan’s urgings!

**“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God:** Christ answers with Scripture, but that Word is also the Bread of Heaven! This Bread Satan cannot have. Then Satan loosed a number of more temptings which Jesus rebuffed, again, with the

written Word "***It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.***" What a perfect lesson for us in confronting Satan. Just as darkness cannot abide the Light, Satan cannot abide the Word.

*"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; <sup>9</sup> And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Satan will promise you all that he does not have power to offer and demands all that you do not have the power to keep from him.*

***Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*** This last admonition was more than Satan could bear. *"Then the devil leaveth him!"* It is often the mystery of God that He allows our temptation under austere circumstances and with faint heavenly help. God watches and observes our overcoming strength through the power of our faith in Him. Then He sends succor: *"and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him"*. After He had born the battle and won the field, God sent the Angels to minister unto Him!

We learn at least three cardinal lessons from this text today: 1) ***Man shall not live by bread alone*** – we need the Bread of Heaven which is the Word, and that Word is Christ. It is this Bread that becomes our weapon against the wiles of Satan. 2) ***Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*** – We do not make deals of our righteousness with God. His demands unconditional surrender to Him. We reserve no secret sins or vices. We cannot cause God to condone any of our cherished sins, all must be on the table. 3) ***Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*** -not the gods of fashion, of power, of wealth – but the God of Heaven in every avenue of our lives. Are you committed to Christ in all these three principles? It is Lenten Season! Now is the time to turn again with fresh resolve!

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