

## **“SATAN’S ATTACK ON JESUS: SECOND TEMPTATION.”**

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### **Scripture Texts: Matthew 4:1-7**

**Prayer:** Father, by the power and presence of your Holy Spirit, cause your Word to be heard according to each person's need. Some need a warning, some need conviction, some counsel, some courage, some confidence, and some comfort and encouragement. Only you can speak to all the varied needs present here this morning. Touch our hearts and minds, renew our spirits and equip us for your service and your glory. Show us Jesus.

### **Introduction.**

Last week we looked at the first temptation of Jesus. The first temptation called into question the Father’s care, provision, love and goodness. Take matters into your own hands, the Son of God should not be starving. It was a appeal to weakness, to intense hunger after 40 days with no food.

Satan knows our flesh and our weaknesses and he is always trying to exploit them. But that didn’t work with Jesus. One characteristic of Satan is he is nothing if he isn’t relentlessly persistent.

Just because Jesus won the first round, means nothing to him, there is no quit in Satan. If he failed once, he comes right back to it again and again. You can never let your guard down. Never think that if you dodged one bullet there won’t be more.

### **Matthew 4:5-7.**

The second temptation of Jesus is equally subtle and devious. If an attack at a point of weakness didn’t work, then he will try an attack at a point of strength. You know how sometimes our strengths are also our greatest weakness. Satan appeals to Jesus’ trust in the Word of God.

Permitted by Jesus, because Satan can only do what God allows, he takes Jesus to the holy city, Jerusalem, the most populous city, the most holy site, the great holy Temple, one of the wonders of the world, a very public setting where Jesus could reveal His power and glory and gain for Himself great public notice and so prove He is the Son of God.

Imagine leaping from the pinnacle of the Temple and being saved by a legion of angels. Nothing would say the Messiah has come better than that.

If He falls and the angels come and deliver Him it will be seen by all that He is from heaven, more than just a man. The Jews will all be convinced in one act. What a great stage for a great show. “If you are the Son of God, what better place to show it and prove it.”

Just fling yourself out there and let’s see what happens. Let’s take your divinity, your deity out for a test drive, why not start here and now.

High places are always dangerous places, both physically and spiritually. High places are where we are tempted to become puffed up, proud, full of ourselves. Those who excel in gifts, abilities, accomplishments, successes should all be wary of the evil one. High places are places Satan loves to visit to get us to topple. Pride always goes before a fall.

This is one of the dangers every politician faces, especially those running for president including the current one. We should pray for them that they will humble themselves before God does it.

### ***Cast yourself down.***

Notice that Satan could take Jesus up to this high place, but Satan couldn’t cast Him down from it. Satan’s power is always limited.

Satan can tempt us and entice us and draw us along, but he can’t force us.

### **For it is written, ....., Satan quoting Scripture.**

It’s as if Satan says to Jesus, “Oh, so you want to quote Scripture, well *two can play that game.*”

This is wickedly brilliant. Playing God against God. God’s Word against God’s Word.

Hasn’t Satan been doing this for centuries. False teachers, false preachers, false prophets and heretics come into churches with the help of Scripture, using God’s Word. Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons have their Bible verses, and they add a word here and take out a word there.

Does Satan know Scripture? Absolutely. Satan knows more Scripture than you do. He can twist it and turn it and take it out of context and just leave a word or two out or add a word or two. He is subtle and devious.

What better power could Satan have to get Jesus to do something than to quote to Him His own Word?

“Jesus, I see you have a deep respect for God’s Word and you live by it. How about Psalm 91?”

**91:11-12** For he will order his angels to protect you in all you do. 12 They will lift you up in their hands, so you will not slip and fall on a stone.

“If you are the Son of God, surely the Son has the right to be protected by the Father for all dangers. Besides the Father has already promised it in His Word.

“If you are the Son of God, then you know God will send His angels to protect your life, so why not put your faith to the test? Why not show just how much you trust God and His Word by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple?”

Once again everything hangs in the balance, everything is at stake, there is no greater threat to the kingdom of God than this threat in this hour. Two kingdoms locked in fiercest combat, the Prince of Darkness and the Prince of Heaven.

***Satan misuses and misapplies Scripture.***

Scripture has been given to us for our salvation, but in the mouth of Satan it is going to be twisted and turned for sinful purposes. Satan is always a liar and deceiver.

Scripture is abused when it is used to get us to sin. The sin is the sin of presumption, to presume upon the Lord and His care and protection.

**Romans 6:1-2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

Shall we sin to test God’s grace, shall we sin so God can glorify Himself by giving us more grace? Shall we throw ourselves off a cliff so God can show His power and grace? God forbid.

***Testing God is not trusting God.*** Testing God is doubting God.

Satan is tempting Jesus to overplay His hand, to over reach, to go outside the will of God, to set God against God. In a sense to become a house divided.

**Again it is written, ..., Jesus’ response.**

The evil in Satan's abuse of Scripture has caused some to say, "***See you can make Scripture say anything you want***, so what's the use? How can you know who is right and how is wrong, it is all just one person's interpretation against another."

Satan uses this very thing to erode people's confidence in Word of God. Some use it to support abortion and some against abortion, some for slavery, others against, some for polygamy, some against, some for we are born this way, some against. Who is right? How can we know? Before long we are standing with Pilate saying, "What is truth?"

The fact that Scripture can be abused or misinterpreted is no excuse to dismiss all Scripture or to not try to understand it and use it correctly.

Because Satan abused and misused Scripture doesn't put Jesus off from rightly using it, nor should it us. Let us rightly use the Sword of the Spirit against Satan.

There is a principle in studying and rightly dividing God's Word, that ***Scripture interprets Scripture***. This doesn't mean that Scripture corrects Scripture or Scripture contradicts Scripture, but that Scripture helps us understand Scripture so that we don't contradict, confuse or abuse it.

To test or prove God here would be to call into question what God already said to Jesus, that He is God's beloved Son. Jesus is completely satisfied with the truth He has heard and it needs no further confirmation, He trusts it and believes it.

Jesus refused to tempt God to give Him new or further proof of His own sonship. Jesus refused to put God's will under His will. Jesus refused to command God to submit to Him.

The verse Jesus quotes is perfect in this context. It comes out of Israel's own wilderness temptation when they had no water and complained to Moses that God had failed them and abandoned them, despite the Red Sea crossing and the manna from heaven. They demanded proof of God's care and provision, they put God to the test. Jesus refused to do what the Israelites had done.

"Satan, you say I should test God's promises for my own sake, for my own benefit, but God has said man shall not put God to the test, so I won't."

Do you realize what monumental thing is happening here? For the first time in human history a son of Adam is standing up to Satan and winning, victoriously defeating the enemy. For the first time there is hope and there is help for us, for all who are in Christ Jesus.

He is being the new Adam, the second Adam, the totally obedient man, man as he was supposed to be, man as it will now be possible for him to be because of Jesus.

***Do you notice what is especially wicked about Satan quoting Scripture?***

Satan knows Scripture, and he knows it's true. He knows God is real and has power and God is able to do the things these Scriptures say. He knows the exaltedness and omnipotence of God and yet he is utterly unmoved by all of this. How is he not afraid, how is he not compelled to believe and submit and surrender and worship?

Is it just one truth against another, or is there a difference between what Satan is doing and what Jesus is doing? What's the difference between Satan's use of the Scripture and Jesus' use of the Scripture?

Satan has put himself over Scripture, Jesus has put himself under Scripture. One is using it, one is believing it. One hates it, one loves it. One is arrogant, one is humble. One turns God's Word into a question mark, one declares God's Word as a period. For Satan the Word is on his lips, for Jesus the Word is in His heart.

Satan is saying, "Did God really say?" Jesus is saying, "God said."

For one the Word of God has no authority, for another the Word of God has all authority. Jesus chooses to live by the Word of God and under the Word of God. The Word of God only has power and authority when we stand under it, when we humbly obey it.

**Implications and application.**

Are we living under the Word? Is it only on our lips or is it in our hearts?

Do we question, did God really say, or do we know God said?

Are we like the Israelites murmuring and grumbling and complaining, testing God in our own wildernesses? Are we testing and tempting God with our doubt and distrust?

Do we God by seeking more evidence He loves or cares or is faithful and with us?

Do we question His authority and doubt His promises?

Are we denying ourselves as Jesus did, or are we being selfish as evidenced by our anger, impatience, lust, greed, envy?

When we sin we are saying did God really say, we are saying God is not enough, or His will is not best, that our way is better than God's way.

Let us take God at His Word and believe what He has already told us and shown us, and not require of Him new proof, new signs, new evidence. Don't abuse His Fatherly kindness and goodness.

If God has given us His Son what more will He not do and what more proof do we need.

Are we confident of our identity in Christ, that we are truly beloved sons and daughters, that we don't have to prove anything or merit anything?

**I John 3:1** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

As a guard against Satan's temptations to distrust God or presume on God or be impatient for more evidence, fix in your heart the infinite grace and goodness of God already toward you.

Fix in your ear those words of God that apply to all His children, "You are my beloved son or daughter, in whom I am well pleased."

Fix your minds on the author and finisher of your faith, on Him who will bring to completion the good work He has already begun and lay ahold of Him who has already laid a hold of you.

Are we fighting sin and Satan in our own will-power or in the victory of Jesus?

This is a great and decisive battle. Just as we were in the first fight when the first Adam lost and we fell with him, so we are in this fight and when the second Adam wins, He wins for us. We are caught up in His victory.

"In order for us to be saved, Jesus had to succeed where Adam failed. Where Adam as a man broke God's covenant, Jesus as a man had to keep God's covenant if we were to be redeemed" (Ligonier).

Jesus has undone the failures of both Adam and Israel, and we share in His victory by the grace of God. The fight we are fighting, He has already won. So when we face temptations, we can face them knowing that Jesus has conquered Satan and by His power in us He enables us to be "more than conquerors" through Christ Jesus (Romans 8.37).

**Prayer:** Holy Father, we pray for your kingdom to come, your will to prevail and for you to deliver us from the evil one.