BD24-01 Satan Tempts the God-Man

We have learned many things concerning Satan and his work as a spoiler. This morning we’re going to look at a very magnificent passage of Scripture which has to do with Satan tempting the God-man. It is possible for a believer who is functioning in the right way to overcome and to be victorious over the worst thing that Satan and the demons can bring against him. This is demonstrated by that great event described for us in Scripture on the day that Jesus Christ was baptized, and he walked out of those baptismal waters, and under the guidance now of God the Holy Spirit, He was let out into the desert wilderness, and there, as a human being, in the same capacities that you and I have, came into confrontation with Satan, on a face-to-face meeting.

**Hypostatic Union**

So we’re going to look at the temptation of Jesus Christ which is very revealing to us relative to our own dealing with Satan. But before we can understand the temptation of Christ and the issue involved there, it is necessary for us to brief you on two basic biblical doctrines. One is called the doctrine of the hypostatic union. The meaning of the term “hypostatic” refers to a mode of being which gives distinct individuality. Some form of being. Hypostatic union is a theological term. You will not find it in the Bible, but it is a term of theology, and it refers to the nature of the mode of being of Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ, we have one personality. But in this one personality, and this is what hypostatic union means, you have one person, but in this one personality, are two distinct natures. There is a human nature and there is a divine nature. These two natures are distinct and they are totally dissimilar. They are true humanity and they are true deity. For this reason we call Jesus Christ the theanthropic person, or the God-man. When you are describing Jesus Christ, He is a unique being. He is the God-man. There never was another like Him, and there never will be. There are many Scriptures which deal with the hypostatic union, which you may read through at your leisure (Philippians 2:5-11, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:2-5, Romans 9:5, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 2:14).

Concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the hypostatic union teaches us that Jesus Christ has undiminished deity. He is God. He is co-equal with the Father. He is co-equal with God the Holy Spirit. In the wilderness temptation, we will see that He did not use His deity to meet Satan. Instead, He met Satan in exactly the same way that you and I have to meet him day by day—in our humanity.

Relative to the humanity of Jesus Christ, He was 100% pure humanity. He was possessed of a body and of a soul and of a human spirit, as any other human spirit. Because He had a virgin birth, He had no old sin nature, and therefore His human spirit was not dead as ours is at the point of birth, but it was alive.

So the first thing to learn about the hypostatic union is that you have one person with two natures, not just one nature such as you and I have. He had a human nature which was absolutely perfect humanity. He also had a divine nature which was undiminished deity. It was perfect deity in every respect.

These two natures are united in one person without any transfer of attributes. The two natures experience no mixture or loss of identity. Nothing goes over from the human nature to the divine, or from the divine to the human. They are never mixed in any way whatsoever. Each nature retains its own characteristics. The essence of deity cannot be transferred to the limitations of humanity, nor the finiteness of humanity to the infinity of deity. If you would transfer these, what would happen? You would have neither true humanity nor true deity. So in the person of Jesus Christ, these are not mixed in any way.

The deity of Jesus Christ does not possess the humanity nor does it indwell it. The two are not mixed in any way. The two remain separate. They do not join into one totally different nature. This is a mistake that people think concerning Jesus Christ, that His human and His divine natures coalesce in some way that they became a totally different third kind of nature. Not true. The two separate natures are combined, but they retain their identity in this one person. It’s more than just compatibility or harmony of the two natures. It is a true union of separate entities.

So both the divine and the human attributes belong to the one person, the incarnate Jesus Christ. So at His first advent, the God-man Jesus Christ could be omnipotent when it came to His deity, but He could also be weak, physically weak, at the same time, and limited. The humanity of Jesus Christ could be ignorant concerning doctrine, which He overcame the same way you overcome ignorance about doctrine, in that you study and learn it. At the same time, in His deity, He had omniscience and He knew full doctrine. In the hypostatic union, two natures in one person, He could have these apparently contradictory features about His being.

In fulfilling the purpose of His incarnation, certain attributes of His deity were not used. However, these attributes of deity, while not used, were not surrendered or destroyed. They were simply put aside.

**Kenosis**

This brings us another doctrine, the kenosis, where He deliberately limited the outward display of the attributes of His deity. He gave up the independent use of His divine attributes, is what it amounted to, while He lived here on the earth. And He operated within human limitations. For this reason, when Satan came to a head-on confrontation with Jesus Christ in the wilderness, what He struck at was not the deity of Christ. But what he struck at was the same thing he strikes at in you and me. He struck the humanity. Therefore, we can learn a great deal on how to cope with Satan and the demonic world from the experience of Jesus Christ in that wilderness temptation.

There was a reason why Jesus Christ had to have a humanity that was pure humanity. First, in order to be the savior of humanity (Hebrews 2:14-15, Philippians 2:7-8). If He was to be savior, He had to be human. It is impossible for Jesus Christ to die on the cross as God. Deity cannot die. If He was to die on the cross for our sins, it was necessary for Him to be human. Deity cannot be subject to spiritual death. Only humanity can be subject to that. So for that reason, to be savior, He had to be human.

Secondly, He had to be human in order to be a mediator (Job 9:2, 32-33, 1 Timothy 2:5-6). A mediator has to be equal with both parties. If He’s going to be a mediator between God and man, He has to be equal to God on the one side, and He has to be equal to man on the other side. He has to be God on the one side and he has to be humanity on the other side, or He could not be the go-between, the mediator between God and man.

Thirdly, it was necessary for Him to be human in order to be our priest (Hebrews 10:5, 10-14) because a priest has to be part of those whom he represents before God. Jesus Christ could not represent us before God as God. He could only represent us before God as what we are, that is, human beings.

Fourth, He had to be human in order to be king and to fulfill thereby the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16, Psalm 89:20-37). Jesus Christ is coming to sit upon the throne of David as the last king of the Davidic line. He had to be a human being to do this.

Now you can immediately see that as you view the life of Jesus Christ, as you read of His activities, that you will discover that His actions will flow from one of these two natures. For that reason, you will discover, concerning Him, that sometimes His deity alone is acting. John 8:58 speaks about His eternal existence. There are certain attributes which are true only of His deity. All of the qualities of the essence of God—His sovereignty, His righteousness, omniscience, omnipresence, veracity, immutability, eternal life, love, and so on. All of these things are true of His deity alone.

Then there are attributes that are true of His humanity alone. John 19:28 says that He was thirsty. Now God cannot be thirsty. So when you read about a man-God, Jesus Christ, being thirsty, you know it’s speaking about His human side.

Then there are attributes that are true of His entire person. It is the man-God who is redeemer, savior, prophet, priest, and king. John 11:28 refers to Him in this act of hypostatic union.

So when you read about the attributes of Christ, it will be either in His human, or His divine, or as His person as a whole, where the two unite within Him as under the doctrine of the hypostatic union.

**Impeccability**

Now this leads us to another doctrine. This is the doctrine of the impeccability of Christ. Jesus Christ did not have an old sin nature (1 John 3:5). The reason that He did not have an old sin nature is that His body was not formed by the natural process of human generation. His body was a special creation through God the Holy Spirit, and having no human father through whom to transmit the old sin nature, He was born in the same condition in which Adam was originally created, without a sin nature. During His life, He committed no sins whatsoever. He never committed a single sin during the period of His incarnation (1 Peter 1:19, Hebrews 4:15).

When Jesus Christ was tempted, He was tempted in the area of His humanity only. Deity cannot be tempted with evil, nor can it be the author of sin, and it cannot solicit others to sin. God does not tempt other people to sin. Hebrews 4:15, Matthew 4:2-11, and James 1:13 tell us about that. In the hypostatic union, all of the temptations that Jesus Christ faced had to come from the outside. In this condition, whatever temptation struck the person of the God-man had to come from without. He had no old sin nature, so there was nothing within Him to tempt Him. You and I, by and large, receive our temptations from the old sin nature that is within us.

Adam was created without an old sin nature, but Jesus Christ was born without one (Hebrews 4:15). The first Adam faced an outside temptation, as we have already seen. That outside temptation was his right woman handing him the fruit in her fallen condition inviting him to join her in sin. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, also faced a temptation from outside. That was Satan offering Him a shortcut to become the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords of all the earth, as we shall see on the mount of temptation. All temptations to Jesus Christ are therefore directed to this part of His being—to His humanity. His humanity was temptable. That’s what we’re getting at. In the humanity of Jesus Christ, He was temptable. Therefore, all the temptations that He faced were temptations to His humanity.

Probably the greatest temptation He faced to His humanity was in the Garden of Gethsemane when He had to face the cross, and He had to make the decision to go or “no-go” at that point, within the plan of God, toward the cross. The first Adam failed in his volition test, but the last Adam, in the Garden of Gethsemane passed it with flying colors (Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:35-36, Luke 22:42).

Probably the second greatest temptation that the humanity of Christ faced was that in the wilderness. The humanity of Jesus Christ was temptable. There is a theological term which is used for that. It comes from the Latin, and it is “peccable.” The humanity of Jesus Christ was peccable. It was open to be led into sin. He was able to sin. To say that Jesus Christ, in His humanity, was peccable means that He was able to sin. However, as we have seen, He also had another side to His being, and that was deity. The deity side was not temptable. It was impeccable. That means, in His deity, He could not sin.

Now, going back to the hypostatic union, we connect these together, and you can see what this means. This means that there came on the scene of history a human being who, because He had two natures, one of which was temptable (peccable), able to sin, and one of them which was not temptable (impeccable), not able to sin, and that they were joined together in one person.

The humanity of Jesus Christ was like a little fine wire. You could take that wire in your hands, and with a snap, you could break it. It was peccable. It was temptable. It was able to sin and to break under temptation. But, the deity of Jesus Christ was like a tremendous steel bar. It was impeccable. You could not break it. It was not able to sin. What happened in the hypostatic union was that this steel bar was welded here to the wire, in one person. Consequently, of the person of Jesus Christ, it came true that He was not only able to not to sin, but He was not able to sin. He could not sin because humanity was joined to the presence of deity.

In His humanity, He could suffer certain things, but they were non-moral things. Physical weakness, fatigue, sorrow, death, hunger, thirst. But when He was combined with His deity, it was said of the person of Jesus Christ He was able not to sin and he was not able to sin. In other words, the question comes up, would it be possible for Jesus Christ, as the God-man, to sin. The answer is, “No.” Within the distinctions of His nature, His human nature was able to sin. It was open to sin. It was open to being broken. But when joined to the presence of the divine nature, it became impossible for Him as a person to sin. That was the perfect plan, the wisdom, the marvelous wisdom and plan of God that He brought about into the world this kind of a person.

Alright, with these two doctrines, the doctrine of the impeccability of Christ which means that the person of the God-man was not able to sin, and with the hypostatic union which explains why He was impeccable, that the humanity and the deity were joined in one person, would you turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 4, and let’s look at this wilderness temptation.

**The Wilderness Temptations**

**Matthew 4**

Here’s the nature of this trial. First of all, Jesus Christ is in hypostatic union. His impeccability will now be demonstrated in the wilderness temptation. The wilderness is a genuine temptation because He is temptable from anything without. He is not temptable from anything within because He does not have an old sin nature. However, the intensity of this outward temptation was even greater for Jesus Christ than it would be for you and me. Because we have an old sin nature, it would be not so hard to say, “Yes” to sin and go along with it. It was very offensive and very loathsome for Him, and very grievous for Him to be faced with the idea of saying, “Yes,” going in positive volition to a temptation.

Now what Adam and Jesus Christ faced without a sin nature is beyond our experience. We have never had the experience of knowing what it is to face sin without an old nature. But in this situation, here you have a God-man in hypostatic union, without an old nature, ready to face the arch-enemy of God in the universe, Satan himself.

During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, His humanity was sustained by the Holy Spirit just as yours and mine is. All of the spiritual resources that Jesus Christ at this moment in the wilderness temptation, you and I also have at our disposal through God the Holy Spirit who indwells us.

We begin at verse one. “Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness.” The word “then” is the Greek word “tote.” This word is an adverb indicating a chronological sequence. It indicates a sequence in the story, and it will keep reoccurring in this passage, indicating to us that this comes next, this comes next, and this comes next. In the case here in verse one, the “then” follows immediately in the context upon the previous chapter of the baptism of Jesus Christ.

What this little Greek word is telling us is that immediately that Jesus Christ walked up out of the waters of baptism, in which God the Holy Spirit came and empowered and filled and took possession of Him, in his humanity now, to be the sustaining force through the three years of his ministry—at that point, Satan moved in for this confrontation with the Son of God. At this point, God the Holy Spirit moved the God-man out into the wilderness to a high place on a hill where Satan was waiting for the confrontation. Satan waiting; God the Holy Spirit taking the Son of God and now moving Him up.

All the life of Jesus Christ had to function under the guidance of god the Holy Spirit, just as you and I do. In a moment of acting on His own, in the hypostatic union, though He was deity—if His deity should take over and start functioning for His humanity, that’s all. He would have stepped out of the plan of God, and He would have been guilty of sin. Everything that Jesus Christ did had to be as God the Spirit moved him and said, “This do, this do, this don’t do.” Which is exactly the condition that you and I are placed in during this age of grace, and exactly the resources that we have available.

So the wilderness is a genuine temptation. Then, after the baptism, this is the chronological sequence, there follows the preparation of the unique Son of God being moved to meet Satan. “Was led up.” “Then was Jesus led up.” This means He ascended to the desert place from wherever He was, probably near Jerusalem. The word “led up” is in the aorist tense which means that point of time when Satan was waiting up there on the hill for Him, ready for the temptation battle. And it’s passive, which means He was led there by the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn’t decide to meet Satan on this ground. This was now His humanity being guided by the Spirit of God.

“By” is the Greek word “hupo.” That means “under.” That is, Jesus Christ was being guided “under” the Holy Spirit. He was under the control of the Holy Spirit as He moved up to this high point. This is a participle which means that a major principal is now going to be faced; that is the hypostatic union and the impeccability of Jesus Christ.

“He went there to be tempted.” The word “tempted” here is “peirazo.” This means to be tested to determine the quality. That particular Greek word for testing to determine what quality is there. So Jesus Christ is going to be tested now to determine the quality of the nature of His being, the hypostatic union. This is the very thing that confronted Satan in his temptation—to see what kind of a being he was. He’s going to set before Jesus Christ what Isaiah 14 tells us was set before Satan—a strong temptation, and that is to take over the kingdoms without cross.

The aorist here again is a point of time. It’s the beginning of the Lord’s ministry. It’s passive. He would receive the testing. He isn’t going to give it. And it’s infinitive which indicates a purpose. Infinitive means purpose. It is God’s purpose to demonstrate the nature of His son.

So we read that He’s led up into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tested by the devil. This again is this Greek word “hupo,” or “by” which means “under”—under the charge of the devil. The devil is in charge of the attack. He has laid it out. So Jesus Christ has to defend Himself on the resources that are available to Him, only as a human being. It’s no contest if He uses His deity.

So the part that Jesus Christ is going to play here is a part in resolving the angelic conflict. This is part of Project Footstool, to show that God in His holiness and love is faire when he deals with negative volition in a human being, because Jesus is going to act as Adam should have acted.

So the Holy Spirit came to sustain Christ during His earthly ministry (Matthew 3:16). John 3:33 says the Holy Spirit is given to Him without measure, just as to us. The ministry under the Holy Spirit was a subject of prophecy (Isaiah 11:2-3, 61:1-2). The Holy Spirit was a source of power to the humanity of Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:18, 28). In His deity He is coequal and coeternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus Christ comes to this wilderness, He has been functioning under that system that God has provided—that grace system for gaining spiritual insights and understanding, the same one that you have. So He has developed a spiritual mature in His soul, just as you are doing. And the result is that when He comes at the age of 30 to meet Satan under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, He has a mature spiritual maturity structure, and He is able to meet Satan as a result of having used the grace system of receiving spiritual things. Luke 2:40 and verse 50 tells you about His doing this since the days of His childhood.

Matthew 4:2 says, “And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred.” The word “fasted” is “nesteuo,” and it means simply having abstained from food, and perhaps some other legitimate things for the purpose of prayer and Bible study. And it is an aorist participle which means that His fasting came before the main verb which is “he was hungry.” He fasted for forty days and forty nights and now He came to the point where He was hunger. The word “hungry” is “peinao,” and it means an intense desire for food. He was very hunger.

So here’s a point in the experience of Christ. He has fasted for forty days and nights. He has drunk water, of course, during this time, but no food. He is now very hungry. He has personally experienced this hunger, and He has a bonafide desire for food. At this point, Satan shows up on the scene to confront the humanity of Jesus Christ with a series of temptations. So the stage is set.

Temptation number one, verses 3 and 4: “And when the tempter came to Him, He said, ‘If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread.’” First Satan says he’s going to deal with the relationship of the humanity of Christ to God the Holy Spirit. The Lord is being tempted to go it alone in His humanity and to operate independently of God the Holy Spirit. This is not in the plan of God for a human being.

So Jesus Christ has been led into the wilderness through the filling of the Holy Spirit, and He has remained so up to this ping. Now what’s he going to do? Satan has a plan. His plan is to try to get Jesus Christ to violate His true humanity and to rely on His deity, and take those stones and turn them into the bread that He needs. In this way, Satan will have frustrated Project Footstool, and salvation will be impossible.

He’s not trying to get Jesus Christ to produce bread through the Holy Spirit. He didn’t say, “Pray that God the Holy Spirit would turn these stones into bread and supply you with food.” That would have been a legitimate thing for him to do. But what he said was, “If you are the Son of God.” And this was a first class condition if. He wasn’t questioning that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He was saying, “Since you are the Son of God, you know that and I know that, turn these stones into bread and meet your need. It was a very subtle attack upon Christ acting independently as a human being of God the Holy Spirit, and He’s the only person that could have done it. You and I couldn’t perform a miraculous thing independent of God. He could. He could have called upon His deity in this way. In His deity H was sovereign, but in His humanity He had a human will that had to go positive toward God.

So here was a … plan if Jesus Christ would do this to supply a legitimate need, Satan will have frustrated what God planned to do to the angelic host. Sin would be involved in this negative volition. He would have acted independently of God. You and I are called to do the same thing today, to act independently of God the Holy Spirit.

The tempter is Satan. It says he “came” which is the word “proserchomai.” This part here “pros” means “face to face.” That is was an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation. Satan looked at Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ looked at Satan. That’s how Satan came to Him on this hill. And he faced Him in this way, in a moment of time, inviting Him to reject what God had said.

“If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be turned into bread.” And He was the Son of God in hypostatic union, and tempted to reject all that he knew of doctrine and act upon His own. “Command” means to tell them. Give these stones an order that they’ll have to obey. That be made or that they become bread in order to meet the need of His Humanity. And there was a little subtle challenge here in verse 3, “being made bread.” This is in the subjunctive mode which means maybe they will and maybe they won’t. It was another little subtle temptation of almost challenging the Lord.

“You are the Son of God, but are you still the Son of God in hypostatic union. Is your deity really still in full force? Can you really claim to be God as you once were before you took on a human body? And the temptation included for Jesus Christ to prove Himself. Remember grace never proves itself. Grace makes a declaration of truth on the basis of doctrine and doesn’t run around trying to prove itself. Unfortunately, we Christians who don’t understand grace are forever running around trying to prove ourselves to people and to prove people are wrong. Rather than the fact that we saw last Sunday, negative volition has within it the structure of making God your enemy so that you are doomed no matter what anybody proves to you or doesn’t prove to you. Once you step out of the source of blessing, you are doomed.

Now this is what Satan is trying to do with Jesus Christ. Here’s the Son of God, the magnificent God-man, who has known the fullness of His relationships with God. He has grown in spiritual maturity. Now Satan comes along and says, “Prove yourself. Can you really change these stones into bread?” And Jesus Christ could have said, “Well, you are challenging the living God. I certainly will.” And we would have been doomed to eternity in hell had he done that.

He answered, “It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the man of God. And He gave him a specific answer. It is the aorist tense and this word answered is in the passive which means that God himself did not come up with it Himself again. The God-man is not acting out of His deity. He knew well what the answer was. Instead He speaks as a human being and He speaks from what? The Word of God is a declaration. It is written in the Bible that the real substance of life is a life led by God the Holy Spirit, and is not to be found in the detail of life which is bread. Now bread alone shows that it is a necessity. It doesn’t eliminate bread. “Man shall not live by bread alone” shows that bread is important, but it is a detail. The thing that is important is doctrine.

Now here’s the principal. If you act upon what proceeds out of the mouth of God and study doctrine, and learn doctrine, and go positive toward it, then God is obligated to bring to you the provisions of the details that you need. God is obligated to bring you the spiritual details as well. If you go positive, God is obligated to keep you up here in first class Christianity that you came into. If you pursue details and you go negative, He’ll take you down to something that seems to you like it’s great. Just like it did to Saul. It could not have been more magnificent in his eyes. It was far more desirable than what Samuel had told Saul to do. He didn’t realize that he was stepping down. Once you have committed yourself to doctrine, then you have obligated God to take care of your detail in some means, and God is going to see that you get your bread that you need, but it’s still a detail. Every word that God has said, that’s what ultimately is important to us.

Now comes a second temptation in verse 5. “Then the devil taketh Him up to the Holy City (that is Jerusalem), and setteth Him on the pinnacle of the temple.” Here He’s going to deal with the believer’s relationship to the Word. What has Jesus Christ done? He has answered the first temptation by quoting Scripture and bringing doctrine. Satan says, “OK. Let’s talk about the Bible.” So he takes him up on the high point of the temple and puts him at the edge of the temple over the Kedron valley which is about a 600-foot drop, and then he proceeds to quote Scripture to him. He quotes from the Old Testament. Here we have the word “then” again, the next thing in the chronological sequence. He takes him up and puts Him next to himself. This is “paralambano” in the Greek which means “alongside of.” Satan’s standing right there next to Jesus Christ up there on the pinnacle. The wind is blowing and you can see the whole city of Jerusalem and all the countryside, and you look down, and 600 feet is a long way down.

When you fly an airplane, you come in at 800 feet in the landing pattern, and that looks awfully high.

600 feet. Now what does he tell Jesus to do? He says, “If thou be the Son of God,” again first class condition here in verse six, “Since you are the Son of God, just through yourself over. Jump into the valley below. It’s aorist—do it now. Active—by your own volition. And it’s imperative—a command of Satan. And Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12, “He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest that any time thou shalt dash thy foot against a stone.” “Charge” means He shall give His angels a command, and what the command here is that in the person of the Messiah, the angels will catch Him and protect Him from death.

Now the verses in Psalm do not contain the words “at any time.” Here is a subtle insertion of Satan. God did not say “At any time” He would do this, because God says He will do this at the time when the Messiah is acting in positive volition. Now suppose that Jesus Christ in His humanity looked down and said, “Yes, that’s what the Bible says, and I’ll just do that,” and He had just jumped over the edge. They would have been scraping of the body of the God-man off the floor of the canyon. He would have committed suicide. Which is exactly what Satan was trying to get Him to do. Because if he could have gotten Him to commit suicide at that point, that’s the end of Project Footstool. There would have been no way for salvation to be provided. It was a very clever and a very brilliant plan.

Anybody who does not understand a true interpretation of what the Bible says can be played for a fool. But Christ in His humanity for 30 years previously in His lifetime had been preparing in spiritual maturity so that He know how to quote Scripture, and nobody could come along and tell Him to take a direction that that Scripture didn’t mean to take at all. Because what was the Father’s plan was not for Jesus Christ to die by committing suicide in the Kedron valley, buy for Him to die by His death upon the cross in the provision of salvation for us. So Jesus Christ understood immediately what Satan was trying to do. On the cross later He did dismiss His life. But what Satan is quoting here, he is mis-applying.

So what Jesus does is to quote back to Him in verse seven another piece of doctrine which is in Deuteronomy 6:16, “Jesus said unto Him, ‘It is written again, ‘Thou shall not put the Lord thy God to the test.’’” “Thou shall not.” You will not tempt the Lord. And the Greek word means “from the outside.” You’re not going to come outwardly and put an outward temptation against Jesus Christ. Since Jesus is the Son of God, He does not bring temptations from the outside against God. He does not say, “Here God, I am going to jump over.”

You know there are some groups of Christians who take Scriptures such as the early church being able to handle snakes and drink poison and it would not hurt them. And they say, “You see, the Bible says this is what should be true of Christians.” One of the greatest mistakes that Pentecostalism makes is that whatever took place in the early church should take place today. The next few Sundays we’re going to go into that, and the fallacy that is behind that statement. If that were true, then we should have healings, we should have tongues, we should have the whole bit. There are certain people who get together and handle poison snakes. Some popular evangelical religious evangelists like to use the word “fundamentalist” very unfairly and very non-intellectually. They use the word “fundamentalist” in describing those people because these people are very basic in their scriptural views and they are very literal, so they’re going to handle snakes. Well, they have two ways out. They don’t get bitten by the snakes or they’ve developed enough immunity to survive, and that’s the only way they make it. Otherwise, they’re in for it because that scripture is not going to protect them.

So Jesus Christ says, “No, you’re wrong Satan. That isn’t what that verse means, and if I were to jump in this valley, I would be tempting God Himself, and I would die.” So anybody who’s thinking about going to downtown Dallas and getting on top of the Southland Life (building) and start flapping your wings, you are going to go straight down because this scripture does not apply to you.

The third temptation is in verses 8 through 10. Satan now comes up with his ace that he has kept up his sleeve until this time. “Again the devil taketh Him up into an exceedingly high mountain and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of men.” Satan uses his supreme appeal now. He offers Jesus Christ the rulership over all of the kingdoms of the world. Satan himself gave up everything he had in heaven for these kingdoms. This is the very reason he rebelled against God.

Verse 9, “He said unto Him, ‘All these things will I give thee if thou fall down and worship me.’” If Jesus will worship Satan, he will receive the crown of the world ruler without having to go to the cross. Now isn’t that appealing to the God-man? He’s appealing to the humanity. “Jesus, you will become someday the ruler of the world. That’s God’s plan for you, right?” That’s right. “In the millennium, you are going to be King of King and Lord of Lords. Isn’t that right, Jesus?” That’s right. That’s good doctrine. “Well, Jesus, here’s how you can do it. I own these kingdoms now.”

When I was taught this as a boy in Sunday School, I don’t ever remember any Sunday School teacher saying that this was one time the devil was not telling a lie. I don’t ever remember a Sunday School teacher saying, “He did own those kingdoms, and he could have given them to the Lord.” And I grew up with the idea that this was just another one of those con practices of Satan, and that he wasn’t telling the truth. He is telling the truth. “You can have these kingdoms. All you have to do is bow down in respect to me, Jesus. That’s all. Just even on one knee. Just on one knee in front of me.” Lucifer told the God-man, “… on one knee, and that will do it. And I’ll give you, without the cross, and you will be ruler and controller.”

Of course, the joker in the pile is that Satan would have been superior to Christ. He would have been the ruler above Jesus Christ. And he would have been continued in the upper hand over the Lord, and the result would have been again, Project Footstool made impossible. That’s the point of all the temptation in the wilderness—somehow to get a human being to so act here so that we could not be saved. The Father’s plan is to rule in the millennium after the cross. Satan takes Jesus and shows Him these glamorous kingdoms of the world that he now rules (John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11).

Now verse 9 says, “If thou will fall down and worship me…,” and this is a third class condition, meaning “Maybe you will and maybe you won’t.” Satan doesn’t know what Christ is going to do. It’s a question.

Well verse 10 is the answer. “Jesus says unto him, ‘Be gone, Satan.’” And “Be Gone” is “hupago.” This is a strong word that means, “Get out.” And Jesus quotes the doctrine of Deuteronomy 6:13 which says, “It is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’” So Jesus says, “I’ll stay with the plan of God. This involves taking me to the cross but that’s what I’m going to do.” And when Jesus says to Satan, “Be gone,” it’s in the present tense which means “get out and keep going.” It’s active—Jesus makes the decision, and it’s imperative—it’s a command. Jesus says, “Beat it. That’s it.” Satan had nothing more to offer the Son of God.

Verse 11 says, “Then the devil leaveth Him and behold angels came and ministered unto Him.” Again you have the word “then” which shows that the next thing chronologically was that the angels moved on the scene. Satan has turned to run away. He has been removed from the presence of the Lord now. They had been face-to-face up to this time. Then the elect angels come in to minister to the exhausted Lord. And since it was in the plan of god to eat food, the detail of necessity, they supply Him with food at this time.

The point of all this, dear friend, is that His magnificent victory in the wilderness makes ours possible today. Because He overcame Satan in exactly the same way you and I overcome him—through a knowledge of Bible doctrine. So that when Satan comes along through the world, through our old sin nature, through all the various appeals about us, in some means, along comes Satan himself with a temptation, we are able to answer and turn to doctrine. If you do not have doctrine, you cannot stand up against Satan. The only thing that preserved the God-man Jesus Christ was God the Holy Spirit cycling up the right information to His mind every time Satan brought a temptation. And every issue and every problem that you and I face in life can only be met if we have the right information cycled up from our human spirits. If you don’t have it in there, you don’t know a thing. And Jesus Christ in this wilderness temptation is the example of how to be protected against fool’s gold when it comes to what Satan can bring against us. If you know the Word, you’ve got the answers.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971