



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Matthew 3:13-17

"The Life of Christ: The Temptation of Christ"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Before we begin our reading, may I remind you of something that is very obvious, but is very important for an adequate understanding of this temptation account. It immediately follows the account of the baptism, which was concluded with the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now the 1st verse of the 4th chapter,

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' 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.' Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 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.' Jesus said unto him, 'It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' 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; and

saith unto him, 'All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'
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.' Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold,
angels came and ministered unto him."

May this reading from God's word be blessed so that we understand it. Shall we
bow together in prayer?

[Prayer] Our gracious God and Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for these great
events in our Lord's life, which we have been studying, for the unusual principles that
come from them and, most of all, for the way in which they remind us that he loved us
and gave himself for us. And that the life that he lived was one life of suffering from
beginning to end and reach its climax in the great act of atonement when he died for our
sins upon the cross at Calvary.

And, O Father, we pray that as we listen to the word today that we may come to
appreciate him more as a result of it. We thank Thee for all that he has done and desire,
Lord, that in the meetings of this assembly of Christians there shall always be the sense of
devotion and gratitude to Jesus Christ for that which he has done for us.

Enable us, O God, to come to the place where we do not in reality put our trust in
ourselves in any way, but lean reliantly upon him who has done it all for us. And may
that note of gratitude so permeate our hearts that the humility of God may be upon our
faces and within our hearts.

We thank Thee for each one present. We know, Lord, that there are many
spiritual needs represented here. And we pray, O God, that through the ministry of the
word, Thou wilt lift us up and lift us up so that we are in touch with Thee. We thank
Thee for Jesus Christ and for this word and desire to honor him.

Lord, we think of this country in which we are living today and we pray again for it, for its leadership. We pray for the Armed Forces. We pray especially for the testimony to Jesus Christ in and among our men. May, O God, those who have gone forth with Christ in their hearts and who are in Vietnam, be witnesses for our Lord Jesus in a significant way in these days of tragedy. And we pray, O God, that Thou wilt strengthen the believers there. Encourage them and use them and, O Father, we pray for the many who are there who do not know Jesus Christ, for whom a bullet means eternity without Christ. O God, we pray that Thou wilt speak to their hearts, to all whose hearts are open to Thee; we pray that Thou will fill them with Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee for those who are preaching the word, not only there, but throughout the four corners of the earth. Wilt Thou, O God, minister through them today and may this be a day of blessing and edification for the true church of Jesus Christ.

We commit our meeting to Thee and pray that as we meet and listen to Thy word our devotion to Jesus Christ shall grow and our knowledge of Thy word shall grow and that the burden and passion of our hearts for others may also deepen. In this we ask in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] In the morning Ministry of the Word, we have been studying, "The Highlights of the Greatest Life" in the Gospel of Matthew. Today the subject is, "The Temptation of Christ." Against the background of the desert and against the background of wild beasts, two solitary figures struggle for a huge stake. The stake for which they struggle is the souls of men and the kingdom of God.

As you look at that struggle, after a few hours, one of the figures leaves the field apparently defeated and the other also leaves the field, but strange to say, instead of marching forth with head high, because he had won the victory, he moves off toward the Via Dolorosa, the sad way.

A few years later, just a few, this same person, who apparently has won the victory in the wilderness, hangs upon a cross and cries out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" From the outward circumstances, if we looked at it simply in that way, we would surely gain the impression that the won who won the victory was really the one who lost.

In fact, I think if you were to ask any person today, "Who really won the victory?" one who does not know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they would inevitably say and must say in the light of the apparent facts, "Jesus lost." And yet in the account itself, there is evidence that he did not lose. You noticed, of course, in the 4th verse, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, the angels came and ministered unto him." He did not lose after all. He really won.

The temptation is a remarkable story. As a matter of fact, it's a kind of replay of the story of the Garden of Eden. These two men or two individuals, Adam the first and Adam the last, represent in themselves the history of men. The last Adam must retrace the history of the first Adam. The paradise that Adam the first lost, Adam the last must regain.

Augustine said many years ago, "The entire moral and spiritual history of the world revolves around two people: Adam and Christ." That, I think, is the New Testament viewpoint. The circumstances of the temptation, however, are remarkably dissimilar. In the case of Adam the first, he was tempted in a garden, a garden that is called the Garden of Eden. Adam the last is tested in a wilderness, "A wilderness, which at the time was peopled with wild beasts," Mark says. Adam the first was well fed. Adam the last had fasted for forty days and was very weak and hungry. Adam the first was the first attempt of Satan to entice men, but Adam the last must be tempted by Satan after he has had at least four thousand years practice.

When we think of the temptation there are some other questions that crowd in upon us. There are the kinds of questions that are discussed in theological classrooms,

but which I'm sure might bore a great number of you. Let me just suggest them and kind of suggest a direct answer to them.

The first question that comes to mind is, "Is our Lord impeccable?" Now I'm not asking, "Is he sinless?" We know the Bible states very plainly that Jesus is sinless. When we say, "Is Jesus Christ impeccable?" we do not ask the question, "Is he sinless?" We do not say, "Did he fail?" but we ask the question, "Was it possible for him to fail?" Is Jesus Christ the kind of person who not only did not sin, but who could not have sinned?

If he could not have sinned then he was impeccable and I answer, without any hesitation in my own heart, that Jesus Christ was impeccable. There are some things that even God cannot do. God cannot sin. God cannot be tempted. The theologians like to say, "Was Jesus Christ's *posse non peccare* or *non posse peccare*?" Was he able not to sin or was he not able to sin? Was it that Jesus went into that test able to sin, but proved that he was able not to sin by the fact that he did not fail or was from the beginning Jesus not able to sin? Well we say, at least I say, that he was *non posse peccare*; he was not able to sin. The holiness that Jesus Christ possessed was more than sinlessness. He was absolutely holy and could not have sinned.

Now if you just think for one brief moment about the person of our Lord Jesus, I think you would come to the same conclusion, for Jesus Christ was not a human person who was raised to the power of divinity by reason of the success of the temptation. He was not a human person such as you and I are, and by reason of that testing became the God-man. Jesus Christ existed before he ever came to this human scene. At the time of his incarnation, he took to himself an additional nature. Jesus is not a human person who possesses a divine nature. He is a divine person who took, at a point in time, an additional nature, a human nature, to himself. And because he is a divine person, possessing a human nature, it is impossible, of course, for Jesus Christ to sin. He existed long before he was born in the manger in Bethlehem.

I've quoted often in the past year the text from Micah chapter 5, verse 2, and when I attend the BMA this summer; I'll learn a second verse. But this one is so appropriate that I think that I want to quote it again and it goes something like this. And mind you, I know the zip code of it, its Micah chapter 5 and verse 2, but I'm not sure that I've learned it letter perfect. It's something like this, "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though Thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of Thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." In other words, Jesus Christ existed from eternity past and at a point in time, he was found in the manger in Bethlehem, in bodily form with human nature, an additional nature. Because he is a divine person, it is absolutely impossible for him to sin. He is as mighty to overcome Satan as his mightiest nature is and he has divine nature and, hence, cannot sin.

Now if I were to try to illustrate this, I might use an old illustration, and modify it slightly used by one of our great theologians. Let's just imagine that by the side of this pulpit, I have hanging down a very thin iron wire and I invite all of you to come forward and to break this wire. And some of you do come forward and you easily break it and I say, "Now this represents the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ." Being human, of course, and having human nature, obviously the human nature is temptable and peccable because we can sin.

But, at the same time, at the other side of the pulpit I stand a steel beam, which is quite thick. Now I invite you who have come forward and have broken the iron wire to come and try the steel beam and, of course, you come and you strain, but you cannot do anything with it. Then for the sake of illustration and just illustration, mind you, I take this iron wire, which represents the human nature. And the steel beam which in my illustration not completely and perfectly, of course, but represents the divine nature and I take this thin iron wire and I wrap it around the steel beam. And then I invite you who came and broke the iron wire to come and attempt to do it again. And, of course, you

cannot do it because now the strength of the steel beam has become the strength of the iron wire. And because Jesus Christ was a divine person, a divine person, he is as mighty as his mightiest nature is and, hence, Jesus Christ could not have sinned.

Now, of course, the next question comes immediately if you are thinking, and I hope that you still are thinking, "Well then if Jesus Christ could not have sinned, how could he be tempted? Was he temptable?" And yes the answer is "Yes." Jesus Christ is temptable for temptability depends upon the constitutional susceptibility of human nature and he had the same human nature that you and I have apart from sin. Because he is human, he can be tempted. Because he is divine, he cannot sin.

Now the evidence that he was tempted in the realm of his human nature, at least in this account, is seen when we read that 11th verse again, "Then the devil leaveth him and behold angels came and ministered unto him." Angels do not minister to deity. Deity does not need the help of angels. Deity does not need the help of men. Deity exists by itself holy in the perfection of its own holiness. It's difference from humanity. When angels come and minister to our Lord, it is an evidence of the fact that this temptation touched his human nature. It was a genuine testing.

You and I might take a pop gun and fire it at Gibraltar. We have tested Gibraltar. It's not likely that we shall move it by such means, but we have tested it. An invincible army may be really attacked. SMU may battle Navy and Navy may try, but Navy may not overcome. Now our Lord Jesus Christ, moving from the ridiculous to the sublime, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ was completely tested and yet he could not have sinned. The iron wire hanging from this side of the pulpit may feel all of your strain of trying to break it, but because the strength of the steel beam is within it, the iron wire cannot be broken.

Now this is a simple human illustration of divine truth and let me hasten to go on to say that theologians have differed over this and good theologians. For example, the Presbyterian Charles Hodge and the Presbyterian William G. T. Shedd differed over this

particular point, "Was Jesus Christ impeccable?" Shedd and I are right and Hodge was wrong, but they differed and they remained good friends. And so, if you don't accept the true doctrine of the word then that's all right. In this point will let you be heretical over the person of our Lord and his impeccability, but I think as I've presented it at least you should be kind of persuaded that probably Jesus Christ was impeccable. Our salvation does not depend upon such things, but you know there are things just like this with which we are very much interested or in which we're very much interested.

A second point that I want to stress before we look at the account is I want to try to answer a kind of objection to the temptation account that has sometimes been raised. Is this account a genuine account? How can we really be sure that Matthew has given us the facts? I read a commentary some years ago now on the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, on Mark specifically, in which the author who is a professor at Duke University has said that, "The temptation account and the baptism account are simply the reverend speculations of the early members of the Christian community." In other words, these are not true events at all, but just the speculations of those who were especially spiritual in the Christian community and they most likely invented these accounts in order to explain the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let me hasten to say that no one would ever have invented an account like the temptation. It, like the baptism, is an account in our Lord's life that raises all kinds of questions, just the questions that I have discussed a moment ago. It is quite obvious that if you open up the Book of Acts, and read the first few chapters of the Acts, and look at the men whose story is told there that not one of them could have invented an account like the temptation account.

How did we get this account then? Why we obtained this account from our Lord Jesus Christ himself. It's quite obvious that he is the only one who could have given us this account. And if I were to try to guess the place where Jesus revealed the fact of the temptation to the disciples, I think I would turn on to the 16th chapter of the Gospel of

Matthew in which our Lord Jesus has just announced that he's going to Jerusalem to die. And here in the 21st verse of Matthew 16 we read, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Now at this point, the announcement of death, Peter we read, "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee'. And the moment that Peter offered this suggestion to Jesus, he received this stinging reply in return, "Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Now it is evident from the reply of our Lord Jesus to Peter that Peter was not speaking *ex cathedra* when he said "Be it far from Thee, Lord." Peter, like he does so often, he puts his foot into his mouth by speaking out when he should keep his mouth shut. Isn't that so true of all of us who are Christians? We want to offer a word or two before we'd had a chance to think and our tongue always move ahead of our minds and Peter has spoken. He's the American in the crowd. He's always putting his foot in his mouth and so he speaks when he should be silent.

And so, Jesus must rebuke him and say to him, "Why Peter, don't you understand that the reason that I am here is Calvary? Everything that I am doing is moving toward the time when I must offer myself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the human race. Don't you realize, Peter, if you take the position of opposing my sojourn to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that you are in effect taking the position of Satan? And I want to remind you, Peter, that right in the beginning, Satan tempted me and tried to get me to turn aside from the will of God." And at this point, he unfolded to Peter and unto the others, who were with him, the facts of the temptation. So I think if we are to look for a place where Jesus revealed the temptation to the disciples that would be the place. No one else could have invented it. This story is obviously a piece of spiritual autobiography told to the disciples by Jesus himself.

Now let's look at the temptation account and you noticed as I read it through that there are three parts to the temptation. We could speak of three separate temptations. The first one is a personal testing, the second one is a national testing and the third one is a universal testing. Jesus has been led up by the Spirit into the wilderness and there in the wilderness, he has fasted for forty days and forty nights. He is very weak and in the wilderness with the wild beasts by his side, Satan comes to the Lord Jesus and he says to him, "If Thou be the Son of God."

Now we must stop here and I said as I began, the Scripture reading this morning that I wanted you especially to notice that this temptation account is given in close conjunction to the baptism of our Lord Jesus. And remember at the baptism, the word had come from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." I think that should really read, "Thou art", but that's somewhat immaterial at this point. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now just a few short days later, Satan comes to our Lord Jesus and says, "If Thou be the Son of God." Now would be stretching things too much to say that Satan may well have been present at that baptism of our Lord Jesus? I'm sure he was very much concerned about the Son of God and is it possible that he heard the voice from heaven too? John the Baptist heard it. Jesus heard it. Apparently no others heard it. But is it possible that this voice was heard by Satan perhaps by the direct purpose of God? At any rate, he comes with a testing that is drawn obviously from the baptism, "If it's really true, as the voice said that you are the Son of God, then command these stones be made bread."

Now I want to stop here just a moment and point out two things. In the first place, all of these temptations which Jesus undergoes are directed towards the same theme: The Messiahship of the Lord Jesus. For remember, in the baptism, he was anointed by the Holy Spirit and inaugurated into the office of Messiah. He is the Messianic King promised by the Old Testament Scriptures, the 2nd Psalm and the 42nd

through the 53rd chapters of Isaiah. He's the King who is to come whose work it is to suffer. Now here, in the temptation account, all of these tests are directed towards the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus. They are attempts by Satan to point out by his testing that he's really not worthy to be the King over Israel.

Now the second thing I want you to notice is this, that in this account, Satan does not come with a direct denial of the word of God. He doesn't say, "Now the voice that came from heaven is definitely wrong. God made a mistake when he said, 'Thou art my beloved Son.'" He says "if." You know, this has been the method of Satan always. He never comes out directly with a point blank denial of the truth of God.

That is why in our churches today, you do not find apostates, and there are many of them around in our professing Christian churches, you do not find them going to the pulpit and say, "Now men have been preaching the Bible down through the centuries, but we know the Bible is no longer the word of God, no longer regarded the word of God by intelligent men, so we close up the Bible and my text shall be taken from Shakespeare this morning."

Now it's quite obvious that if they were to do that, why their audiences in many cases would be thrown into complete turmoil and I have from personal experience, I'm quite sure that many should really come to know the Lord Jesus as Savior because they would then see the great contrast between the reality and that which poses for the reality. But men come into the pulpit and they open the word of God and they teach supposedly from the word of God, but contradict its basic teaching, not directly, but indirectly. This has been the method of Satan from the beginning.

He came in the Garden of Eden and he said, "Ye hath God said, 'Ye shall not eat of every tree which is in the midst of the Garden?'" He didn't say in the beginning of the temptation, "Now God made a terrible error. You ought to go out and eat of the tree regardless of what he says." He didn't approach them that way. And so, today men say with regard to the virgin birth, they don't say, "Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin."

How often have you ever heard that in a Christian church? You won't hear it; rarely. Occasionally you'll find a young man stand up and say something like this and pretty soon he's pastoring in another church.

Ordinarily, they will say something like this, "Now Christians have believed in the virgin birth, but really the virgin birth is not necessary to the Christian faith. As a matter of fact, the virgin birth seems to suggest that Jesus was not really completely man and he must be completely man and hence, the virgin birth is not a necessary doctrine of the Christian faith" all with regard to the deity of Christ.

They will not say that Jesus Christ is not God. They will not say, "The Christian Church has believed this for centuries, but now we know it's wrong." They don't say that. They will explain it away. They will say that Jesus was our great example and he was our example. But they won't say anything more than that. They will say, "He's a great example of faith" and we ought to believe with Christ in God. He was the great believer in God and he calls upon us to be great believers in God. And so, we believe with Christ, but not in Christ." And oh, what a tremendous difference there is between believing with Christ and believing in Christ.

And so, Satan comes, "If Thou be the Son of God," in Greek this is a first class condition, a condition of assumed reality. It's a kind of debater's technique, you know, in which he says, "Okay, accepting your premise, then what about this?" And that's the way in which Satan comes, "If Thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." Jesus replies to the first test by saying, "Satan, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Man lives first by God. Man doesn't live by food."

The greatest test that comes to men always is the test of God's silence. Here is the Son of God in the wilderness. Satan saying to him, a hungry Son of God, can you imagine something like that? The Son of God and yet he's hungry, but Jesus' faith holds steadfast through the silence of God and he gains the victory. But Satan does not stop

with one test. And so, we move on to the second test, which is the national temptation.

Now in this temptation, it's quite obvious that it's directed toward the national side of things because we read in the 5th verse, "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple." And so, he's in Jerusalem and he is on the pinnacle of the temple and when he has been set there then Satan says to him and I'm quite sure that this is in vision form as far as I can tell, Satan says to our Lord Jesus, "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.'" Now the meaning is very plain. If you are the Messiah then demonstrate that you are the Messiah by a sensational sign. Jews wanted signs and so demonstrate your Messiahship by the fulfillment of Scripture.

As you know, Satan has learned something from the first testing. He learns that Jesus is moved very strongly by holy Scripture because he quotes Scripture himself. That is why in Believers Chapel, we never hesitate to preach doctrine. I will continue to preach doctrine as long as the elders say that I can minister the word on Sunday morning to you. Regardless of when, we shall teach doctrine constantly and, as far as I'm concerned, as long as I serve with these men as an acting elder, we will stress Bible doctrine, because doctrine is tremendously important. We can never live the Christian life if we do not know the doctrines of the Christian life. That is why so many Christians today are set forth and swimming and floating upon the sea of confusion in their Christian life because they don't know the truths of God's holy word. They don't know Bible doctrine.

Now the test then, Satan has learned that the Lord Jesus is moved by holy Scripture and so he has quoted the 91st Psalm. Now he has made a tremendous mistake. He has, of course, by this quotation tempted our Lord Jesus to presumption. Now presumption, of course, is the forcing of God's hand. It's something that we Christians frequently do, you know? We look into the Bible and we look for a promise and we

select a promise out of the Bible and then we say, "Now, Lord, fulfill this promise for me today." That's presumption for you see, the promises of the word of God are not only valid, they're always valid, but they are valid for us at God's time for us. They are valid in so far as the Holy Spirit desires to use them in our lives at that particular moment; always valid, but valid for us at a particular time under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He has taken a text from Scripture from a Messianic Psalm and said, "Do this."

Now Jesus knew that Psalm was written about him, but he said, "Satan, you've forgotten something. You've forgotten, 'It is written again.'" You know, every false teacher in the United States, it seems to me, has hinged his false teaching upon some text of holy Scripture. It is impossible to turn on your radio and look for anything about the Bible before you run into false doctrine. But you again, I say, do not find people who say, "Now I believe this, but the Bible teaches this." You will find them saying, "The Bible says this" and interpreting it in such a way as to contradict the truths of God's word.

For example, all you have to do is open up the Bible and I really hope I step on your toes, if you're listening to this heretic, but if you turn on your radio and you listen to the World Tomorrow, Herbert Armstrong and Garner Ted Armstrong. Now you know I don't often in this particular meeting talk about individuals, but sometimes I think it's necessary and you know why? Because all over the country, I run into genuine evangelical Christians who are listening to that broadcast and who have not yet discerned the error of it.

If there is anything that is Satanic upon the radio, it is that broadcast. Do you know why? Because there is so much that is good on it and yet at the same time, there is so much upon it that is directed toward the heart of Christianity. You will find Mr. Armstrong saying that what America needs is to get back to the Bible, God's word. Well, that's wonderful isn't it to hear someone say that?

You will hear him say that you can go in our churches today and you never hear anything about the prophetic word. How true that is. You will hear him say, "You won't

go into our churches and find the men opening up the Bible and teaching the Bible." How true that is. But I dare you, you listen to that broadcast for a little while, I've listened to it for a long time because it so happens it comes on the radio when I'm out visiting or in my car. And so, I turn it on quite frequently and listen. I have yet to hear that man preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He has talked about the law of God. He talks about the Ten Commandments. The way of salvation for this man is keeping the Ten Commandments. Now if there is anything that is contrary to the teaching of God's word from beginning to end, it is this legalistic method of salvation. It is not Christian. It is directed against the heart of Christianity, which is a salvation by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us upon the cross at Calvary.

"It is written, it is written, it is written" is stated in this broadcast and others like it, over and over again, "Turn to the Bible, listen to Isaiah, listen to Revelation, listen to what Paul says." But listen, if you do not take all of the texts of Scripture and compare, you can be led off down bypath lane to heresy contrary to God's word and you will in that broadcast. Oh, if men had just remembered our Lord's words, "It is written again," because you see, Scripture must be compared with Scripture. Every single false doctrine that abounds today can be supported by a misinterpretation of a passage of Scripture.

But *Scriptura ex Scriptura explicanda est*, please remember that. Scripture is to be explained by Scripture and Jesus simply said to Satan, "Satan, it's true you've quoted Scripture, but 'It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' And for me to leap off of the pinnacle of the temple when the Holy Spirit has not led me to do it would be to test God. It would be to force God's hand. It would be to step out of the will of God."

Now I don't have time to talk about the misquotation of that passage for Satan did not completely quote it. We must move on. That's something for you to study. Let's move to the last temptation. This is the universal one, "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; and said unto him, 'All these things will I give Thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'" In other words, "I have the key to world blessing and I will be glad to give it to you if you will simply fall down and worship me."

Now there have been some people that thought that Satan did not have any such authority. Billy Bray, the evangelist used to say, "Why the old rascal, to say that he could give Christ the kingdoms of the world? Why, he didn't possess so much as a tater skin." [Laughter] But after all, if Satan did not possess some authority before the time of the cross, then how could this possibly be any testing? It's quite obvious because of his high previous station as the chief of the angels of God, he did have delegated authority and, furthermore, by reason of the temptation, he had gained the hearts of men.

Now Jesus must win this back at the cross, but this is pre-cross. And so, apparently he possessed some authority for Jesus does not question his authority. And here, of course, the test is again the same, "Bring in the kingdom apart from the cross." But Abraham's seed must die. And so, Jesus says, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'" The citadel is hell, the foe is vanquished. Satan is defeated, but he is not destroyed.

Now before we close this morning, I want to stress something of a practical nature and then something of a doctrinal nature. I want you to notice, first of all, that the way that Jesus defeated Satan was by the use of the word of God. Did you notice that? Will you look for a moment at verse 4, "And he answered and said, 'It is written'"? And then will you notice verse 7, "It is written again"? And then will you notice verse 10, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written"? Oh, the supreme need of the word of God.

Sometime ago, I think I told you an incident that happened, when I was preaching the word a few years back in the little city of Nacogdoches in Texas. I was preaching in the church there, Grace Bible Church, a church which was founded about 25 years ago when a group of Presbyterians left the local Presbyterian of the city in which had come in

a great deal of liberalism and formed an independent church. And about eight years ago, I was holding some meetings in that church; I usually go down there every year and hold some meetings there.

But one night, I was speaking on the temptation and we had kind of a small group of maybe a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five people there. And so, I stopped in the midst of the message and I said, "Now will you notice (and this just kind of came to me on kind of the spur of the moment, I hadn't intended to do it, I said,) will you notice that our Lord won the victory by three quotations from Scripture?" And now not looking at your Bibles, will you please tell me from what part of the word of God these Scriptures came? And you could tell from the audience that though the church has as its pastor a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, they were not too sure about the place from which the Scriptures had come. And so, I said, "You will notice that they all come from the Book of Deuteronomy."

And then I think Satan must have entered into me for a moment because I said to the audience, "Now how many of you are able to quote apart from the Ten Commandments, which are repeated again in the Book of Deuteronomy, and apart from the Great Schema Israel, 'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one Lord', how many of you can quote even one text from the Book of Deuteronomy?" And I looked out at the audience and not a person raised their hands.

And I was a little bit astounded and at the conclusion of the message, two very lovely ladies came up to me (they're a lovely group of Christians) and one of them came up and she said, "You may be interested in a conversation we had after the benediction tonight, Lewis. I turned to my friend and I said, 'I had a text, but I was a little embarrassed about raising my hand in a meeting.'" They were Presbyterians, you know, not used to ever raising their hands in a meeting. And the other one said, "Well, I had one too, but I too was too embarrassed to raise my hand." And then she said, "Lewis, I turned to her and I said, 'What was your text?'" And she said, "Oh, my text was, 'If my

people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Now you know, here's a very interesting thing, because as I look out over this audience, it is quite obvious that you're not sure from what part of the Old Testament this text is. Well, needless to say, this is a text from 2 Chronicles chapter 7 and verse 14. And she said, "Well, when my friend said that text, I said, 'Well that's not from the Book of Deuteronomy. It's a good thing you didn't raise your hand. He might have asked you to quote that text out in the midst of all of this audience.'" And the friend turned to her and said, "Well, what was your text?" And she said, "Well, my text was, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'"

Now, of course, that comes from the Book of Joshua. But it illustrated the fact that you see one of the reasons that we do not ever win victories for the Lord is because while we're still fumbling for our Sword of the Spirit, the word of God, we've lost the battle. There is one lesson, I think, that stands out here. It is the supreme need of the word of God and if we do not learn the supreme need of God's word, we shall never be able to win victories for the Lord.

And then I said I wanted to say one last thing (It's twelve o'clock), but let me just point out briefly now, what this really meant, the temptation. I'll just kind of sum it up in three statements. The temptation meant, first of all, that Jesus Christ was perfectly qualified morally to be the Davidic Sovereign. At every point Satan attempted to have him take the center of the stage, "Jesus, you take the center of the stage. Command that these stones be made bread. Cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple. All these things will I give you if you'll fall down and worship me." Everything that Satan attempted to do was to put Jesus Christ in the center of the stage and Jesus Christ's answer every time puts his Father in the center of the stage, for you see, while he is here

in the flesh, he must obey completely the Father. So Jesus is perfectly qualified morally to be the Davidic Sovereign.

Secondly, Jesus is perfectly qualified to be our Savior. He did not sin. Every single test he surmounted. He, by reason of the fact that he is the Son of God, overcame. And because he overcame, he gives us a kind of anticipation of the work of the cross when he shall blot out the handwriting of ordinances that are against us, which are contrary to us. He shall take them out of the way, nailing them to the cross, and he will there spoil principalities and powers and make a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross.

And finally, Jesus Christ is perfectly qualified morally to be a sympathetic high priest. This is the great use of the temptation that the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews says. He says because Jesus has overcome in the temptation that we too can go to him and expect that he shall sustain us. It's wonderful, you know, to have this double consolation. We have Jesus Christ as our brother and because he is one of us, we know that we are not alone in our temptations. We know that he suffers with us. We know that he fully understands. But at the same time, he is the Lord and he is the Lord of these human events in which we find ourselves. And it's wonderful to know that he is not only the Lord who is the Lord over all of these events that surge about us, but he is also our Great High Priest who has stood in the midst of human history and, hence, he knows exactly how to deliver us.

And so, as Christians we march forward in the midst of the things that are before us with the knowledge that we can lay our hand upon one above who is strong to sustain us and we can also lay our hand upon one who walks with us through these events because he is one of us. And, you know, it's a wonderful thing to know that in the midst of the temptations of life, we have a Great High Priest who knows every temptation to its fullest. He knows everything to which you shall ever be exposed.

I think the best conclusion I could possibly give is the conclusion of the words of holy Scripture, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for help in time of need." May God speak to your heart. May you realize the perfections of the Son of God, that he loved you and gave himself for you, and may you also know that in the trials of life, Jesus Christ can sustain us and undertake for us, because he is Lord and because he is one of us. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who withstood the temptations of the evil one, stand by us in the midst of our trials. And may, O God, the presence of the Holy Spirit within our hearts, which sustained our Lord as he used holy Scripture, sustain us in our temptations. And may the love of God the Father, which sent the Son, gird our hearts with strength from on high. And, O Father, if there should be someone present who has not yet believed in him, give them no rest nor peace until they do. May Thy presence go with us now. For Jesus' sake. Amen.