

JESUS' TEMPTATION: OVERCOMING ALL

MATHEW 04:01–11

Introduction: The Temptation of Jesus Christ

Why was Jesus being tempted now right after His baptism (a mountaintop experience) and right before the launch of His ministry? There is one primary reason.

Jesus Christ was about to launch His ministry — an unbelievable ministry that was to determine the eternal fate of every person who had ever lived or ever would live. The intensity of its importance, the necessity of personal preparedness and the need for having the *right plan* pressed in upon Him. He had to be prepared — prepared mentally, prepared spiritually, prepared physically. How could He prepare Himself? There was only one way: He had to get alone with God and subject Himself to gain complete control over His body and Spirit. He had to get completely apart from the world. This Jesus did.

He was “led by the Spirit” to separate Himself from food and from everything else. He got alone for forty days and nights in order to be with God. He was in earnest, ever so intense over His ministry which was about to be launched. He prayed; He thought; He meditated on the Scripture. And He planned. He bore so heavy a responsibility, and all the strain in all its weight and duty pressed in ever so heavily upon Him. Just imagine the pressure and weight pressing against His body. He prayed; He asked; He pleaded; He broke: He wept — He begged for strength and endurance to stand up under all that was to face Him in the upcoming years. The preparation went on for forty days and nights.

Once Jesus had worked out the plan necessary to launch His ministry, and once He had received the necessary strength to go forth, His personal reparation lacked only one more thing: confronting the temptations that would face Him in the upcoming years. Conquering the onslaught of temptations that lay ahead would complete His preparation. Thus “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted. After fasting forty days and forty nights...the tempter came to Him” (4:1-3).

Heb 5:8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Heb 2:18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (see Heb. 2:16-17)

Heb 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- I. The temptation of Jesus (v. 1).
 - II. The first temptation: to prove His deity by using His power for personal reasons (vv. 2-4).
 - III. The second temptation: to prove His deity by the spectacular (vv. 5-7).
 - IV. The third temptation: to prove His deity by compromise (vv. 8-10).
 - V. The triumphant victory: Christ conquered the temptation (v. 11).
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MATHEW 04:01–11 THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

This was not the only time Jesus was tempted.

1. Satan tempted Jesus through Peter when Peter tried to divert Him from the cross. Jesus revealed what really was behind Peter's apparent concern: "Get behind me, Satan" (Mt. 16:23).
2. Jesus commended His disciples by saying: "You are those who have stood by *me* in my trials" (Lk. 22:28).
3. Jesus faced the severest temptation of His life in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was there that Satan made a last-ditch effort to divert Christ from the cross.

In referring to Christ's experience in Gethsemane, Scripture says to all believers: "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood" (Heb. 12:4; see Lk. 22:44).

Thought 1. The devil knows just where to tempt a person.

- 1) *In the wilderness or desert:* when a person is without bread, when he really has need. This is the temptation that appeals to the sinful nature, the lust of the flesh.
- 2) *On the pinnacle, the highest point of the temple:* when a person is before multitudes. This is the temptation that appeals to pride — the pride of life (fame).
- 3) *On a high mountain,* when a person sees what is available — sometimes rightfully his, sometimes just desired.

This is the temptation that appeals to the lust of the eyes. □

LUKE 04:01–02 TEMPTATION (PERIRAZO)

The word temptation is used here in both a good and a bad sense. In the good sense it means to test, to try, to prove. It does not mean to seduce into sin. Its purpose is not to defeat or to destroy. The idea is not that one is tempted, seduced, enticed, and pulled into sin by the Holy Spirit (see Jas. 1:13); but one is tested, proved, strengthened, reinforced, and purified through the trials of temptation.

In the bad sense, it means to tempt, to seduce, to entice, and to pull someone away from God into the way of sin, of self, and of Satan (Mt. 4:1; 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Th. 3:5; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 1:13-14).

Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tested. The Spirit did not seduce or entice Jesus to do evil, but He led Jesus into circumstances whereby He could learn obedience and discipline. Through such trials, Jesus was to be perfected and enabled to succour all those who suffer trials (Heb. 4:15-16; 5:8).

Six things need to be said about overcoming temptation.

1. Temptation has its bottom root in passion and appetite (Mk. 7:20-23; Jas. 1:14). It comes directly from within, from man's heart, not from without. And it does not come from God. "For God cannot be tempted by evil; nor does he tempt anyone" (Jas. 1:13). God does not tempt any man in a bad sense. What He does is look upon His people as they endure temptation, and He strengthens them to bear the temptation. By such He teaches them discipline and obedience for a greater work (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Heb. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:6-7).
2. No man confronts any temptation that is not common to all men (1 Cor. 10:13).
3. God does not allow the believer to be tempted beyond what he is able to bear. There is always a way to escape (1 Cor. 10:13).
4. Jesus Christ understands temptation. He was tempted in all points just as all men are tempted, yet He never sinned (Heb. 2:18; 4:15).
5. Jesus Christ is a sympathetic High Priest in helping the believer through temptation (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15).
6. Temptation is overcome (a) by submitting to God and resisting the devil (Jas. 4:7-8; 1 Pet. 5:8-9), and (b) by using and obeying Scripture to combat temptation (Lk. 4:4; see Deu. 4:8; 4:12; 6:13, 16; 8:3; 10:20). □

MATHEW 04:01–11 GOD'S WAY: FAITH, NOT PROOF

Jesus Christ was tempted three times by the devil. He was tempted to prove that He was the Son of God. What was wrong with proving His deity?

Proof is not God's way; faith is God's way. Proof is not what God wants; faith is what God wants. God wants to be trusted and loved. He wants to be freely loved, not loved because of force — because some persons are constrained by irrefutable proof. There are facts, plenty of proofs that He is the Son of God; but in the final analysis, an act of faith has to be taken. No one has seen God. God cannot be known by the physical senses. To know God, a person has to leap by faith, reach out for God in an act of belief, believing that God will reward his faith.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Jesus Christ had come to establish and construct the way of faith. Therefore, Jesus Christ had to reject anything that led men away from the life of faith. Note that all three temptations had to do with man's senses and the physical world. If Christ had given in and secured the loyalty of men by feeding bread to the whole world, or

by performing a spectacular miracle, or by taking over the kingdoms of this world, life would end and end soon. Why? Because all die. All waste away. The world is physical and material, corruptible and dying, deteriorating and decaying. It does not last. That is just the way of the physical world and all within it. This is the very reason Jesus Christ has come — to conquer the physical world of decay and death and to usher in the eternal world of the spirit — by the way of faith.

Therefore, Jesus Christ had to live the life of faith Himself. He had to walk the way of faith, of trusting and believing God Himself. He had to reject the devil's *proofs* and show and lead men by faith. □

I. *Mathew 04:01 The Temptation of Jesus Christ*

Three facts need to be noted about Jesus' temptation.

1. Jesus was tempted immediately after His baptism. The word “then” shows this. All three gospels stress this fact. He had just had a mountaintop experience, a very special experience with God. Then, immediately Satan attacked Him.
2. Jesus was the *only person* who knew about the temptations. He was the only person there. What the gospel writers recorded was what He had shared with them.
3. Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. Jesus was tempted for three reasons.

- a. To learn obedience — the control of His body, mind, and spirit.

Heb 5:8 *Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.*

- b. To secure righteousness — the ideal perfection and sinlessness for man (Rom. 8:3).
2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

- c. To experience all the infirmities of human life so that He would be able to help and support man.

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

In discussing temptation it is important to remember that God does not tempt man (Jas. 1:13). God allows man to be tempted for the same reasons He led Christ to be tempted. God allows man to be tempted...

1. To prove and demonstrate his faith.
2. To strengthen and prepare him for heavier responsibilities.
3. To demonstrate the mercy, grace and power of God in a human life.

Thought 1. There are special times when communion with God is absolutely essential: (1) after a mountaintop experience (Christ's baptism); (2) before a great trial or time of temptation. Note that Jesus spent forty days alone with God *before* the tempter came to Him; (3) periods of great service for God. It is a great mistake to go before the public or to return from the public without spending a long time alone with God. The public, at least some of the public, will lay accolades at the feet of God's servant. Temptation lies just ahead. Preparation is essential.

Thought 2. The devil attacks anywhere and everywhere, in the wilderness (desert) and in the city when surrounded by others. But temptation is especially strong at certain points.

- 1) Right after a mountaintop experience.
- 2) Right before the launching of a new work.
- 3) During moments of severe weakness: physical and mental.

Thought 3. Three facts are true about the person who really knows God and is set on serving God.

- 1) The more a person seeks to serve God, the more he can expect to be tempted. Note how heavy and intense the temptation was against Christ.
- 2) The more a person seeks to serve God, the more he needs communion with God. Time alone with God is essential. A quiet time in God's Word — meditating, communing, and worshipping is an absolute essential for the believer.
- 3) Spiritual strength and maturity do not exempt a person from temptation. Everyone is tempted, even the Son of God Himself. No one is exempted (1 Cor. 10:13).

Thought 4. Christ met temptation by doing three things.

- 1) He spent time alone with God.
- 2) He made sure He was led by the Spirit.
- 3) He relied upon the Scriptures.

Thought 5. The devil is the tempter. He is the one who tempted Jesus Christ. He was the spiritual power who attempted to destroy the purpose of Christ (see Heb. 2:14-15). The believer must prepare for the combat (See Eph. 6:10-20. See *Satan*, Rev. 12:9.)

Thought 6. What should the believer learn about fasting from the Lord's experience? Jesus fasted for forty days. He was facing an important and critical moment in His life; the weight was pressing in upon Him. He needed special preparation. Therefore, He separated Himself from the world; He got alone with God. He was so sincere and dedicated that He even separated Himself from food.

How often do believers *miss out* because they are not sincere and intense enough to put time with God before all else, even before food? How much more could be done if believers sought God with the same intensity? How much more growth and ministry could be gained?

REVELATION 12:09 SATAN

*The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. **Revelation 12:09***

Satan is called “the great dragon...that ancient serpent.” His name is Lucifer. He was probably one of the highest angels ever created by God, but he fell because of selfishness and pride (Isa. 14:12; cp. 1 Tim. 3:6; Rev. 12:3-4; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:8.). He is “an angel of light” with such deceptive and seductive power that even some ministers follow him, ministers who “masquerade as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Throughout Scripture Satan is described as follows:

1. He is “the god of this world” who blinds men’s minds (2 Cor. 4:4).
2. He is “the prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31; 14:20; 16:11) and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph. 2:2; 6:12).
3. He is Satan, which means the adversary (1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1:6; 2:1-6; Zec. 3:1; Mt. 4:10; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:8; Jn. 13:27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; Rom. 16:20).
4. He is the devil, which means the slanderer (Mt. 4:1, 5, 8, 11; Lk. 4:2-6, 13; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 20:2).
5. He is the deceiver of the whole world (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9).
6. He is the tempter (Mt. 4:3; 1 Th. 3:5).
7. He is the evil one (Mt. 6:13; 13:19, 38).
8. He is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).
9. He is the accuser of our brothers (Rev. 12:10).
10. He is a murderer (Jn. 8:44).
11. He is called Beelzebub (Mt. 12:24; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15).
12. He is called Belial (2 Cor. 6:15).
13. He is called Abaddon (Rev. 9:11).
14. He is called the angel of the Abyss or bottomless pit (Rev. 9:11).
15. He is called Apollyon (Rev. 9:11).
16. He is called the enemy (Mt. 13:39).
17. He is called the gates of Hades (hell) (Mt. 16:18).
18. He is called an enormous red dragon (Rev. 12:3).
19. He is called a lying spirit (1 Kng. 22:22).

20. He is called that ancient serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2; cp. Gen. 3:4, 14; 2 Cor. 11:3).
21. He is called the dominion of darkness (Col. 1:13).
22. He called the prince of devils (Mt. 12:24).
23. He is called the ruler of this dark world (Eph. 6:12).
24. He is called the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient (Eph. 2:2).
25. He is called the evil spirit (Mt. 12:43).

Satan's purpose in making war against God is twofold.

1. Satan's purpose is power and worship, to receive as much of the power and worship of the universe as possible (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-17). He goes about this in three ways.
 - => He opposes and disturbs God's work in the world (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-17; Job 1:6; 2:1-6; Mt. 4:10; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:8; Rev. 12:7-9).
 - => He discourages believers through various strategies (Lk. 22:31; Eph. 6:10-12).
 - => He arouses God's justice against people by leading people to sin and to deny and rebel against God. And when they do, God's justice has to act and judge people to the fate of their choice: that of living with Satan eternally (Mt. 12:25-26; Jn. 13:31-32).
2. Satan's purpose is to hurt and cut the heart of God. Why? Because God has judged and condemned him for rebelling against God. Therefore, Satan does all he can to get back at God. The best way he can do this is to turn the hearts of people away from God and lead them to sin and to follow the way of evil.

However, Christ has broken Satan's power by two acts (Jn. 12:31-32; 16:11; 8:44; Col. 2:15).

1. By never giving in to the devil's temptation (Mt. 4:1-11) and by never sinning (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ overcame sin. He was righteous: He was perfect.
2. By destroying the devil's power of death. Christ was not held by physical or spiritual death (Heb. 2:14-15). He arose and ascended to God's right hand.

It is for this reason that the Bible says "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4); and again. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). □

II. *Mathew 04:02–04 The First Temptation of Jesus Christ*

The first temptation of Christ was to prove His deity by using His power for personal purposes. The devil tempted Christ to prove that He was the Son of God, that is, to secure the loyalty of men by two acts.

1. Christ was tempted to use His own power to meet both a personal and a worldwide need: hunger. He was hungry, and His hunger was critical. He had not eaten for forty days. The devil tempted Him to create bread to feed Himself, and in this suggestion was the hidden idea that He could feed the world, proving Himself to be the Son of God. By such, He could secure what He was after: the loyalty and worship of men. Men would rush to serve any Messiah or man who could meet their physical and material needs.
2. Christ was tempted to trust Himself, not God, and to choose a way other than God's way. God's way was the way of faith which included both time — time to suffer the trials of life — and the cross. The devil was saying “trust yourself, take a shorter route. Feed yourself and the world. Your needs can be met, and you can have the loyalty of men immediately.”

There are two errors in the reasoning of this temptation.

1. Man needs more than bread. He needs more than physical life and physical needs being met.
2. Man needs God's life. He needs eternal life and he needs his spiritual needs met.

Bread is a necessity of life. Jesus could have proven that He was the Son of God by using His supernatural power to create bread; He could have secured the loyalty of men by feeding them, that is, by meeting their physical needs. But He would have failed in at least two points.

1. He would have failed in meeting the spiritual needs of man.
2. He would have failed by teaching error — the error that the physical is more important than the spiritual and that receiving is more important than giving.

There is a spiritual hunger that is just not met by bread. Man's responsibility is the same as Christ's was: to trust God and to seek the things of God as he walks day by day throughout life.

Mat 6:33 *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

John 6:35 *Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

John 6:50-51 *“But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

Deu 6:13 *Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.*

Job 23:12 *I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.*

Psa 119:103 *How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

Isa 55:1-3 *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.”*

Jer 15:16 *When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty.*

Thought 1. Believers often face the very same temptation (see 1 Cor. 10:13):

- 1) To prove who they are and to act in their own strength and their own ability.
- 2) To meet a real need (personal or community) in a wrong and illegitimate way: misusing one's position and abilities.
- 3) To stress physical needs over the spiritual needs of men to feed them bread only, never bringing them to the cross (Lk 9:23).
- 4) To trust self, not God, trusting one's own strength and abilities.

Thought 2. Four clear lessons are seen in this temptation.

- 1) Temptation often attacks an area of desperate need such as hunger. There is a right and a wrong way to meet any need. It is often felt that if a real need can be met, then how it is met is excused. That is, the end justifies the means.
- 2) Man must learn that he does not live by bread alone. The physical alone will not satisfy. Man is spirit; therefore, he needs God and is dependent upon God. He cannot live without God. “You will eat, but not be satisfied” (Mica. 6:14 see Hag. 1:6, 9; Mt. 6:24-34).
- 3) Temptation is to be resisted by using the Word of God. The believer must study and learn the Word of God in order to withstand temptation (Psa. 119:9, 11; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:2-3).
- 4) When *needs arise*, a person must always strengthen himself against temptation. The greater the need, the greater the attack of temptation.

III. Mathew 04:05–07 The Second Temptation of Jesus Christ

The second temptation of Christ was to prove His deity by the spectacular. The devil tempted Christ to prove that He was the Son of God by doing two more acts.

1. Christ was tempted to test God. He was tempted to do the spectacular. He was to jump off the towering pinnacle of the temple and let God send His angels to catch Him in mid-air and lower Him gently to the ground. Since He was God's only Son, God would certainly bear Him up (so the devil reasoned).
2. Christ was tempted to attract attention by the spectacular. The worshippers at the temple, seeing such a spectacular event, would accept and proclaim Him to be the Son of God.

There are two errors in the reasoning behind this temptation.

1. God is not to be tested. His will, His power, His protection and His promises are not to be presumed or taken advantage of or misused. God is not to be tested or tried; God is to be trusted. His will and His Word are to be trusted and obeyed just as they are laid down; all things are to be done exactly as He says.
2. God is to be trusted, not the spectacular. God wants men to believe Him because they love Him as their Father, not because of events and happenings, whether they be spectacular or commonplace (Isa. 43:10).

Christ would have failed in at least two points if He had given in to this temptation.

1. He would have tempted God to misuse His power. Christ would have placed Himself in a threatening position and risked His life, expecting God to save Him. This act would have abused God's will and misused what God had promised. This act would have ignored what God really wanted and had really said.
2. He would have centred people's attention on the spectacular. The mission of Christ was to focus people's attention on faith in God — in particular, their desperate need for God and His eternal kingdom (Mt. 19:23-24)

Mark 11:22 *"Have faith in God," Jesus answered.*

John 6:28-29 *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*

1 Tim 6:12 *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

Heb 10:22-23 *Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

Thought 1. Believers are often tempted the same way as Christ (1 Cor. 10:13).

- 1) They are tempted to test God, to lay hold of some Biblical promise and take it out of context, to misuse and misapply it. The motive is sometimes good, for the believer wishes to do great things for God. What happens is that he lays hold of some great promise of God and launches out, but the promise is misused and misapplied. The great things were not God's will for the believer. We must always remember that God does give us great promises. But we must stay close to God (meditation and prayer) and stay in His Word in order to rightly understand His promises. This alone will keep us from misusing and misapplying His promises.
- 2) To centre people's attention upon the spectacular, not upon God and faith in God. God is to be trusted, not the spectacular. God is to be the focus and centre of all that is said and done, not the spectacular.

Thought 2. Three things are absolutely essential in order to conquer this temptation.

- 1) Living with God moment by moment — genuinely living in constant communion with Him.
- 2) Living in God's Word — really knowing His promises in order to use them as they were meant to be used (see 2 Cor. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; see Acts 17:11; see Psa. 1:2f).
- 3) Realizing that the power of Satan is a limited power. He can only tempt; he cannot force a person to sin. He could not push Christ off the highest point of the temple. He cannot push man into sin. The lust or desire is from within man. Satan's temptation can only stir and arouse the desire and lust. Satan cannot cause a man to lust. Therefore, if a person is living in communion with God and living in God's Word, he will be stirred to obey God more than he is stirred to yield to the temptation. (Jas. 1:13-18; 4:1-6)

Thought 3. The temple or house of worship is a place of special interest to the devil. It is the place where the worship of God is centred. Therefore, to cause some diversion, pride, or false teaching — anything that detracts and leads people away from God — defeats God's purposes and *ruins people's lives*, sometimes eternally.

Thought 4. Satan knew Scripture and knew it well. It is possible to know the Scripture and not know God. It is even possible to know the Scripture and to stand against God, abusing and misusing His Word.

IV. Mathew 04:08–10 The Third Temptation of Jesus Christ

The third temptation of Christ was to prove His deity by compromise. The devil tempted Christ to prove that He was the Son of God by compromising.

1. Christ was tempted to compromise His ministry and His mission. He was tempted to secure the world without the cross, without paying the price. He was tempted to choose another way instead of God's way — to achieve His purpose by another

route. He was attracted to use the wrong means for reaching the end of universal sovereignty. If He bowed down and worshipped the devil, the kingdoms of the world and the loyalty of men were to be His.

2. Christ was tempted to compromise His life and His loyalty. He was tempted to switch loyalties. He was offered the world and the sovereign leadership of the world if He would just do one thing: worship the devil. What does this mean? It means that Christ was tempted to allow the world (including man) to remain corruptible and dying with no hope of life eternal with God. It was a temptation to allow the world to continue as it is, and to allow the devil to continue his work within the world in order to frustrate God's eternal plan for the world.

There are two errors in the reasoning behind this temptation.

1. Compromise with the devil and the world is not God's way. God's way is to conquer the corruption and death of this world.
2. God alone is to be worshipped, not the devil nor the world and its power.

If Christ had given in to this temptation, He would have failed in at least two points.

1. He would have secured the kingdoms of this world through compromise, not by God's hands. God had promised Him the world and the loyalty of its citizens, but it was to come by way of the cross. The way of God was far better, for the kingdoms promised by God were to be eternal (Mt. 19:23-24).
2. He would have switched His loyalty from God to the devil. He would have forsaken God for this world and its prince, Satan (Eph. 2:2).

Mat 16:26 *“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Rom 12:2 *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

2 Tim 2:3-4 *Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs — he wants to please his commanding officer.*

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

Titus 2:11-12 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*

Thought 1. Four significant lessons in this point are:

- 1) A believer is often tempted to compromise both his life and his work or ministry. The tempter, Satan, wants a person to live for the world only, to ignore his spirit that is destined to live forever. He wants a person's attention and energy and effort. He wants a person given over to this world and to this life *only*.
- 2) Satan deceives and lies. The kingdoms of this world are only temporary — for a few short years. The life of a person and the life of the world itself is short, ever so short. It all ends.
- 3) Believers cannot receive from Satan what God has promised them, that is, eternal life (Eph. 1:3. See 2 Pet. 1:4; 3:8-15.)
- 4) Temptation must be resisted immediately. Jesus did not hesitate a moment in resisting temptation.

Thought 2. When a believer is tempted time after time, he faces two critical dangers.

- 1) Discouragement. The sheer number and force of extreme temptations can discourage a person. Succumbing to temptation and sinning can discourage a person. In fact, the greater the fall of a person, the more unworthy and self-accusing he becomes. Self-pity, shame, guilt, and failure always discourage to some degree. (See 1 Pet. 4:12-13)
- 2) Over-confidence. When a believer overcomes temptation, he grows, becoming stronger and more mature and gains more confidence. However, there is danger in this. He can begin to feel strong and mature enough to conquer temptation. He can feel above temptation. Such feelings can lead to two gross errors.
 - a) It can lead to liberal or loose behaviour and beliefs. Before long, a person begins to think everything he does is right. He feels so mature and strong that he feels he can conquer any temptation. He feels that what he believes and does is bound to be right. He even pulls Scripture out of context to justify his ungodly and loose behaviour.
 - b) It can lead to conservative or narrow behaviour and beliefs. Before long a person can begin to feel that he is so mature and so strong that he can conquer temptations on his own, that what he believes and does is also bound to be right. He lives by strict rules and regulations, judging himself and all others by the same rules. He, too, justifies his bigotry and narrow-minded behaviour by Scripture.

V. *Mathew 04:11 Conquering Temptation*

There was the triumphant victory over temptation. Christ resisted the temptation the only way He could: by doing exactly what the Word of God said. He simply obeyed God; therefore, He never got out of the will of God. The devil was defeated, and temptation and sin were conquered. Note that the devil left Jesus alone for awhile and some angels came and ministered to Him.

Thought 1. The devil is a conquered enemy.

Col 2:15 *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

Heb 2:14 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil.*

Thought 2. There is always an escape from temptation. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Thought 3. When temptation is resisted, the devil flees and the believer is relieved for a while.

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ■*