

Overcoming the Lust of the Eyes

Matthew 4:8-10

The Progression of Temptation

- 1) All sins spring from temptation.
- 2) All temptations spring from sinful lusts (cravings).
- 3) All sinful cravings ultimately spring from three root, sinful cravings.
 - The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.
- 4) The three root temptations spring from three normal, God-given human desires.
 - This is the level at which Jesus was tempted.**
 - He did not have within Himself sinful cravings that cried out to be satisfied.
 - He did have normal desires.

I. The Preparation (8)

- “Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain.”
 - Arguments for a vision:
 - 1) No mountain high enough to see all the earth's kingdoms.
 - 2) Luke adds, “in a moment of time”, which seems to imply something highly unusual and perhaps miraculous.
 - 3) Two other passages in which someone is taken to a high mountain occurred in visions.
 - Ezekiel in Ezek. 40:2; John in Rev. 21:10

I. The Preparation (8)

- “Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain.”
 - Arguments for physical presence:
 - 1) No point in going to a high mountain if it's a vision.
 - 2) Luke uses “kingdoms of the inhabited earth”, which could mean he saw parts of the kingdoms of the Middle East within his physical vision, but the rest was audibly described.
 - 3) Greek verb *to show* can mean either “to show physically” or “to describe, explain.”
 - E.g., Matt. 16:21 - From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
 - 4) The language of Luke's account seems to imply normal, physical movement.
 - Luke 4:5 - “and the devil led him up”

“The Devil Led Him Up”

- 1) They traveled via ordinary human transportation.
- 2) The devil transported both himself and Jesus there miraculously.
 - On two occasions Jesus did miraculously escape from His enemies (Luke 4:30; John 10:39).
 - But nothing in either of those accounts says that He was transported somewhere else.
 - There is no record that, like Philip in Acts 8:39, Jesus was ever miraculously transported somewhere.
 - After His resurrection: Luke 24:31—vanished (simply means no longer visible); John 20:19—passed into a locked room.
 - So if Jesus is miraculously transported by Satan to the pinnacle of the temple and to this high mountain, this would be the only time in His earthly life, except for possibly after His resurrection.

“A Very High mountain”

- 1) Judean wilderness
 - Highest elevation: less than 3000 ft
 - Distance from the pinnacle of the Temple: less than 30 miles
 - Days walk: 1-2



"A Very High mountain"

- 1) Judean wilderness
 - Highest elevation: less than 3000 ft
 - Distance from the pinnacle of the Temple: less than 30 miles
 - Days walk: 1-2
- 2) Mt. Nebo
 - Highest elevation: 4000 ft.
 - Distance from the pinnacle of the Temple: less than 40 miles
 - Days walk: 2
- 3) Mt. Hermon
 - Highest elevation: 9200 ft.
 - Distance from the pinnacle of the Temple: about 140 miles
 - Days walk: 6



Mount Hermon from south

I. The Preparation (8)

- "The devil...showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory."

II. The Temptation (9)

- "And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

A Legitimate Offer?

- In Luke's account (4:6), Luke quotes the rest of what Satan said to Christ: "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I will give it to whomever I wish."
 - It's true that God has permitted Satan to rule over the world system opposed to God.
 - Satan can legitimately be called the ruler of this world:
 - John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; cf. 1 John 5:19
 - But it's not true that the created world had been fully handed over to Satan.
 - Neither is it true that Satan controls world governments to the extent that he can give them to whomever He chooses.
 - Cf. Dan. 4:25 - the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.
 - But it was also true that Satan had control, power, and influence over the world's great empires.

II. The Temptation (9)

- "And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."
 - Literally, "if falling down you will worship me."
 - Satan was not asking Jesus to forever renounce the true God and treat Satan as if he were God.
 - This is an acknowledgement of Satan's authority over the world.
 - It's not a recognition of his divinity—note: Satan himself has just admitted that these things have "been given to me."
 - It's not an acknowledgement of his personal merit to be worshiped.

The Ultimate Temptation

- Bowing before Satan is the means to a greater end.
- The end goal: "all these things I will give you."
 - Cf. Luke 4:7 - "it shall all be yours."
- The Father had promised that Jesus will have the kingdoms of this world.
 - Cf. Ps. 2:7-8; Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27
- The temptation was to get what God had already promised Him.
 - Not in God's way—the way of the suffering and death.
 - Not in God's time—yet in the future.

The Heart of the Third Temptation

- To pursue personal prosperity or self-fulfillment.
- It includes the desire for...
 - 1) Position, Authority, & Power – to rule
 - 2) Material possessions & Wealth – to possess
- It springs from the God-given desire to work hard in the fulfillment of what we have been designed to do and to enjoy the fruit of that labor.
- Root sinful desire: craving for personal prosperity or self-fulfillment.
- 1 John 2:16 calls it: the lust of the eyes.
- That is, sinfully craving to have or possess what the eyes see.

What Forms Does This Temptation Take?

- 1) Not having them but craving them.
 - Ex. 20:17; Ps. 62:10; Eccl. 5:10-11; 1 Tim. 6:9-10
- 2) Pursuing power & wealth in a way contrary to God's commands.
 - By force (stealing, robbing; Micah 2:2-3; Pr. 22:16).
 - By stealth (lying, deceiving, cheating, conniving, embezzling; Pr. 13:11; 21:6; 28:20; Jer. 17:11).
 - By sacrifice of biblical priorities (worship, church, family; Pr. 23:4; Luke 12:15).

What Forms Does This Temptation Take?

- 3) Having them and...
 - Trusting in them (Job 31:24; Mark 10:23-25; 1 Tim. 6:17)
 - Hoarding them (Matt. 6:19)
 - Disobeying God to keep them...
 - Lying for yourself or your company
 - Neglecting other biblical commands like be generous, care for the needy, serve in the church, worship.
 - Imagining that you are the reason for your power and wealth (Deut. 8:17-18; Pr. 10:22; Eccl. 5:19; 1 Tim. 6:17; 1 Ch. 29:12; 32:27-29).

Is Prosperity an Idol in Your Life?

- Do you love it more than you love anything else, including God?
- Are you willing to disobey God to get it?
- Is that desire and its fulfillment what you believe will bring you your highest and greatest happiness?
- Do you obey that desire and make sacrifices to satisfy it?

The Heart of the Third Temptation

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III. The Biblical Response (10)

- "Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"
- Quotation is from: Deut. 6:13
- Application:
 - Luke 16
 - 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17

A Summary: Three Root Temptations

1. The lust of the flesh
 - Self-satisfaction
 - Craving and pursuing satisfaction of the body's appetites contrary to God's Word.
2. The lust of the eyes
 - Self-fulfillment
 - Craving and pursuing personal prosperity contrary to God's providence.
3. The boastful pride of life
 - Self-promotion
 - Craving and pursuing personal glory at the expense of God's glory.

Why Jesus' Temptations Are Recorded...

- 1) To provide us with a pattern for overcoming temptation in our own lives.
- 2) To demonstrate Jesus' power over temptation.
 - Substitution!
 - Justification!