

Lent 3 - Matthew Chapter 4, verses 8 - 11:-

Note that the order of the temptations here in the Gospel of Matthew would appear to be chronological; whereas that in Luke reverses the second and third. Here we have the temptations of the physical appetite, spiritual attainment and worldly ambition. Then the devil left him “*until an opportune time*” (Luke chapter 4, verse 13). The immediate period of temptations was over but the threat never went away.

As you read these verses remember that Satan has limited authority and control of this world. See the Gospel of John chapter 14, verses 30 – 31 and chapter 16, verse 11, also 1 John chapter 5, verse 19: 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4 and Ephesians chapter 2, verse 2.

Matthew Chapter 4, verse 8:- The use of the word “*Again*” emphasises that the temptations came one after the other – no let up! In his loneliness and physical weakness the tempter was unrelenting! How often it happens like that! ‘Just one thing after another!’ we say. Remember always that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and “*was tempted as we are, yet without sinning*”. Hebrews chapter 4, verse 15.

The Lord Jesus was shown “*all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*”. The possibility of controlling the vast legions of the Roman Empire and the power that would give him was a severe test of his faith and trust in the Father.

Verse 9:- To receive all this power there was only one condition! The redirecting of ‘worship’ and the bending of the knee to Satan. This had to be a physical action - “*fall down*” - as well as a spiritual one - “*worship*”. The ‘kingdom of the world’ will be given to the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of time, see Revelation chapter 11, verses 15 – 18.

Verse 10:- Again Satan is rejected by quoting scripture – the Word of God. The commandment to ‘worship and serve the Lord God’ is found in Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 13.

Verse 11:- The Lord Jesus, having successfully resisted the temptations of the Devil was ‘ministered to by angels’. The support was there but during the period of testing it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to stand alone – he “*was tempted as we are, yet without sinning*”!

Notice although Satan, the Devil himself, left him that as the Lord Jesus called his disciples and began his public ministry he was immediately confronted by an evil spirit; see Mark chapter 1, verse 23. Throughout his earthly ministry there was an ongoing confrontation with evil, right through to Passion Week itself.

Our Lord Jesus repelled the temptations of Satan by means of the written Word of God and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. He did not need a thunderbolt from heaven or to perform any ‘miracles’. The method used by the Lord Jesus is available to any believing Christian. May the Lord give us the wisdom and courage to use them in our daily lives!

*Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather;
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.*

*Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright;
He'll with a giant fight;
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.*

*Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say;
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.*

John Bunyan, original words from ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’ 1684