

1st LENT - TRIALS, TEST AND TEMPTATIONS

(Dt. 26:1-11; Rom 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13)

Trials of varied character, tests of different kinds, and temptations from within and from without come our way on daily basis. No one is immune to trials, tests and temptations. We are all subject to tests and temptations. The question is whether we can find a way out or whether we will fall into Satan's hands after all is done. The good news is this, in all cases, God provides "*the way of escape*" 1Cor. 10:13.

For temptation to be effective Timing is Important. Jesus was tempted immediately after His Baptism. Why? Because God had declared Him His *beloved Son* and Satan wanted to prove him wrong (Lk 4:1-2, Mt.4:4:ff). *If you are the Son of God... do this, do that to prove it.* Satan demanded.

Timing was important also on the basis of Jesus' physical need for eating food. Fasting forty days and nights meant that Jesus was hungry and so His need to eat was incredible. It was good timing for Satan to test Jesus. Psalm 34:10 says that "*Even young lions (that seem strong and formidable) suffer hunger...*" Some people die of lack food and other dies of overeating. Satan tempts in both areas.

Trials and Temptations manifest themselves thru our strength.

The Devil tempted Jesus where he was strong. Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread. Satan wanted him to wrongly use that power to elevate his pride and self-grandeur as if the Father had abandoned his Son. Your areas of strength can be also your slippery slope.

Jesus did not give in to the temptation. He ate nothing because, "*Man does not live on bread alone.*" Jesus is saying that everything in life depends on **God's Word**. To strive for success, material things and happiness apart from God, will lead to bitter disappointment and failure. "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given unto you.*"

For temptation to be effective, location must be right; A desert place.

The desert place biblically is a place of deprivation. It is a place of suffering. It is a place of want. The Israelites spent forty years wandering in the desert being tempted day and night that they reached a point of breaking down. They accused Moses to have brought them from Egypt to kill them in the desert. I dare to say to you today that we all have our places of deprivation, lack, and want. Ours may not be physical deserts but a different kind of void in our heart. If you haven't experienced that kind of void experience, rest assured that it will come to pass.

Many Times, Trials and Temptations appeal to the Eye.

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. Most of the temptations that come our way come thru our own sensory organs: eyes that see; ears that hear; hands that touch; noses that smell. Companies invest a lot of money into advertising because they know that advertisements appeal to the eye. The Devil *showed him ... all the kingdoms of the world* for this very reason. In Eden, Eve "saw that the fruit was good for food and pleasing to the eye...." The eye is basic in receiving temptations. The temptation is always aimed at areas of vulnerability. (1John 2:16 says, "*For all that is in the world --- The lust of the flesh; The lust of the eyes; The pride of life (Ego)...*" Certainly, the eye can lead to more dangerous tempting areas of seeking "*Dominion over world kingdoms* for which Satan demands to be worshipped."

Some of the temptations we face come in multiple ways. When Satan tempted Jesus to worship him, in that one temptation there were also issues of attaining glory, accruing power and authority. Within one temptation, Satan can strike to the heart of your faith and easily recruit you into Satan's control.

Remember, the Devil manifests himself in many guises and so there is never a time for you and me to relax and take it easy.

Jesus didn't call at angels to put the Lord to the test although he had the ability to do so. He refused to jump from the pinnacle of the temple which could impede his obedience to the Father. He disciplined himself to the end fasting, praying & standing in the Word. If Jesus had chosen to follow the popular people's expectation of a political Messiah (vv. 9-11) he would never have followed the way of the Cross.

Learn this straight away; Satan knows the Word or the Bible than you do. We can never face the forces of Devil without knowledge of the Word or the power of the Holy Spirit. We must be well equipped in the Word and the fullness of the Holy Spirit to fight Satan as he comes to us in multiple ways. If you say that you are saved and that Jesus is your Lord and Savior or claim to be born again, Satan will demand that you prove it.

Satan tempts believers and Christian leaders to misuse their spirit's anointing, position, and power to satisfy their own self-interests, their own legacy and to please people rather than please God. My advice to you, don't compromise with Satan or surrender willingly to his lordship. Remember, trials, tests, and temptations are there to strengthen us. Whatever tempting deserts we find ourselves in, whether physical, situational or emotional temptations, they don't last a lifetime and God will provide "*the way out.*" 1Cor. 10:13. Don't sell out to Satan! In times of trial, trust God for your food, your reputation, your inspiration, your success, your victory, and your destiny. Amen and Amen.