**Special Presentation**

Matthew 4:1-11

Don Maurer

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**Don:** Heavenly Father, we worship You, we adore You. Father, we thank You for this day, for this gathering. We thank You, Father, for the fact, as Ted pointed out, that You have sustained us as a group these few months where Jeff has been absent from us. But You have provided teachers for us every week. Thank You, Father. Thank You for giving people these gifts.

Father, we thank You for Jeff, and we continually lift him up to You, asking that You would sustain and bless Jeff and Nathan and Abbie as they continue to grieve the loss of Tab. Father, we ask that You would grant us great grace now as we listen to Your word taught, a very important part of Your word.

Jesus, we thank You that You overcame the evil one. And we pray, Father, that as we are instructed by Your word that You would bless the reading, the teaching, the hearing, and most important the application of it, for we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Don:** Hear the word of God from Matthew 4, verses 1-11. *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.*

*“Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’*

*“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*

*“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: “He shall give His angels charge over you,” and, “In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”*

*“Jesus said to him, ‘It is written again, “You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”*

*“Again, the devil took him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’”*

*“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall you serve.’”*

*“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Don:** Okay. I’ve entitled this study “The First Temptation of Christ.” I wanted to be clever and cute. You may recall that in 1988 there was a controversial, and I believe blasphemous film which was protested by many, which was called “The Last Temptation of Christ.” Is Mr. Gratner here today?

**John Gratner:** Maybe.

**Don:** Maybe? All right, good. *(Laughter)* It all depends on what I say, right, John? *(Laughter)* You know, I’m sure that Mr. Gratner’s wheels are spinning. “Wait a minute! There wasn’t one temptation of Christ, there were three here in this passage!” I know that. I was just trying to be clever to come up with a catchy title. Okay, so anyway—

**John:** I’ll save my comments for later. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** All right, go ahead. I’m sure you will. *(Laughter)* But what we have here and in Luke’s Gospel is the first recorded temptation of our Lord. Hebrews 2:17 asserts that Jesus “had to be made like us in every way, in order to be a faithful and merciful High Priest.” This is our Lord’s first recorded confrontation with the evil one. It raises some questions, and I’ll have a little more to say about that a little bit later, and I have a feeling that you will too.

He is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Now Ted, you’ve been to Israel, correct?

**Ted:** Yes.

**Don:** Okay.

**Ted:** Three times.

**Don:** Can you give us a little background or a description of the nature and location of this wilderness?

**Ted:** I think this wilderness would be as you go around into the river valley which is a great geologically deep area. It’s near the Dead Sea as you go to Jerusalem which is above sea level. You go down into the wilderness which is below sea level. It’s not sand; it’s just lots and lots of rock. There is a super highway that goes from Jerusalem all the way down into the valley, into the wilderness, and a four-lane highway. But along the way you see Bedouin shepherds with their flocks. But there is no grass and there are no trees or anything similar.

**Don:** Mmm.

**Ted:** It’s a very rocky desert area, too.

**Don:** Wow! Desolate.

**Don Bishop:** It’s sandstone, right?

**Ted:** It’s like sandstone. It’s beautiful, it’s starkly beautiful. But it’s very remote.

**Don Maurer:** Mm-hmm. Well thank you. Now I’ve heard that it was and is beautiful but desolate. R. C. Sproul says that it’s not fit for man or beast. So take that for what it’s worth.

But He is led by the Holy Spirit into this wilderness for the express purpose or being tempted or tested. I understand that the Greek word can mean the same thing.

**Ted:** Yes.

**Don:** He’s tempted by the devil. Now what is the nature of this fallen angel? What is the nature of our enemy?

His fall is recorded in several parts of Scripture. I realize that it’s a little bit of a difficulty because in Ezekiel 28 is it talking about the king of Tyre, or is it talking about Satan? There are titles there in Ezekiel 28, calling him a cherub, and saying that he was in Eden, the garden of God, and that he was filled with perfection, which could not describe the king of Tyre. And so in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, if you get a chance to read those, you’ll find descriptions of what I believe is talking about the fall of Lucifer.

Carl Robins, the pastor of Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church in South Carolina says that Satan is mentioned sixty times in the New Testament. The name Satan is mentioned 29 times, 28 of those by our Lord Himself. And there are twelve titles that Scripture uses that Carl Robins talked about. He’s called “Satan,” which means “adversary.”

He’s called “the accuser of the brethren.” Have you ever had times when you’ve sinned or you remember something that you did many years ago, and you’ve wondered: Am I really a Christian?

**Ted:** Mm-hmm.

**Don:** Am I really saved? You don’t have the assurance of your salvation. Sometimes the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin. But that also could be the work of the accuser of the brethren.

He’s called Lucifer—Light Bearer—masquerading as an angel of light, now that he is the fallen angel, Satan. He’s called “the dragon” in Revelation 20, showing his fierceness and his power.

He is called “the devil,” which is the most common name that he is known by. It is used over sixty times in the New Testament. The term “devil” means “slanderer.”

He is called by our Lord “a murderer” and “a liar” in John chapter 8. Jesus called him “the father of lies.” He’s called “Abaddon” and “Apollyon” in Revelation 9, which means “the destroyer.” He ruins and destroys relationships, families, lives and entire congregations. And as Jesus said in Matthew 24, if it were possible he would deceive and destroy even the very elect. We know that it isn’t possible. But he certainly tries, does he not?

He’s called “Belial” in 2 Corinthians 6, meaning “the absolutely worthless one.” He’s called “Beelzebub” or “Beelzeboul” depending upon your translation: “Lord of the flies”, literally “the dung god,” the ruler of a wicked kingdom, along with the principalities and powers, the forces of darkness which he leads.

He’s called “the evil one” by our Lord, the wicked one who brings hardship and pain. He’s called “the prince of the power of the air” in Ephesians 2. He’s called “the prince” or “god of this world.” And finally he is called “the serpent” in Genesis 3, 2 Corinthians 11 and Revelation 20.

Now why do I belabor this point? The devil, beloved, is a formidable foe. I think that we have to keep that in mind. It was popular in the ‘70s during the heyday of the charismatic movement to kind of find a demon under every rock. They talked about the demon of lust and the demon of smoking and the demon of rock and roll; whatever. *(Laughter)* You know, that kind of thing. And I think that sometimes they may have given the devil a little more credit than he was due.

But I think that we have a tendency to go to the other extreme, not really considering the power and the ferocity of the evil one. 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 8 and 9 says that *“the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* Peter should know; after all he came under the attack of Satan in a very terrible way the night before our Lord was crucified.

Okay. It’s interesting to me that this episode occurs after the high point right before the beginning of our Lord’s public ministry, when He was baptized by John in the Jordan River, and the voice of God spoke to Him and declared from heaven that Christ was His only-begotten Son with whom He was well pleased.

We see this in other parts of Scripture. We see this with David who was at the high point of his kingdom. He was at ease when he succumbed to the temptation to commit adultery with Bathsheba and to kill Uriah.

We see it with Peter, as I said before. He confesses Christ as the Son of God. And then several minutes later he is the mouthpiece of Satan. And we see it with the apostle Paul, who after his great revelation received the thorn in the flesh to humble him.

**Ted:** And Don, we also see it when Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and the first person He encounters is the demon-possessed person.

**Don:** Yes. Very good, Ted; thank you. God uses these things to humble us. And even though Jesus did not have the sinful nature that we have, this happens to Him as well, as part of identifying with us.

Also, very briefly, this episode in the life of our Savior raises questions. Was it possible for Jesus in His human nature to be tempted? We know that God cannot be tempted by sin, as it says in James 1. Was it possible in His humanity for Jesus to sin? Jesus of course is the God-Man; He is two natures in one Person. Hebrews 4 says that He was *“tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.”* What does this mean?

There’s a controversy right now; I’m not going to get into it in depth. But there are people who say, well, if you have a certain sexual orientation, or if you have a certain predisposition to alcohol or whatever, that isn’t sin in and of itself. After all Jesus was tempted in all points as we are.

I think we have to be careful. Jesus did not have the fallen nature, the sinful nature that we have. Thus I don’t believe that He was tempted internally to sin. His temptations were external, from the devil. And He suffered the extreme onslaught of Satan. And so He suffered the intensity of this temptation from Satan more than we could ever imagine or more than has happened to us. He was tempted with the most intense onslaught of the evil one that was possible. And I’ll try to apply this at the end for us.

**Ted:** Don?

**Don:** Yes, Ted.

**Ted:** You say you don’t believe that Jesus was tempted internally versus externally, right?

**Don:** Yes, in terms of having a sinful nature.

**Ted:** That’s a tough one.

**Don:** It is, I know it is.

**Ted:** Because it says that He was tempted in every way that we are tempted, externally and internally.

**Don:** Right; I know.

**Ted:** I’m not arguing with you. I just think that it’s almost unfathomable.

**Don:** I know. On the one hand, of course, if this were not a true temptation and Jesus couldn’t be tempted, then what’s the point?

**Ted:** That’s right.

**Don:** He had to be tempted. The temptation was real, no question about it. I just want to safeguard the fact that He was without sin, unlike us.

**Don Bishop:** Don? Don?

**Don** **Maurer:** Yes?

**Don Bishop:** Would you say that He was tempted in His human nature instead of His divine nature?

**Ted:** All these things are—

**Don Maurer:** Yes, I know.

**John:** Or do we accept that the Bible says what the Bible says?

**Ted:** Yes, that’s right.

**Don:** That’s a novel idea, isn’t it, John? *(Laughter)*

**John:** At the end of the day, what we do know from the Scriptures is that Jesus was tempted and that Jesus didn’t sin; that’s what we do know. How did that work exactly? I’m not sure we can parse that out. But what we should do is not to let any particular form of theology taint how we should actually just let the Scripture read. It says He was tempted and yet He was without sin. It says that He is a sympathetic High Priest who knows us, who was tempted as we are. We just have to let that say what it says and hold faster to that more than to any other methodology or interpretation that might keep us from fully embracing what the Scripture actually says.

**Ted: It’s** in the realm of mystery, isn’t it?

**Don:** It is.

**Ted:** I think about that Michael Card song, “The Mystery.”

**Don:** Mm-hmm.

“Ah the mystery, more than you can see.

Give up on your ponderings;

Fall on your knees.”

**Don:** Ah, yes.

**Ted:** With this mystery, “give up on your ponderings and fall on your knees.”

**John:** Just one last thing. I always appreciate the desires of people to be precise and to not open the door to heresy. But Jesus wasn’t really concerned about that because He needs no defense. He’s okay on His own. He’s okay with what the Word says the Word says. So we just have to let it be, and sometimes we don’t have everything answered to our satisfaction. But He just wants us to trust and not explain.

**Don:** There are things that we’re obviously not going to understand until we’re in glory, and maybe we won’t understand them fully then. So thank you, John. I stand corrected. No! *(Laughter)*

Okay. I also think it’s important to set the contrast as R. C. Sproul is very good at doing, between the setting and the situation of the first Adam and the second Adam. The first Adam was in Paradise. We can only imagine the lush setting and the incomparable beauty which we have never experienced, with a veritable feast set before him, presumably many fruits to choose from, save one. Not only that, but he had a companion specially designed by God for him to help him, to encourage him and to be alongside of him.

By contrast our Lord was in the barren, desolate wilderness with rocks, perhaps with wild animals; I don’t know. Luke’s account seems to indicate that this Satanic barrage wasn’t just for a short time or at the end of the forty days, but was for the duration of all of that time. Can you imagine constantly, 24/7 for forty days, being tempted and oppressed that way? And He was utterly forsaken, alone, perhaps experiencing a preview of Gethsemane or what happened on the cross. So with that in mind, let’s examine the first temptation in verses 3-4.

Notice Satan’s strategy. Being the supreme blockhead, as John Gerstner used to call him, he thinks he can plant doubt into the mind of the omniscient Son of God. He doesn’t say, “Since You are the Son of God,” but *“If You are the Son of God.”* It’s similar to what He does with Eve in the garden, planting doubt. “Did God really say such and such?” *“If You are the Son of God”:* Satan’s direct onslaught on the word of God.

The Father had just announced and proclaimed previously that Christ was indeed His only-begotten Son. And now Satan tries to plant doubt in the mind of our Lord.

This temptation comes in the midst of agonizing hunger that I dare say you and I have never experienced. Only Moses and Elijah fasted that long for that period of time. And of course this is where it’s important not to make narrative passages doctrine.

I remember in the ‘80s that there was someone on the news who tried to fast for forty days and forty nights and ended up dead. Obviously that is not something that God wants for everyone. But this was something that was a special thing for those people, including our Lord. But at the end of those forty days He was famished. Absolutely every bone in His body was screaming for food.

And so Satan says, “Break the fast. Command that these stones become bread.” Matthew Henry says, if we can read between the lines a little bit, that after all if He could raise up children of Abraham from stones, surely He would be able to make bread out of them, as He would later turn water into wine.

Now is there anything inherently wrong with satisfying the need for food if you’re hungry? Of course not. So what would the problem have been here? What would have been the problem if Jesus had succumbed?

**Don Nemit:** He would have listened to the tempter.

**Don Maurer:** Yes, He would have listened to the tempter. Apparently this is what the Father had commanded Him to do, right? This is what the Father’s revealed will for Him was at that time. And so to break the fast would be sin; it would be disobedience. For example, to break the Nazirite vow in the Old Testament would have been sin, something like that. And so that is the heart of the matter: Satan’s attack on the word of God.

And Jesus’ response in verse 4 is instructive for all of us: *“It is written.”* Jesus says that three times. He only uses the Bible in reference to itself. I find it interesting that Jesus could conceivably have said, as the incarnate Son of God, “I say such and such”; in fact He did several times in the Sermon on the Mount. “You’ve heard ‘You shall not murder,’ but I say to you.” And He was perfect legitimate in doing that. But He quotes from Scripture in all three instances, all from the book of Deuteronomy, which liberals like to attack.

*“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”* In our predominantly secular culture, as well as pagan cultures throughout all of history, the ultimate credo is that man shall live by bread alone: for pleasure and for what feels good right now, because this is all there is. There is no afterlife, no day of judgment, no giving account to God: post-modernism, relativism, you name it. But we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

It shows the absolute importance of Scripture. And it also shows that our Lord believed in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible. What Jesus says here underscores 2 Timothy 3:16, doesn’t it?

**Transcriber’s Note:** 2 Timothy 3:16, ESV. *“All Scripture is breathed out by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”*

**Don:** All Scripture is profitable for us. Now John said something a few weeks ago that I thought was right on: that all Scripture is written for us, but not all of it is written to us. And so we have to examine the context and the setting and the people to whom all of Scripture is written. And of course, like I said, we are not all instructed to give all of our goods to the poor, or instructed to fast for forty days and forty nights, or to observe the Levitical sacrificial laws, or whatever.

But it is still for our instruction. And we don’t have the option of picking and choosing which part of the word of God to obey, especially in the moral realm. People say, “I love ‘Judge not, lest you be judged’”—a Scripture that has been woefully misinterpreted. Or *“Come unto Me, all he that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” I love that.”* But *“Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”* Or there is going to be a day of judgment, and all of the hard sayings of Christ, I don’t like those so much. I love *“Thou shalt not steal”;* I don’t want anyone taking anything away from me. “But I’m not too sure about the Bible’s sexual ethics.”

No, we don’t have that option. As the Westminster Confession says in its chapter on saving faith, part of saving faith involves “whatsoever the Bible teaches, God being its Author.” And it means *“obeying the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises both for this life and that which is to come.”* Okay, so we go now to the second temptation.

**John:** Hey, sir.

**Don:** Yes.

**John:** Before you move on, I just wondered what your thoughts were on why did Jesus respond with that response?

**Don:** Scripture doesn’t say, and we’re only to—Out of thy own mouth I will—*(Laughter)*

**Ted:** Good shot.

**John:** What was the context of Deuteronomy 8? He could have answered with anything. But He chooses to answer with the verse that He answers with. Any thoughts on why He may have said that?

**Don:** Well, I don’t know. But maybe some other people—

**Ted:** It’s obvious that—

**Brave Man:** Which point are you talking about?

**Don Bishop:** The first temptation.

**John:** “You shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.” Why would He say that?

**Don** **Maurer:** It is in Deuteronomy 8. I can’t remember which verse it is. Moses said not to forget the LORD your God. Don’t become too presumptuous; don’t think that my hand and my wealth have obtained all of this. Be careful to observe all of My statutes. *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”*

**Ted:** What verse is that?

**Mike Davis:** Verse 3.

**Don Bishop:** Verse 3 says: *“He humbled you.”*

**Gary Craig:** He says that we’re supposed to follow what God says.

**Don Maurer:** Yes.

**Ted:** Bread is something we think is what we can provide ourselves. But only God can provide His word.

**John:** What’s going on in Deuteronomy 8 is instructive for us. They are brought out of Egypt and they go into the wilderness and what do they do? “I’ve provided all these things for you, and you failed the test,” right? “You asked Me for bread and I gave you bread. You asked Me for meat and I gave you meat. And what do you want to do? You want to turn your backs on Me and go back to Egypt and worship the other gods,” right? Jesus, their Representative comes and says, “I won’t turn My back on the Father.” The whole point wasn’t that they were supposed to trust in bread; they were supposed to trust in the bread giver. And so He comes here and passes the test as the perfect One, the perfect Representative of His people. *(Unclear)*

**Don:** Very well spoken, John.

**Gary Dunbar:** *(Unclear)*

**Mike Davis:** There are a couple of very interesting things in this passage as we’re looking at this. He is tempted. And why does the Spirit lead Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil? And so that’s the first question. And we can talk about that sitting here and looking at these things. The devil says, *“If You are the Son of God.”* Don, it would be like saying to you, “If you think you’re a Bible teacher,” or “If you think you’re an elder at Providence Presbyterian Church.” He’s trying to stir Him up; he’s trying to make Him angry when He’s already hungry and tired.

**Don:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike:** So he is tempting Him in what he is trying to get Him to say. We can see that in some of the other temptations from verse 4 to the end. As I say, he’s trying to get Him to say things that He doesn’t want to say to make Him angry, and he’s throwing that in His face. In what’s recorded here anyway, Jesus doesn’t spout off. He quotes the Scripture.

**John:** Mike, to your point. It was the devil’s idea to have Jesus go out into the wilderness so he could have an opportunity to tempt Him. This is an offensive encounter: the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of darkness. It’s not a defensive encounter.

**Mike:** It is led by the Spirit of God.

**John:** Right. Again, we ought not to miss that. “I will continue to live by every word that proceeds from My Father in faithfulness to Him.” That’s an offensive thing, not a defensive position.

**Mike:** It almost begs the question as well. If He was led by the Spirit and being tempted, are you led by the Spirit to be tempted?

**Don:** Wait a minute, now!

**Mike:** Just listen. Are you led by the Spirit of God? Jesus was. Are we led by the Spirit? We have the Lord’s Prayer where Jesus tells us to pray: *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”* I’m just throwing that out as a question; I’m not trying to stir the pot.

**Don:** Oh no, not you, Mike!

**Ted:** Are you going to pick on him?

**Don:** No. *(Laughter)* I want to get through this. But please, I do appreciate your input. All right, the second temptation: verses 5-7. Interestingly enough, the order is different in Matthew and Luke’s accounts. But the devil sets Christ at the pinnacle of the temple, at the very top of the massive structure built by King Herod. Again, as in Eden, Satan continues the onslaught, although he is more subtle this time. Again, *“If You are the Son of God,”* “do a stunt! Jump off! Throw Yourself down!”

It’s the same thing in a different way that His formerly unbelieving family would say to Him later at the Passover feast in John 7. “If You are who You say You are, then perform a sign; show Yourself to the world.” As the Pharisees said, “Show us a sign from heaven. People will flock to you. Isn’t that what You have wanted all along? And after all, Jesus, it is written, right? If You can quote Scripture, so can I.”

Remember, beloved: Satan has had thousands of years of experience. I dare say—and this might strike some people as heresy!—I dare say that he knows the Bible better than you or I or Augustine or Calvin or R. C. will ever know it. In many ways he can be very orthodox in his theology. He believes and trembles, as James 2:19 says.

Jeff used to say that faith is cat with a k: knowledge, assent and trust. What doesn’t the devil have? He doesn’t have trust. He has knowledge. He has to assent intellectually to the word of God; he has no choice. But he doesn’t have trust in Christ. And because he knows Scripture so well, he is equally good at twisting it.

Yesterday Paul and I got to spend a little over an hour with some Jehovah’s Witnesses, and that was quite an encounter. You talk about Scripture twisting; there was a lot of that kind of thing going on there.

He twists the Scripture. And he’s the one behind people doing that, as 2 Peter 3 says: “twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction.” Satan quotes from but misapplies Psalm 91:11-12. And countless people do that today as well with a lot of Scriptures.

**John:** What is the misapplication, Don?

**Don:** The misapplication of course is that these are general promises. They are promises that the Lord will protect you and that you will not dash your foot against a stone and that angels will take care of you. The misapplication is that we’re to presume upon those promises and to do something that God does not permit us to do as far as putting Him to the test. If Jesus would have jumped off the temple, #1, He could have hurt Himself. But #2, it was not what the Father wanted. It was not how He was supposed to bring people to Himself: by performing tremendous stunts, or whatever.

**John:** Who does the devil acknowledge as the truth? In that second conversation with Jesus here he says that “these things are said to be true of You.”

**Don:** Yes, mm-hmm. And what is Jesus’ response? “Don’t put Me to the test.”

**John:** What did He not do? There are a few things here—

**Don:** Go ahead.

**John:** 1. He didn’t validate “Yes, that’s true,” because it is true. It is true for Him, and He can prove it by obviously doing the sign. But what would that have proven if He had thrown Himself down and the angels had borne Him up so that He was protected?

**Don:** It would have proven that Jesus had listened to the devil and that the devil would have authority.

**John:** Well it might prove that it’s really hard to kill this Guy.

**Don:** I’m not sure where you’re going with that.

**John:** Well, “throw Yourself down. We’ll see if the angels catch You. You’re hard to kill, and I’d like to.” But He didn’t answer him with “Yes, that’s true.” But He obviously didn’t prove yes, that’s true. He says, “You can’t test me so the Lord will tell you what I’m doing. That’s not for you; I’m going to go with the plan. You’re going to know what the plan is. And the plan is that I’m actually going to die. But I’m not going to tell you that. And I’m not going to let you know so you can’t kill Me; you can’t kill Me for good.” *(Unclear)*

**Don:** I’m not sure I would go completely with that, John. I would say that implicitly what Jesus is saying in His response is: “Yes, that’s true; that is a promise of the word of God. But you’re misapplying it.”

You don’t put the Lord to the test. For example—and I talked about it earlier,--someone thought he could fast for forty days. I wish I could think of specific examples. Jesus said that if you pray, believing. Then let’s try to cast that mountain into the sea and it will obey you. Or the faith healers today who say, “Just name it and claim it. Jesus said that if you ask anything in My Father’s name I will do it.” And therefore I can pray for a million dollars, or whatever. No, that’s putting the Lord to the test. And I think that’s what Jesus has in mind here.

**Ted:** In my own work experience I was meeting with a potential future client, and she just kept asking questions. And I said, “I’m not going to answer any of your questions. I mean, I’ve established my credentials. It’s not worth my time to answer any of your questions, because none of them are going to come up with ‘Oh I see and I believe.’” I mean, it’s not like at the end of this conversation Satan says, “Oh my gosh! It’s amazing, isn’t it? I’m going to believe in You, Jesus, from this point on.”

**Don:** Mm-hmm. Right.

**Ted:** Even if Jesus were to be lifted up, it’s not as if, oh my gosh! I believe You are the Son of God! I believe; I repent of all the evil I’ve done for the past six thousand years.

**Don:** Right.

**Ted:** It’s just an unworkable conversation. We’ve all been in that situation.

**Don:** Yes. And Paul and I will be in that situation, because we said that we would meet with—I’m sorry, Ted; I interrupted you.

**Ted:** Go in peace.

**Don:** Okay. We said we would meet with our Jehovah’s Witnesses friends one more time. I think one more time is sufficient.

**Ted:** One time is too much. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** We are to preach the gospel to every creature. But we’re not to cast our pearls before swine either. Anyway I need to go to the third temptation. Again, the order is different in Luke and Matthew. But “the devil took Jesus and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.”

Now don’t you sometime wish in the Bible that it would be more explicit? I wish that Matthew and Luke would have elaborated on what that was like. What did the devil show Him? Did Satan show Christ the glory of the temple, Jerusalem, the Taj Mahal? Future things: Paris, the seven wonders of the world, the Grand Canyon, the Roman Empire? Interesting. And Luke says that he showed Him all of them *“in a moment of time.”*

Okay. So Satan deceives others, but he also deceives himself. He is insane. *“All these things I will give you.”*

Now we have something very interesting. He says: *“All this authority I will give You and their glory, for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whoever I wish.”* Is that true?

**Mike:** He’s the prince of this world.

**Don:** Yes. It’s a half-truth, isn’t it?

**Ted:** It almost sounds like some of the things that Jesus said.

**Don:** Yeah.

**Ted:** It almost sounds like a mirror.

**Don:** It’s a duplicate of Matthew 28:20: “All authority has been given to Me.”

**Ted:** Right.

**Don:** Yes. But you’re right, Mike. He’s called *“the prince of this world”;* he’s called *“the god of this world.”* 1 John 5:19 says: *“We are of God, and the entire world is in the power of the evil one.”*

Now that’s delegated by God; we have to remember that. Luther said that “the devil is God’s devil.” That causes some people conniptions, but I think that it’s very true. But he shows his perverted pride expressed in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, if indeed that is talking about Satan. He claimed for himself the ultimate divine prerogative, expressed in Psalm 2.

Was it not God who said of the Son:

*“Ask of Me, and I will give You*

*The ends of the earth for Your inheritance?”*

And then Satan comes along and says, *“All of these things I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me.”*

Now John, I think your point is well taken. I don’t know what Satan knew about the whole plan of salvation. I’m sure that he knew what God had said in Genesis 3; he was right there when He said it: the *proto-evangel,* the first gospel: that the Seed of the woman would come and bruise the serpent’s head, but he will bruise His heel. Maybe I’m assuming too much, but maybe Satan was thinking something like this: “Why go through all of this trouble that You’re going to encounter in Your public ministry—the scorn, the rejection, being misunderstood by even Your own family and Your disciples?”

I don’t know if he knew about the cross, but it was the cross that awaited Him. “Or even what you’re now going through with me! Just worship me and it will all be over, and You’ll have what You’ll wish. Just genuflect to me; make a little sign with Your finger, and everything will be all right.”

It’s the lie of lies that deceives the world to this very day, isn’t it? And it deceived us until the Lord made us alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. What is the appeal of every temptation to sin, applying it to ourselves? It’s do this, think this, and everything will be fine. There won’t be any consequences. That’s the way it is. That is the way the evil one works in his temptations.

And then of course, what does Jesus do? “Get behind Me, Satan! Begone, Satan! Away with you, Satan! I’ve had enough of your shenanigans,” if I can put it that way. *“For it is written.”* Again, “it is written”; He says this for the third time: *“You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall You serve.”*

**Don Nemit:** Amen.

**Don Maurer:** Amen is right, Don. End of discussion; that settles it once for all; that’s the bottom line. Interestingly enough, Jesus accepted worship, proving His Deity.

Okay. So in the short time I have left, let me just give a few applications. Any related questions or comments would obviously be welcome, except for John. No, just kidding! *(Laughter)*

Jesus is our example in this cosmic spiritual warfare which Paul talks about in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10-18. What did He do when He was confronted by the temptation of Satan? He took hold of the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. How much more do we need to do this?—we, who unlike Christ are beset by sin every single day?

Okay, that’s the importance of knowing Scripture. That’s the importance of memorizing Scripture and knowing verses that we can bank on whenever we are tempted to sin, and all too frequently give into temptation. *“The sword of the Spirit, the word of God.”*

We have to realize and remember that we don’t fight against flesh and blood. We don’t wrestle against Kamala and Trump and the philosophies of Washington or Communism or Islam, or—

**Ron Baling:** Capitalism.

**Don:** Excuse me?

**Ron:** Or even capitalism.

**Don:** Capitalism, yes. Or all of the trials that beset us every day. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the powers and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” And our only solution is the word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then secondly, and most important, Christ conquered Satan and was victorious because He did not succumb to the temptation. The first Adam did; the second Adam did not. And therefore He won the victory for us.

Luke says that “the devil left Him until an opportune time.” This wasn’t the last time Jesus would be accosted by the devil. But our Lord and Savior, our Prophet, Priest and King, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, was and is and always will be victorious over sin and death and hell forever. Hallelujah! And all the Brave Men said:

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Don Nemit:** Hey, Don.

**Don Maurer:** Yes?

**Don Nemit:** Our pride will cause us to wrestle with darkness. But our humility will cause us to bear the light of Jesus into the world. So instead of wrestling with fools, spread the light and say, “It is written,” as Jesus did. These three temptations are the greatest blessing ever given to us. If the Son of God can be tempted, then we shouldn’t think that we aren’t going to be tempted. But He said it right: “It is written.”

**Don Maurer:** Mm-hmm.

**Don Nemit:** The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. So I don’t like to wrestle with fools; they waste my time. So I just proclaim the Word, and let them fight it out.

**Don Maurer:** Amen. Thank you, Don. Okay, let us pray. Our Father, we thank You that we have this portion of Scripture. Our Savior, Lord Jesus, we thank You that though You were tempted in ways that we can’t fathom and that we can’t understand, You came through victorious. And Lord, thank You that as Your word says: because You were tempted, You are able to help us when we are tempted. We pray, Father, that You would help us to remember this and to apply it to our lives. Lord, we know that as Bruce used to say to us, what are we going to do with what we just learned? We pray, Father, that You would instruct us by the Holy Spirit how to apply this to our lives in our individual circumstances every day. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen. *(Applause)*