

WHAT THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS TEACHES US

By Milton Smith

One of the most amazing incidents recorded in the Bible is the story of the temptation of the Son of God by the prince of “spiritual wickedness in the high places.” Each of the synoptic gospels record this incident. We must consider that what took place on this occasion was Satan engaging himself in an assault on the incarnate Son of God. Among the adversaries of Jesus, none could equal the power of Satan. If our Lord was able to triumph over the spiritual assaults of the prince of this world, he truly was the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and the Holy One who has the authority to rescue all sinners from the kingdom of darkness.

Scripture tells us that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days. (Luke 4:2.) This would be the ultimate assault on Christ by the wicked powers of

darkness. This area the Bible identifies as the “wilderness,” was often called the “devastation.” It is a very frightening area east of Jerusalem that was entered by traveling down the back slopes of the plateau on which Jerusalem rose over the Dead Sea. It was an area consisting pretty much of nothing but rocks, jagged cliffs, and devastation. It was a most frightening trip. Jesus found Himself all alone in this dreaded wilderness when Satan came to Him. Here, in this intimidating wasteland, Jesus would be confronted by a subtle, crafty, and clever deceiver. Satan’s temptation would be masterfully designed to attack Jesus with the greatest amount of impact. Everything about this situation would be dangerous.

But Jesus overcame every obstacle and every temptation that this evil deceiver would throw at him. But what

does this mean to us? Basically, three important facts: First, Jesus satisfied the Father’s demand for the perfect sacrifice by his victory over the tempter. Second, Jesus became the perfect mediator between God and man by being “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15.) And third, in turning back Satan by quoting Scripture, Jesus was showing us how to overcome Satan’s temptations by using the Bible. Satan hates the word of God, and when we use it, he is more likely to flee from us and center his attacks on someone else. The temptation of Jesus was truly an amazing incident, and one that teaches the student of the Bible some magnificent lessons.

— Tulsa, OK

MIND CONTROL OF CHILDREN

By Danny Tunnell

“As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them”. (Psalm 127:4-5.)

Children have always been important to Jesus. “And they brought young children to Him, that when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Allow the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein”. (Mark 10:13-16.)

“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of

heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receives Me”. (Matthew 18:1-5.) The next verse shows us that Jesus does not want to see young children abused or led astray. “But whoso shall offend (hurt) one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he was drowned in the depth of the sea”.

The Bible gives us instruction on how children are to be taught so they can be like Jesus. “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man”. (Luke 2:52.) Children are to be brought up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4.) Solomon admonishes us to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”. (Proverbs 22:6.)

History sadly reports a time in Russia when they had a godless leader who tried to perpetuate his unbelief in the country’s children. Joseph Stalin ruled Russia from 1922-1952. It seems

that the last thing Stalin wanted was for Russia’s citizens to believe in God and to think for themselves.

Stalin practiced his mind control on the nation’s youngest citizens, those in kindergarten. Teachers would tell children in their classes to close their eyes and pray to God for a bag of candy. None appeared. Then the teacher said, “Now pray to Stalin”. As the children prayed, the teachers would place bags of candy on each desk. Prayer to God never gets anything, the teachers would announce. The lesson taught was to trust their leader for their needs.

That is so despicable that it may hurt your heart to read it. It appears that Joseph Stalin, who was an atheist, was trying to set himself up as a “god” in the eyes of his people. Unfortunately for Mr. Stalin, he knows now who the real God is, and he is discovering first hand that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”. (Hebrews 10:31.)

— Miami, OK

Old Paths

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“ask for the old paths” (Jer. 6:16)

Who Does He Think He Is?

By Joe Slater

“The paradox of the pulpit is that its occupant is a sinner whose chief right to be there is his perpetual sense that he has no right to be there, and is there only by grace and always under the spotlight of divine judgment.”

Scottish preacher A.C. Craig spoke those words back in 1953 in one lecture of a series entitled “Preaching in a Scientific Age”. His lectures were printed in a book by the same title the next year.

While we could find much about which to disagree with this preacher from the Church of Scotland, the above-quoted statement is right on target. Christians are redeemed sinners, and that most assuredly includes the preacher. The great apostle Paul considered himself the chief of sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15.) Any preacher who supposes that he is “better” than his audience, or that his own personal goodness somehow entitles him to speak the oracles of God, ought to sit down and be quiet!

What right do I have to preach? That question nags at me. Just who do I think I am? Actually, I know all too well who and what I am – a flawed, broken creature who upholds a divine standard that I did not set, and that I fail to meet. As Craig said, I have a perpetual sense that I have no right to be doing what I’m doing.

By God’s grace, I have the opportunity to preach Christ. Since we have established that I do not merit this privilege in any way, and since it is, indeed, a privilege, the only alternative is that it is by grace (unmerited favor.)

As usual, however, privilege comes with responsibility. Craig correctly observed that the preacher is “always under a spotlight of divine judgment.” Paul told Timothy to take heed to himself and to his teaching, for in doing so he would save both himself and those who heard him (1 Timothy 4:16.) A faithful preacher must preach only the truth and all of the truth. Paul emphasized that he had declared the “whole counsel of God,” and was therefore innocent of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26, 27.)

The first of this month marked the completion of my seventh year working as a gospel preacher with the church here at Justin. I am keenly aware that I don’t deserve the privilege, and I am thankful both to God and to this congregation.

— Justin, TX

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON’T FORGET TO REMEMBER!

By Dalton Key

When asked what learning was the most necessary, Antisthenes replied, “Not to unlearn what you have learned”.

The Greek philosopher had a point. Remembering what we have already learned, what we should already know, is imperative. But it can also be frustrating. In the words of one wit, “A man’s memory is what he forgets with”.

Consider the Bible. Many of us have heard and read and studied the Bible for years. It has been a regular and important source of our instruction. Yet how much of this marvelous book do we remember? How many of the great events of the Old Testament can we recall? How many rich, New Testament texts can we locate? Can we show someone the plan of salvation as laid out in Scripture?

Paul writes of the gospel, “by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain”. (1 Corinthians 15:2.) The King James uses the words, “If you keep in memory what I preached unto you”. How well do we “keep in memory” the sacred truths of God’s word.

You say you can’t remember the Bible? Don’t blame your brain. Researchers have calculated the brain’s storage capacity to be in the range somewhere between 1 terabyte and 2.5 petabytes. Without getting into matters of higher mathematics, let’s just say that the brain has plenty of space for whatever Bible knowledge you’d like to store there.

Yet you still say you can’t remember the Bible?

I wonder? Could it be that we remember what we have a deep and intense interest in? Don’t we tend to remember best what we love most?

The Psalmist wrote, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You”. (Psalm 119:11.) God’s word was not merely in his home, or on his shelf. It was in his heart. And how was this possible? “Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Psalm 119:97.) The Psalmist remembered what he loved!

Could the same be true with us?

ACCEPTABLE MUSIC IN WORSHIP

By Bobby Key

A preacher of some renown was asked, "May a church use a piano in its worship service and be pleasing to the Lord?" He replied, "I do not know; it would depend on the feeling of the majority of the members and the decision of the elders."

This answer is completely out of harmony with the doctrine of the New Covenant. Enoch had this testimony that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5.) This man walked with God, and he did so by faith. In order for one to please God today, he must walk by faith. (2 Corinthians 5:7.) Faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17.) Thus, to please God, one must walk in faithful obedience to the word of God.

The word of God teaches Christians to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.) Quoting from the 22nd Psalm, the author of Hebrews says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee." (Hebrews 2:12.)

I know of no act of worship acceptable to God unless the Bible authorizes that act to be done. Christians are told to sing. I know of no passage of Scripture in the New Testament that talks about mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship. Therefore, I can have no faith on this subject. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23.)

Since when did God allow the majority in a congregation to determine the kind of worship that pleases Him? When did He ever give elders the authority to legislate concerning the type of music to be used in New Testament worship?

The only way we can know what pleases God in the New Testament age is by reading what God has revealed in the New Testament. It is never wise to speak where God has not spoken.

— Miami, OK

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:16,17.)

Editorial . . .

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STUDENT OF THE BIBLE

By Dalton Key

Bible reading, once a regular practice for Christians, a daily pastime for families of the Lord's people, and, further, a personal and daily regimen of the masses, has more recently fallen upon hard times. Sadly, the reading and study of the Bible is now too-often ridiculed as amounting to nothing more than the wasted efforts of those with small minds and even smaller intellects.

The ablest leaders and most brilliant minds in history would beg to disagree.

Sir Isaac Newton, renowned scientist, mathematician, and philosopher, once confessed, "I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatsoever."

William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, declared, "The Scriptures contain a declaration of the mind and will of God. They ought also to be read, believed, and fulfilled in our day. We accept them as the words of God Himself."

Martin Luther, whose determination sparked the early fires of the Reformation, was a man in love with God's Word. Though we believe him wrong on many counts, he was "spot on" in observing, "Holy Scripture is a sweet-scented herb, and the more you rub it, the more it emits its fragrance."

Our country has been blessed with leaders at the highest levels of government professing deep respect for the Bible. George Washington once said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible. He is worse than an infidel who does not read his Bible and acknowledge his obligation to God." John Adams stated, "The Bible is the best book in the world." Thomas Jefferson declared, "I have always said and always will say that the studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better fathers, better husbands. The Bible makes the best people in the world." And Abraham Lincoln, perhaps the most admired and loved of all past presidents, once acknowledged, "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible," further advising, "Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man before God."

Today's Bible scoffers are on the wrong side of history!

Why not resolve now, at the beginning of this new year, to make the reading and study of the Bible a dedicated priority in your daily routine! The time to begin is now!



REMEMBERING MY UNCLE'S SILVER DOLLAR

By Jimmie Keas

I remember my mother's older brother, my Uncle Duard. He was a prospector in Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. I remember all he could talk about was the gold and uranium mines he had prospected and was mining. He lived to make the almighty dollar! An extremely good looking man, I remember a picture taken of him on his 50th birthday. In his hand was a silver dollar.

The time would come some twenty-one to twenty-two years later that I would preach his funeral. As I peered down into the casket I remembered that picture and looked closely; his hands were folded, empty! No silver dollar! But even if that silver dollar had been there, he still would not have taken it with him!

Well did the scripture say, "We brought nothing in this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out". (1 Timothy 6:7.)

I also remember what Jesus said in Luke 12:15: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses". Basically, Jesus was saying, "Life is not things". Jesus then told the parable of the rich man. (Luke 12:16-21.) The last question asked that rich man was, "This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"

Don't be trapped in the tyranny of things.

Let us all be careful to not allow our possessions or even the desire for

possessions to possess us!

— Oklahoma City, OK.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. . . No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. . . But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". (Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 33.)

A GOOD MAN!

By Ron Stough

The Scripture reserves the word "good" for a select few characters described in its pages, but one of those men was Barnabas. Acts 11:24 describes Barnabas as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." Although the term "good" is often tossed around lightly today, God's description of a man as "good" is a rare compliment indeed.

Let's look at some of the possible reasons behind the goodness of Barnabas:

The first mention of Barnabas shows him to be a working Christian. (Acts 4:36-37.) He sold his land and brought the money to the apostles to help with the needs of those who were converted in Jerusalem. Barnabas counted his possessions as God's, and was not hesitant to give what he had to the cause of Christ.

Another fine quality in Barnabas was his faith. He was "full of faith," both in God, and in his fellow man. It was Barnabas who convinced the doubting and frightened Christians in Jerusalem to accept the man, Saul, who had been

their persecutor, as their new brother in Christ. (Acts 9:27.)

Barnabas was also missionary-minded. He was not content to help his friends at home only. He was anxious to tell others of the Savior, and he and Paul traveled great distances telling the Good News.

Barnabas was truly a remarkable individual because it seems he put the cause of Christ far ahead of his own desires. For this attitude, God called him good.

How would the Lord describe your life?

Why not be a Barnabas!

— Duncan, OK

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For 'He who would love life and see

good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (1 Peter 3:8-12.)

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