

- ***READ I Peter 5:8-11*** As Peter begins to conclude his letter written to Christians who were facing trials for their faith, he seeks to remind them of their identity in Christ (**I Peter 2:9,10**) and their need to be holy in all of their conduct. (**I Peter 2:11,12**) After strongly establishing the need for these two things in their lives, he leaves them with the important reminder to always be on guard and aware of the devil who he describes as prowling around *“like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*
 - Yet, the Apostle states that we are able to resist him and stand firm in our faiths. I would suggest that this is done when we do as **I Peter 5:6** says and *“humble [ourselves] under the mighty and of God, that He may exalt [us] at the proper time.”* No more proper a time can we be exalted in God than when we are tempted by Satan and come out on top.
 - We must recognize, however, that those victories are not a result of our own power and strength over Satan, but they are a result of Jesus’s power over Satan. If we were left all alone against Satan then that hungry and roaring lion would soon be on his way having had his fill of us. We are weak, but with Jesus and His power we can be strong as we face Satan throughout this life.
 - This year’s VBS is focusing on Jesus’s amazing power. The choices for the teachers were Jesus’s power over nature, needs, problems, sickness, and Satan. I’ll let you guess which subject wasn’t picked! No worries at all, though, because I am more than happy to be able to discuss the mighty power of Jesus this evening, and how His power even extends over the great adversary, the devil. Let’s use our time of study this evening by looking at how Jesus’s power was shown, is showing, and will be shown over the devil in the end.
- I. Jesus showed His power over Satan by overcoming his temptations in the wilderness.**
- A. It was the Father’s will that Jesus experience the temptations of Satan.**
1. Just after His baptism, we see in **Matthew 4:1** that Jesus was *“led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”* This was no coincidental meeting between Jesus and the devil, but it was something that the Father wanted to happen. So after having fasted for forty days and night, we see the devil beginning the three temptations that are recorded in Scripture.
 2. In the first temptation, we see Satan tempting Jesus to turn stones into bread to alleviate His hunger. Jesus responds from **Deuteronomy 8:3** which states that *“MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.”*
 3. Secondly, we see Satan taking Jesus into Jerusalem where He stands on the pinnacle of the temple. It is at this point that Satan tells Jesus to show His importance by throwing Himself down for God had promised that He would be kept safe. Jesus responds to this temptation by stating, *“YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.”* (**Deuteronomy 6:16**)
 4. Finally, Satan takes Jesus up to a very high mountain and tells Him that He would be given everything in the world if He would only fall down and worship him. Jesus’s parting words to Satan are strong and clear, *“Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’”* (**Deuteronomy 6:13 & 10:20**)
- B. This occasion taking place accomplished numerous purposes.**
1. Upon every temptation that Satan threw at Jesus, our Lord responds by leaning upon the holy Word of God that is profitable for training in righteousness. (**II Timothy 3:16**) There is no temptation that Satan can bring against us that the Bible cannot instruct us in how to overcome.
 2. Additionally, these temptations of Satan against Jesus give us insight into how Satan operates in his temptations. We learn that he will attack us in our times of weakness. He will attack us if we begin to think too highly of ourselves. He will seek to cause us to fall by offering us the world in exchange for only our souls. He is cunning and out for blood!

3. Finally, these temptations being overcome by Jesus simply show us that Jesus has power to overcome Satan. Power went against power. Supernatural being went toe to toe with supernatural being, and Jesus overcame and prevailed. If anyone doubted Jesus's power over Satan then those doubts surely must be put away after seeing Jesus get through Satan's strong temptations unscathed and free from sin.

II. Jesus showed His power over Satan's demons and unclean spirits during His ministry.

A. Demon possession was a very real problem during the time of Jesus's ministry.

1. After His baptism and temptations, we find Jesus *"going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people."* (**Matthew 4:23**) Jesus's power over the flesh's frailties was becoming well known, and this was to the extent that many people were being brought to Him. Yet, it wasn't just the sick that we see Jesus healing, but **Matthew 4:24** shows us that even demoniacs were being brought to Him for healing.
2. As Jesus went throughout His ministry, He encountered many individuals who were afflicted by demons and unclean spirits possessing them. There truly was not shortage.
 - a) He was met by a demoniac in the synagogue in Capernaum in **Mark 4:21-26 & Luke 4:33-36**.
 - b) Jesus came face to face with the demon called Legion in the country of the Gerasenes in **Matthew 8:28-29; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39**.
 - c) The Syrophenician woman in the region of Tyre begged Jesus to come heal her daughter who had been overtaken by a demon. (**Matthew 15:21-28 & Mark 7:24-30**)
 - d) Jesus healed an epileptic boy who was demon possessed in **Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43**.
 - e) He healed a mute demoniac in **Matthew 9:32-34**.
 - f) To one up that demoniac, Jesus healed a man who was both blind and mute. (**Matthew 12:22ff & Luke 11:15**)

B. Time and time again Jesus showed His absolute power over demons and unclean spirits.

1. In some of these encounters, the demons openly acknowledged who Jesus was as the chosen One of God. Jesus showed His power over them by rebuking them and causing them to be quiet and not announce such a thing. (**Mark 1:21-26**)
2. Elsewhere, we see Jesus conversing with the demons and even negotiating with their expulsion from their host. The demons had to ask Jesus if they could go into the swine in the region of the Gerasenes. They were only able to do so after Jesus gave them permission. Jesus makes his power over Satan extremely clear in the analogy that he shares when He is accused of actually being in league with Beelzebul in **Matthew 12:22-29**.
3. The commonality among all of these encounters is that these demons were all immediately expelled as soon as Jesus said for it to be done. He was in complete and total control over these supernatural beings, and they could do nothing against His will. We saw Jesus's power over Satan when He was tempted, but we also see that His great power extends even beyond Himself and in others as He casts out Satan's minions.

III. Jesus shows His power over Satan in the strength He provides us when we are tempted to sin.

A. Any time we are tempted, we enter into a battle against Satan and his will for our destruction.

1. We have already been reminded that Satan is a hungry lion looking for some soul which he can devour and destroy, but Paul in **Ephesians 6:10-17** we find Paul describing our struggle with Satan as being likened to a war. The armor we are to wear as warriors is designed by God and the enemies we are facing in the rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness are led by the devil. It is them against us and the prize is our souls.

2. Paul is well aware of this battle, and he wants us to not just be aware, but he also wants for us to be prepared as we enter into the battle arena so that we can stand firm against the schemes and temptations of the devil. If we are to be readily equipped to stand against the devil, then Paul says that we must put on the armor of God. We must put on truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, and the Word of God. Interestingly enough...we are not the first ones to use these things in the battle against Satan. In fact, these are the very same things in which Jesus used when he battled against the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, and we best believe that if these things are proper tools for Jesus then they are good for us to use when we are faced with temptations in our own battles in this life. Yet it is at these times that the power of Jesus will be on full display within us if we allow for to do such.
- B. Jesus shows His power over Satan when we lean upon Him and overcome temptation.**
1. We are taught in **James 1:13-15** and **Matthew 4:3** that Satan is behind the temptations that we face throughout this life. This is the way in which he seeks to devour us, and it is at these points that we have a choice as to how we can respond. We can either choose to give into those desires that we are feeling, or we can seek to withstand the desires and remain obedient to God. I am fully aware that at times it can seem like such a struggle to do what we need to do because it seems so much easier to just give in and do as we would like to do.
 2. However, it is in those moments of struggle that we can remember that Jesus's desires for our holiness and obedience are backed up by His first having done what He desires of us. *"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need."* (**Hebrews 4:15,16**) Jesus has already shown us His power over Satan within His own life earth earth as He was tempted, and He can most certainly continue to show that power over Satan when we learn from His example and lean upon the strength that He wants to provide us with when we are in the heat of the battle against the evil one.

IV. Jesus will show His ultimate power over Satan when he is cast into hell for eternity.

A. Satan has had and is having his time of power and influence over men.

1. As long as there have been men with free will then there has been Satan and His efforts to cause them to use that free will to disobey and sin against God. He had success in the garden, he caused the whole world except eight souls to be wicked in the days of Noah, he caused for thousands of Jews to die in the wilderness, he was behind Israel's continued rebellion, He and his demons were highly active in the first century, and he continues to do everything he can in order to cause as many souls to turn away from God as possible.
2. Some might wonder why it is that God allows for Satan to continue to be active today. Why doesn't God just stop Satan and the work he is doing against the Lord? While we might not be able to say for certain, I would suggest that it goes back to the fact that this life is all about choice. We were created with the choice as to whom we would serve. We can either serve ourselves and in turn fulfill the will of the devil, or we can resist his temptations and be faithful to God. That choice is ours, and if there wasn't that choice then could we say that true faith in God is actually true faith? If we couldn't turn away from Him then true love wouldn't be possible, and therefore there must be the protagonist who is seeking to turn people away.

B. Yet there is coming a day when all of that will cease and Satan will be eternally condemned to hell.

1. The thing about Satan is that he is already well aware of his end, and he is simply giving this great effort to make sure that there are as many people going to that end as he is. In **Jude 3-7**, we read of the admonishment of Jude towards those other disciples who were striving to earnestly contend for the faith. The admonishments and warnings were necessary at this time

because there were people creeping in who were ungodly and seeking to lead the faithful away from God. Jude wants to remind these disciples of the eternal end of those who rebel against God. He lists the Israelites who were unfaithful and were destroyed. He lists the angels who rebelled against God and are kept in eternal bonds waiting judgement. Finally, he mentions Sodom and Gomorrah who were punished for their ungodliness.

2. Satan knows that these are his people, and that the same fate is awaiting him when this life ends. He knows that and Jesus of course knows the same thing. He knows that who we choose to serve will determine where we spend eternity. In **Matthew 25:31-46**, Jesus shares a description of what the judgment day will look like. Those who have been faithful to God will be welcomed with open arms into *"the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* (**Matthew 25:34**) Yet, those who have rebelled against God will be condemned *"into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."* (**Matthew 25:41**)
3. It is at this point that Jesus's final victory over Satan and over death will be accomplished. No more will Satan have the power to tempt the faithful for they will be gathered together with God in the kingdom of heaven while he is tormented in eternal punishment. While it might seem at times that Satan has the upper hand because so many people are following him, the sad reality is that they are only preparing themselves to feel the full power of Jesus once he is struck down into eternal condemnation for all eternity. This death blow is coming...and it is just a matter of time until it is delivered.

The thought of Satan, demons, and unclean spirits can be quite confounding to us because these supernatural beings are outside of our natural and material understanding and grasp of this world, but we must recognize that there is a spiritual battle currently taking place between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. The outcome of the war has been decided...God wins and Satan will be condemned to hell for eternity, but what is still left undecided is which side we will be one. Will we experience the power of Jesus over Satan, or will we taste that power as it stands against us because we stood with the devil? May God help that to never be our case, and may we be found in the Lord's army as victory is sounded forth in the end

PRAYER *Loving Father...we are ever mindful that our adversary the devil walks about this world seeking souls in which he can destroy and devour. We are well aware that we by ourselves are weak and helpless, but we are so thankful that we have a strong and powerful Protector and Savior who desires to shield us against the evil one's attacks. May we ever stand in His strength and be found pleasing in Your sight. May we find ourselves on the side of victory in the end because of our faith and trust in You. Strengthen us as we battle against Satan this week. Especially bless us in our VBS efforts this week, and may this church, our young people especially, be greatly benefitted by our studies together. Thank You so much for Your love, grace, and mercy. May we always stand firmly in them each and every day, and it is by the power and authority of Jesus that we offer up this prayer to You...amen.*