

DAMNED IF HE DID (AND SEEMINGLY) DAMNED IF HE DIDN'T

Deuteronomy 6:1-25; Matthew 3:13-4:11

Theme of Matthew: "Behold your King is coming to you" (Zech.9:9 with Matt.21:4-5)

REVIEW

- Putting the hunger of Jesus into perspective: *How many days has it been since the sermons on Samson and temptation were preached?*
- Satan's first temptation appealed to Christ's hunger. If Jesus had remained in the wilderness by Himself, He never would have been tempted. Never was there a single time when He considered using His supernatural power to satisfy His *personal* need to eat.
- Satan does not only appeal to the bad within people, but sometimes the good. In the second temptation, Satan is appealing to Christ's single-minded obedience.

I. RIDDLES AND CONUNDRUMS.

- A. The second temptation is like a riddle that has no apparent answer.
1. If Christ jumped, He would have been overcome.
 2. If Christ had not jumped, but for the wrong reason, He would have been overcome.

When one does not know what it is then it is something. But when one knows what it is, then it is nothing. What is it?

- B. The second temptation is like the life and death riddles the Greeks told – like the famous riddle asked of Oedipus by the Sphinx as he was travelling to ancient Thebes

*What is it that
Walks with four legs in the morning,
With two legs at midday, and with three legs
When the sun has gone down?*

- C. Damned if He did (and seemingly) damned if He didn't.
1. If Christ had jumped, in "trust", His people would have been plunged into hell.
 2. We could have been plunged into hell if Christ had NOT jumped for the wrong reason.

"There is an essential riddle that each of us must confront at some moment of our lives. It has to do with who we are and why we are here – the meaning of life" (Phil Cousineau)

- D. As with all temptation, there was a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13). But only one way (**Deuteronomy 6:16!**)

II. A PERSON CAN DO THE RIGHT THING, BUT IF IT IS FROM THE WRONG MOTIVE, IT IS SIN.

- A. The motive for Jesus not jumping was love for God and a heartfelt desire to obey the law of God (Deuteronomy 6).

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

*“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.
(Deuteronomy 6:5-6)*

B. Heartfelt love for God and His commandments is to be the motive of our lives.

C. You can do the right thing but if it is from the wrong motive, it is sin.

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Pray that God would not lead you into temptation and that He would deliver you from the evil one.

What were the three temptations Satan spoke to Jesus?

From which book and chapters of the Bible did Jesus answer Satan?

What was the subtlety of the second temptation? Was there any truth to this second temptation?

Why was the sermon entitled, “Damned if He did (and seemingly) damned if He didn’t?”

Explain the following statement, “You can do the right thing but if it is from the wrong motive, it is sin.”