

THE KINGDOMS WITHOUT THE CROSS

Matthew 3:13-4:11

Theme of Matthew: “Behold your King is coming to you” (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)

I. THE LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF OUR LORD AND THE LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

A. Being under grace does not mean that the law no longer has a purpose for the Christian.

“The Law drives us to Jesus Christ for our justification and Jesus Christ sends us back to the Law for our sanctification.”

B. In the life of Jesus, there was no contradiction between a Spirit-filled life and obedience to the Law.

- **Matthew 3:** Jesus receives the Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17)
- **Matthew 4:** Resisting the devil in the power of the Spirit, “It is written”
- **Matthew 5:** Kingdom living, and the law in the life of the Christian (**5:17-20**)

C. The abiding significance of the law can be seen in the words, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

1. “It is written” is a single verb in the Greek in the perfect tense (γέγραπται).
2. The perfect tense in Greek focuses not so much on the past, but the past’s significance for the present.

“I loved my wife for ten years”

VERSUS

“I have loved my wife for ten years” (This is the sense of “It is written”).

3. Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, does not resist temptation by opening His mouth and speaking newly inspired charismatic words. He was capable of doing this, but in order to identify with us in our temptations, He quoted the charismatic words written by Moses. What Moses wrote in the past has present and abiding significance for those who are in Christ & led by the Holy Spirit.

D. The only answer Jesus gave to Satan not from the law was “Go Satan” (Matthew 4:10).

II. OVERVIEW: THE “LOGIC” OF SATAN’S TEMPTATIONS

First Temptation – Satan appeals to Christ’s hunger and Jesus responds with “It is written...”

Second Temptation – Satan takes Christ’s commitment to what is written and Satan takes it to its next “logical” step – OK, then prove You are committed to what is written. Satan then proceeds to quote “What is written.”

In the **Third Temptation** – Satan offers Jesus what He came for (kingdoms), but only if Jesus gives His allegiance to the devil.

- This is the only temptation Satan does not say, “If You are the Son of God.”
- Satan’s temptation is offering to be Jesus’ “father.” Satan is attempting to subvert the Davidic Covenant where God promised David and his seed, “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me” (**2 Sam.7:14; 1 Chron.28:6; Psalm 2:7; 89:26–27; Isa.9:6**).
- Jeremiah speaks about Israel’s idolatry as saying to idols, “You are my father” (**Jeremiah 2:26-27**).

◆ “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me;... (2Samuel 7:14a)

◆ “He will cry to Me, ‘You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.’ 27 ‘I also shall make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth (Psalm 89:26-27).

III. DOES SATAN IN SOME SENSE POSSESS THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD AND THEIR GLORY? (Matthew 4:8-10//Luke 4:5-8; cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor.4:4)

“I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession (Psalm 2:7-8).

A. I’m of the persuasion that Satan *did* in some sense possess the kingdoms of the world (**Daniel 10:10-13; cf.**

Isa.24:21; Jer.46:25; 1 Cor.8:5; 10:20). However, Satan was never Sovereign over the nations (1 Chron.16:31; Psalm 47:8).

1. The prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed for 21 days the angel sent to Daniel (Daniel 10:13).
2. There was also a prince of Greece (Daniel 10:20).

3. “latter days” (**Daniel 10:14**; Dan.2:28; cf. Gen.49:1; Isa.2:2; Acts 2:16,17; 1 Tim.4:1; 2 Tim.3:1; Heb.1:1; 1 John 2:18). The “latter days” of Daniel anticipated the time of Jesus Christ and His conquering the power of Satan over the kingdoms of this world.
4. With the death and resurrection of Jesus, the ruler of this world was cast out (John 12:31; cf. Daniel 7:12; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 10:18; 22:52,53; John 12:3; Col.2:14,15; Rev.20:1-3,7-10).

B. In the third temptation, Satan is offering to Jesus Christ the kingdoms of this world, BUT WITHOUT THE CROSS.

IV. TEMPTATION IS NOT ALWAYS SUBTLE

- A. Every time you or I choose sin over the law of God, deviate from the way of the cross, choose compromise, make excuses, or don't obey because of “hardship,” we fall prey to this third temptation.

“The devil will steal your watch and wallet and explain it so well you will give him your coat and pants”

The end does not always justify the means – The *ends* are our goals and the *means* are the actions we take to achieve those goals. The ends never justify the means if (1) we put our own interests before God or above our neighbor; (2) we elevate our own wisdom/understanding/will above God's (Proverbs 3:5-6).

For example, it would be wrong to harvest body parts of unborn children to save the lives of others. In this case, saving the lives of others (*end*) is praiseworthy, but murdering unborn children in the process is sinful (*means*).

- B. The means by which we attain our goals must conform to God's Word. The end does not always justify the means.

The high mountain Satan takes Jesus to parallels the mountain from which Jesus gave the Great Commission. Satan offers Jesus “all authority” if Jesus would worship Him. Jesus receives all authority and the worship of men after His resurrection (Matthew 28:16-20).

- C. The temptation of rationalization (kingdoms without taking up our cross).

- D. The third temptation was not the *easiest* (note the agony of Gethsemane Matthew 26:36-46).

Matthew 16:24-26

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

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 is the relationship of the law to a Spirit-filled life?

Why doesn't Satan introduce the third temptation with the words, “If you are the Son of God”?

What does “it is written” mean?

What was the only answer Jesus gave that did not come from the law? Why?

Where does Satan take Jesus to show Him the kingdoms of the world and their glory? Where does Matthew end?

Did Satan, in some sense, own the kingdoms of the world? Does he have the same authority now as he did when he tempted Jesus?

Why wasn't the third temptation the easiest?