

# Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

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MISSIONARY

# THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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## THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

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The temptation of Jesus was Satan's response and challenge to God's announcement: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

The literal meaning of the word "tempt" is to try, to test, or to prove. It is used in the Bible both in a good and in an evil sense. The moral character of the testing depends upon the object in view and the means employed. If the object is to entice or incite to sin, the testing is evil. In this sense, God never tempts and cannot be tempted. But when the object is to prove or improve the character of a person, then the testing is good. And if the means used is lawful then the testing is also lawful. In the good sense, God tempted or tested Abraham, and in this good sense God allowed Satan to tempt Christ to prove that He was the sinless Son of God. Of

course, Satan always tempts in the evil sense, —he tries to get one to do wrong.

Our Lord endured many temptations. He said to His disciples: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations" (Luke 22:28). But we are now to be occupied with the temptations which immediately followed His baptism.

In thinking of the temptation of Jesus we face the problem of His peccability. Was it possible for Him to sin? If so, then it was possible for Him to fail as the Saviour. Perish any thought of His failure as Saviour! On the other hand, if He could not sin, then how could He be tempted? If we think of



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

- Sunday School . . . . . 9:45 a.m.
- Worship Service . . . . . 11:00 a.m.
- Evening Service . . . . . 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting . . . . . 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned Nursery Provided

Pastor . . . . . Alfred M. Gormley  
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Lexington, Ky. 40505

His human nature in itself, apart from His deity, this human nature like the sinless Adam was capable of sinning. However, this human nature was owned by a Divine person, and as a person He could not be tempted or induced to sin. He had a human nature which was peccable (liable to sin), but this nature cannot be separated from the Divine person, and as a Divine person—as God manifest in flesh, He was impeccable. In being tempted Christ could suffer but could not sin. He was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin. "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Matthew says that after His fast of forty days He was hungry. Mark and Luke say that he was tempted of the devil forty days. The nature of this temptation is not stated, but He must have been so occupied in mind that He was not conscious of any hunger.

Matthew and Luke describe the threefold temptation at the end of forty days. Whatever he had been doing during the forty days, Satan now changes his tactics and attacks Jesus when He is in a state of starvation. He is tempted not only as a man, but as a man with a mission—the mission of human redemption. To redeem sinful men He must be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. If Satan can break His will to obey God, he gets the victory, and there is no human salvation.

In the first temptation we have faith versus disobedience, or the temptation to under-confidence. Satan said, "If thou art the Son of God, feed thyself"—pick up a stone and make bread of it. Jesus was where the Spirit had led Him, and the issue was whether He would trust God to keep Him from starving, or take matters into His own hand and provide for Himself something He had power to do as the Son of God. In His reply Jesus said that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God. Deut. 8:3. As a man He must keep the commandments of God. Jesus suffered hunger, but with no desire to feed Himself and thus distrust God.

In the second temptation we have faith versus presumption, or temptation to over-confidence. Satan says, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down" from the pinnacle of the temple, quoting Ps. 91:11 as proof that no harm would come to Him. Satan deletes from this Scripture the words "in all thy ways". "For He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:11). Jesus answers, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. 6:16). This means that one must not experiment with God to see if He will keep His word. Testing God to see if He will keep His word is doubt rather than faith; presumption rather than trust. If God had commanded Him to leap from the temple it would have been faith to do so. When God says "Prove or test me by doing thus and so", it is faith to do what He says. But to needlessly rush into danger to prove that God will take care of us is wrong. We must not presume where God has not promised.

In the third temptation we have faith versus compromise, or temptation other-confidence. From a high mountain Satan shows Jesus the kingdoms of this world

with all their glory and offers them to Him on one condition: "fall down and worship me." The issue is, Who shall be supreme: the true God or the Usurper? And the further question is, whose Messiah shall He be: God's or Satan's? Here is an effort to turn Jesus from His purpose to go to the cross. He can have the kingdom on easier terms. Quoting Deut. 6:13, where all idolatry is forbidden, Jesus summarily dismisses the tempter, saying, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Jesus was tempted objectively, but there was no inner conflict in resisting the temptation. Men yield in temptation to escape the pressure, but Jesus faced the pressure without any desire to do what He was asked to do. He suffered, but He would not yield. He wanted food, and protection, and dominion, but not at the cost of disobeying God. Truly our Saviour could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

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A GENERAL DEFINITION OF HOPE: Hope may be defined as the expectation of future good. Hope is always concerned about the future. We never hope for what we already have. Hope is made up of two ingredients: desire and expectation. When one desires something he does not expect, it is not hope but despair; and when one expects something he does not desire, it is not hope but dread. But when one expects his desire to be realized in the future he has hope.

Hope has been called the spring of all human endeavour. Without hope of harvest, the farmer would not plant and cultivate. Without hope of profit, the merchant would close out his business. Without some hope of winning, the politician would not run for office. Without hope of happiness, no couple would ever march to the marriage altar. "In all the wedding cake, hope is the sweetest of the plums."

Hope is the chief pillar of life. Hope supports the mind under all changes, trials, and difficulties. A man without hope would soon go mad. It is fairly safe to say that every suicide who leaves a note reveals that he has lost all hope of future good.

The hopes of many souls end at the grave. The hope of the rich man was soon dispelled. Abraham told him that there was an impossible gulf between him and the blessings of God. The rich man did not ask for much, but he did not get even the little water for his burning tongue.

A DEFINITION OF CHRISTIAN HOPE: Christian hope is the well-founded expectation of future good. Christians are the only people who have hope beyond the grave. Our hope in Christ is well-founded and will not end in disappointment. Our hope in Christ is sure to be realized—it is an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast. The future good we expect is the inheritance reserved in heaven—that salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. And the grace that has saved us will also keep us and bring us to this inheritance, which embodies all the eternal blessings promised us in Christ. And one feature of this inheritance, and the main feature, is conformity to Christ. And so we sing, "Just to be like the dear Lord I adore, Will through the ages be glory for me."

Peter exhorts us to prepare our minds and hope to the end for the grace being brought to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Salvation is by grace from beginning to end. Grace planned the way, provided the way, put us in the way, helps us by the way, and takes us all the way to glory. So certain is this grace that Peter thinks of it as being on the way. How glad we are that there is more grace to come! We are not self-sufficient; we cannot walk alone; we cannot make our way to heaven; grace must bring heaven to us. Grace will perfect God's purpose concerning us; we shall yet be conformed to the image of God's Son. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).

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