

Satan's Tactics of Temptation

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Introduction

When dealing with spiritual warfare, any approach that is effective and biblically sound must be one that brings the power, perspective, and passion of the truth and life of the gospel against everything that is set against the knowledge of God. It is this knowledge of God that Satan seeks to destroy (2 Cor. 10:5) because anything that erodes the knowledge of God will get in the way of our relationship with God (John 1:17; cf. John 17). There is no grey area; the kingdom of Light has no business being together with the kingdom of Darkness (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Due to these Bible-based facts describing the spiritual realm (2 Cor. 10:3-4), it is imperative that we not give Satan any opportunity for he lurks around to destroy us (Eph. 4:27; 1 Pet. 5:7-9).

Satan seeks to control a believer's behavior by taking control of his or her mind through deception, accusation, lies, and temptation. Believers must personalize the truth, resist Satan, and take every thought captive for Christ. Although demons have no authority over a believer, Christians can fall prey to temptation and yield control to a demon. As far as the cultural phenomena of demonic possession goes, in accordance with this view—the truth encounter—the location of a demon is irrelevant; however, what is relevant is the authority the demon has over the individual in question. The truth that Christians were rescued out of the kingdom of Darkness into the kingdom of Light, and that Christ has forgiven all sin, cancels all demonic authority over a believer, unless deceived to believe they are still under demonic authority (Col. 1:13-14, 2:15).

Satan is a deceiver (2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:11; Matt. 6:13; 2 Thess. 2:9-10; Rev. 12:9, 20:3). Satan is an accuser (Zach 3:1-3; Job 2:1-6; Rev. 12:10). Satan is a liar (John 8:44; Matt. 5:37; 2 Cor. 11:14). Satan is a tempter (1 Thess. 3:5). While there is a plethora of scriptural evidence describing Satan in these four primary ways, and while they are all interconnected to an extent, the focus of this discourse will be on Satan's tactics of tempting believers. Eldredge muses, "The

devil has more temptations than an actor has costumes for the stage. And one of his all-time favorite disguises is that of a lying spirit, to abuse your tender heart with the worst news he can deliver—that you do not really love Jesus Christ and that you are only pretending [and] deceiving yourself.”¹

To dissect these tactics, this discourse will examine two key passages. In Genesis 3, we see Satan’s deception of Eve—the cataclysmic event that shook that foundation of original glory, a concept often forgotten thanks to the cloud of original sin. In this major passage, the serpent and Eve have a conversation about the character of God, and as we will see, Satan is successful in defecting Eve’s view of God, resulting in the sin of disobedience. In Matthew 4, we see Satan directly tempt Jesus. In this final major passage, Satan tempts Jesus, the sinless God-man, in three ways appealing to virtue rather than His nonexistent sinful nature, and as we will see, Satan is unsuccessful in tempting the second Adam to sin like he was with the first Adam.

In so doing, Eve provides believers a model to avoid when dealing with temptation, and Jesus provides believers an effective model to employ when dealing with temptation, especially those appealed to by virtue. From these two major passages, as well as from research and literature, we will identify Satan’s tactic of temptation by means of appealing to virtue, and examine the ways in which believers can respond to such temptation.

Genesis 3:1-7

Genesis 3 is one of the most important passages of scripture. After a full understanding of this key passage is achieved, the reader is undoubtedly suited for the rest of the biblical narrative to unfold, regardless of where the reader goes to next. With a proper understanding of the

¹ Eldredge, John. *Waking the Dead: The Glory of a Heart Fully Alive*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003, Page 152.

entrance of sin into the original glory of creation, God's sending of His son to cover the consequences of that sin to make right what the crafty serpent made wrong makes greater sense.

Satan begins the conversation with Eve by discussing God's Word by means of a question (3:1). In this exchange between Satan and Eve, Satan lays the groundwork for doubting God's Word. For many, faith means working up enough belief that God will like that belief and respond to us, but we do not move God by our positive confession, by our own doing, or by believing enough. The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry defines faith as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Heb. 11:1). Faith should be understood as synonymous with trust and/or confidence in something. Within Christianity, it is a divine gift (Rom. 12:3) and comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). It is the means by which the grace of God is accounted to the believer who trusts in the work of Jesus on the cross (Eph. 2:8). Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6)."² When confronting something demonic, we must not second-guess God's Word; it has been at the center of the doubt Satan has always thrown at humanity, because doubting God's Word clouds faith.

*[Eve] said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die'" (3:2-3).*³ In Eve's response, she emphasizes the limitation of God while deemphasizing the allowances of God. In other words, Eve understates God's gracious gift in the allowance to eat from all other trees from the entirety of the garden. God made such a point in Genesis 1-2 at the vastness of the creation He was gifting to His most prized creation, man, that for Eve to understate it was the beginnings of the seeds of doubt Satan planted in Eve through his initial questioning of God's Word to manifest.

² Slick, Matt. "Faith." *Dictionary of Theology*. Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, n.d. Web. <<https://carm.org/dictionary-faith>>.

³ All scripture directly quoted comes from New American Standard Bible and will appear in italics

Satan responds by outright rejecting God’s Word, calling God a liar. *You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (3:4-5). Satan is tempting Eve through an appeal to an ill-directed virtue and as the story unfolds, Satan succeeds because of the seeds of doubt he planted—that God’s Word is something to be questioned—and exacerbated God’s limitation as if it showed God to be holding out on Eve. Satan essentially tells Eve that she will be like God, and to be like God is something to be sought after, almost as if he is suggesting that Eve not follow God blindly but rather use wisdom withheld by God to make accurate statements about God. Walter Brueggemann observes, “God is treated as a third person. God is not a part of the discussion but is the involved object of the discussion. This is not speech to God or by God, but about God. God has been objectified.”⁴

“Temptation succeeds at first by exciting our curiosity. It is a wise saying that our great security against sin lies in being shocked at it. Eve gazed and reflected when she should have fled. The serpent created an interest, excited her curiosity about this forbidden fruit. And as this exciting curiosity lies near the beginning of sin in the race, so does it in the individual.”⁵ Satan cooked up this false motive that God was withholding something truly spectacular from Eve, and she left the identity that she had in a personal relationship with her Lord God for an identity founded in a lust for the one thing she perceived was holding her back from the good life.

After a brief exegetical review of this key passage, several observations of Satan’s tactics of temptation can be made. First, Satan did not directly tell Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; he wanted her to come to that conclusion herself—that was his desired outcome, but he did not reveal his cards from the start of the hand. Second, Satan

⁴ Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982, page 48

⁵ Dods, Marcus. *The Book of Genesis*. San Francisco: Bottom of the Hill, n.p.n. 2013.

initiated the process by doubting God's character and Word. By implying that God was lying to the first couple and that God was holding out on them, Satan was establishing his authority over the life of Eve. As stated in the introduction, all demonic authority over a believer has been cancelled, unless the believer has been deceived to think they are still under demonic authority (Col. 1:13-14, 2:15). Satan had no authority over Eve until she had been deceptively convinced that his authority was worth submitting to, and to this measure, Satan succeeded.

Lastly, in his methodology of tempting in the two aforementioned ways, Satan appealed to the virtues that existed in Eve as an image-bearer of God, and he managed to direct those virtues in less-than virtuous directions. By means of these ill-directed virtues, Satan successfully tempted Eve to check God on His Word and promises, abuse God for personal gain, and use Satan to achieve the good life instead of living dependent upon and trusting God. These indirect methods contributed to Satan's successful execution of his plan to destroy the original glory.

Matthew 4:1-11

Satan succeeded in tempting the first Adam, and as a result, God's redemptive program centered around the entrance of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. The entire biblical narrative beyond the successful temptation of Adam and Eve is one of three things: 1) looking forward to the gospel message; 2) the gospel message itself; or 3) remembering and spreading the gospel message. The gospel message is that Jesus Christ dwelled among us as a real person, he died for our sins, and God the Father raised him from the dead; therefore, we must repent, which is to believe God is who He says He is, and be baptized so we may receive a new heart by the Holy Spirit, be forgiven of our sinfulness, and live with Him for all of eternity.

For this gospel message to be true, Jesus needed to be without sin at the time of his death so he could be the innocent sacrificial lamb. “One of Satan’s key strategies is corrupting and distorting the understanding of who Jesus really is, what he came to do, and what he is about to do.”⁶ With this reality, it should not come as a surprise that Satan would tempt Jesus. If Satan succeeded with the second Adam just as he did with the first Adam, he would yet again thwart God’s master plan.

Just before this second critical passage, in Matthew 3:13-17, John the Baptist baptized Jesus and the Spirit of God descended, declaring Jesus as His beloved Son. This backdrop is imperative for a full understanding of Matthew 4:1-11, where we see Satan use the same approach he used on Eve in Genesis 3, by appealing to Jesus’ virtue and trying to direct those virtues in less-than virtuous directions. The temptations of Jesus immediately follow the announcement from God the Father that Jesus is the Son of God. In addition to the vital context of Jesus’ baptism, we learn in 4:1-2 that Jesus went to fast for forty days and had become hungry, an understandable physical condition after not eating for over a month.

Satan enters the picture: *If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread* (4:3). According to a groundbreaking grammatical study by James Boyer of Gordon College, this statement of Satan is a first class conditional phrase, and is one of just 37% of first class conditional phrases in the New Testament to follow the grammatical rules of first class conditional phrases. The grammatical rule behind first class conditionals is that the first clause is assumed true whereas the second clause is an assertion based upon the truth of the first clause.⁷ Therefore, a better understanding of the phrase would be “*Since* you are the Son of God,

⁶ Arnold, Clinton E. *Three Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1997, page 53

⁷ Boyer, James. “First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?” *Grace Theological Journal* 2.1 (1981): pages 75-114, print.

command that these stones become bread.” Why would Satan accurately acknowledge Jesus’ divine nature? The immediate context of this passage indicated that Jesus is the Son of God, and from the perspective of Satan, beginning his dialogue with Jesus with truth would be the best approach to appeal to Jesus in an attempt to gain some authority over Jesus so he could direct Jesus away from the authority of God the Father.

Satan was not attempting to get Jesus to eat; he was attempting to get Jesus to use his divine nature—to abuse God—for personal gain. Satan was not leading Jesus to doubt that he was the Son of God; he was leading Jesus to recognize his desires and to put them above his devotion to the Father. Satan’s message to Jesus, nearly identical to his message to Eve and oftentimes to us, is to do whatever you desire.

Jesus responds to Satan’s first temptation by quoting from very clear scripture: *It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’* (Matt. 4:4; cf. Deut. 8:3). Juxtaposing the temptations of Eve alongside this temptation, Jesus is making very clear that an appropriate response to temptation is to compare the temptation with clear, well-interpreted scripture.

After being unsuccessful, Satan tries again, but now employs the use of quoting scripture back at Jesus. Interestingly enough, the first class conditional used in Matthew 4:6 is also one of the 37% that Boyer identified in his study as one that follows the grammatical rule. Therefore, a better understanding of the phrase would be “*Since* you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down [from the top of the temple] for it is written ‘He will command His angels concerning You’ and ‘on their hands they will bear You up so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone’” (Matt. 4:6). Ironically, though, in the passage from Psalms that Satan quotes from, he omits the final phrase indicating the Messiah would trample upon the serpent (Ps. 91:13),

reiterating the prophetic imagery spoken in the aftermath of the first temptations of Eve in Genesis 3:15, which states *He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*

Unlike with Eve, Satan's first temptation did not obtain any position of authority over the life of Jesus for him, so Satan's second temptation of Jesus used very clear scripture as a basis to obtain some authority—this is stronger temptation to resist, because it uses scripture as evidence. Satan is attempting to gain authority over Jesus, and so with this second temptation, Satan was not trying to get Jesus to do some parkour building exercises, but rather trying to check God on the messianic promise made in Psalm 91. Just like with Eve, Satan attempted to demonstrate that he was the source of wisdom and that God was holding out on Jesus, almost as if he was suggesting that Jesus not believe God's promises blindly but rather use wisdom withheld by God to make accurate statements about the promises of God. Satan's message to Jesus, nearly identical to his message to Eve and oftentimes to us, is not to take God at His Word and to test it to see if it is true.

Jesus responds to Satan's second temptation by quoting from very clear scripture: *On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'* (Matt. 4:7; cf. Deut. 6:16). Juxtaposing the severity of this second temptation alongside the response gives great insight into the nature of the temptation; it was a test. Jesus is making very clear that an appropriate response to temptation is to take God at His Word and not to test God's Word.

After the first temptation and the second, more severe temptation were unsuccessful, Satan tries yet again, by tempting Jesus to announce an allegiance with him. After showing Jesus *all the kingdoms of the world and their glory*, Satan offered Jesus those kingdoms if he would simply fall down and worship him (Matt. 4:8-9). Unlike in the previous two temptations, the third temptation of Christ is not a first class conditional, and is the most obvious of the three

temptations. Satan is very direct in this temptation; there is no more bluffing—worship me and I will reward you. How telling it is that the great heresy of legalism is based on this very premise: if your worship is good enough, you will be rewarded! Interestingly enough, Satan, the god of the world, had the power to give his kingdom of darkness over to Jesus, and this is true of all spiritual principalities and authority in the world: that they have real spiritual power to reward followers and persecute those who stand against them.⁸ To be sure, McDermott affirms that the spiritual power of Yahweh far surpasses that of the principalities and authorities of the world, and although Christ has won the war, battles still wage until Christ returns.

Yet despite these theological truths, Jesus refrains from engaging in a theological dialogue with Satan. A systematic reading of scripture would lead us to affirm that Satan and the demons know Jesus is the Son of God, they know Yahweh is God the Father, they know their own powers and limitations, and they know the weaknesses of the humans they oppress. We need not convince them of anything; arguing with Satan or the demons is a waste of time. Satan wants one thing, and that is for Jesus to submit to his authority; if Satan obtains authority over Jesus, then he would have defeated God, or at least made things far more difficult for God to execute His refined master plan of redemption. In other words, if Satan gets Jesus, then Satan wins. The prize Satan offers to Jesus for his mere worship is kingship over the kingdom of Darkness, giving up on God's promise of kingship over the kingdom of Light. Satan's message to Jesus, nearly identical to his message to Eve and oftentimes to us, is not to pursue the will of God but instead to use Satan and evil to achieve the good life.

Jesus responds to Satan's third temptation yet again by quoting from very clear scripture: *Go Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him alone'* (Matt.

⁸ McDermott, Gerald. *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions? Insights from the Bible and the Early Church*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2007, pages 75-77.

4:10; cf. Deut. 6:13). Whereas in the previous two temptations, Jesus calls Satan out on his bluff, in this third temptation, Satan plays his cards from the beginning, and Jesus does not back down. Jesus identified that what Satan was suggesting was that Jesus give up his forthcoming authority over the kingdom of Light for authority over the kingdom of Darkness in exchange for a change in allegiance from God to Satan. Jesus, the Son of God, who was present at creation, knows that Yahweh is the Most High God, and to worship anything or anyone but Him would be to violate his very nature. Jesus is making very clear that an appropriate response to temptation is not to pursue our own goals but to pursue the goals of God instead. An additional, appropriate response to temptation, by Jesus' example, is to command Satan to leave.

Personal Connections

Having grown up in an evangelical church, I am familiar with the stories of the fall and the three temptations of Christ. As I grew up in the church, especially during my teenage years and during my brief time volunteering in youth ministry, I often heard verses from Hebrews that state Jesus *had been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin* (4:15) and is therefore able to *come to the aid of those who are tempted* (2:18). I never quite understood how this story demonstrated three temptations though; the only one I saw was the third one and I certainly had never been tempted to worship Satan in exchange for power, so I often felt a bit disconnected from the text. I mean, could it really be sinful to desire to eat food when I am hungry, or to take safety precautions when I go places? It was not until seeing this particular tactic of Satan to appeal to virtue that the passage of the three temptations made sense.

I think of my high school aged sister who is a leader in a youth ministry at a different church than the one our family attends. My parents tell my sister before she leaves that she must

be back by 9:30pm. They set a curfew because on a school night for a high school student to be out after dark, especially one as tiny as her (not to mention the fact that the dangers of night are ever greater for girls), there are great dangers that they do not want her caught up in. Additionally, our town has a nighttime curfew that begins at 10pm for all individuals under 18, so my parents want her home no later than 9:30 so there is no risk of violating the law, not because they seek to limit her social life.

Satan does not tempt my sister by pushing against that curfew directly, but rather he appeals to my sister's virtues by seemingly every week providing somebody in attendance that needs a ride home. Appealing to my sister's desire to serve the Lord, my sister is given this opportunity—a seemingly minor situation that ultimately accomplishes Satan's goal of getting my sister to disobey the authority of our parents. The appropriate response to that temptation for my sister is to do what Jesus did and quote clear, well-interpreted scripture such as Exodus 20:12, which states, *Honor your father and mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.* This is the fifth commandment, and interestingly enough, the only one of the Ten Commandments attached with a direct promise. The conniving, crafty serpent is tempting my sister to check God on His promises and reject His Word by means of appealing to her virtues of leadership and service.

Is giving a ride to someone who needs a ride home a sin? Absolutely not; however, it becomes sin when the act itself violates the instructions of God. I imagine that the next time Satan tempted my sister in this way, if she took the example of Jesus and quoted the above scripture, that Satan might come back and quote from Matthew 8:22 or Luke 14:26 which essentially state that one must prioritize following Jesus over one's own family. What happens when faced with this dilemma? Following the example of Jesus, the appropriate response would

be to quote from the two passages in Matthew (15:4 and 19:19) where Jesus commands those who follow him to submit to the authority of their parents. It is, of course, much easier to reflect upon this situation in hindsight and with hypothetical solutions, but I imagine in the moment that the decision would be difficult to make.

Temptation comes in many forms—as a man, I can attest to the severe struggle that men face when it comes to pornography. I was addicted for many years, and only after the Holy Spirit changed the way I viewed women—as daughters of the Most High God who are created in His image—did I overcome that addiction. Yet as I reflect on my life, temptation has not always been as obvious as it was with pornography. The temptation that has wrecked the most havoc on my life has been when it appealed to the virtues that exist in me as an image-bearer of God.

I reflect on my brief time as a substitute teacher at a local high school. I became a favorite among students who felt connected to me due to my young age of 21 at the time, among faculty who appreciated my commitment to following their lesson plans, and among administrators who had fewer disciplinary problems to deal with when I was in charge. I was exposed to worlds I had never seen before. Having been raised in an upper-middle class, white family where a house in a neighborhood with kids playing in the front yards had always been my home, working with students who had never experienced any of that brought things to great perspective. Seeing the direct affects of living in a single-parent home and the barriers that came forth were devastating, and to that, I began to build bridges with students on individual levels.

One freshman student in particular experienced a traumatic experience toward the end of a six-week period where I was his science teacher. His father was diagnosed with cancer and died all within about two months; it was rapid and my heart broke for this young man. I opened up my classroom to him at lunch and after school. Over the following year, I grew quite fond of

him and he grew quite fond of me; we began to view each other as brothers. I would give him rides home from school every now and then so he would not have to walk; sometimes we would get food on the way. His mother appreciated the additional stability that I was providing her son as she was forced to work double shifts each day and had little time to spend at home with him.

Despite the good intentions I had in invested time in this fatherless youth, the administrators at the school grew cautious of the legal liability of me transporting a student without an official school permission slip from his mother and instructed me to discontinue doing that. The administrators were my authority and in the best interest of the students they were in a role of overseeing, they gave clear instructions not to take any students to their home from school, even if they stayed late in my classroom to do homework or hang out, which this young man did almost daily.

It would have been the godly thing for me to do as a believer to follow their instructions. Yet what I was tempted with was not to outright reject their authority, but instead through an appeal to virtue, I found myself in strange situations where I was justifying and making exceptions to their rule. I thought, "It was raining. They cannot expect this poor guy to walk two miles home in the pouring rain do they? It will only take five minutes, and if he does walk in the rain, this poor guy might get pneumonia or something."

Or another instance, in which I had my prep during second period another fatherless youth I had been mentoring was still not at school because he was running late. I thought to myself, "The school is losing money by him not being here. If he walks, he will not get here until at least fourth period. It will literally take just five minutes. I am allowed to leave campus on my prep anyway. I mine as well just go get him and bring him to school so he can learn and so the school can maximize the amount of money it gets from federal and state taxes." This situation

made for an awkward conversation with the administrators filled with disappointment when I returned to campus with this young man.

Thirdly, the rise of false teachings throughout the ages is another subtle form of temptation that Satan has employed. I think of Matthew Vines, regarded by evangelicals as one of the rising American heretics, for his teachings on homosexuality contrary to that of scripture. In the growing post-Christian America, many prominent leaders such as Rachel Held-Evans find themselves with a desire to spread the gospel to those in the LGBT community, but unsure how to do so with the traditional dogma on homosexuality. Christians like Held-Evans and me, who share a desire to build bridges with those in the LGBT community, are tempted by Satan to diminish God's Word on the nature of homosexuality through an appeal to spread the gospel to them. We think, "if I am spreading the gospel to them, don't the ends justify the means?" Believers must resist this temptation—if we have to water down God's Word to proclaim God's Word, then we have proclaimed nothing but a speech of lies. We must reject the heresy of Matthew Vines, who argues that the Bible does not speak ill of homosexuality and that the homosexual lifestyle and same-sex marriage is endorsed by God.⁹ Vines' argument is well crafted and has persuaded many, including Held-Evans. The Bible is clear, though, to *see that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than to Christ* (Col. 2:8).

"Jude warns us of apostate teachers who are filthy dreamers and part of whose folly is to despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities (vs. 8). He goes on to show how even Michael the archangel did not dare to judge Satan, but appealed to the Lord to rebuke him (vs. 9)."¹⁰ In 1

⁹ *The Gay Debate: The Bible and Homosexuality*. Matthew Vines. YouTube, 10 Mar. 2012. Web. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezQjNJUSraY>>.

¹⁰ Bubeck, Mark. *The Adversary: The Christian versus Demon Activity*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013, page 20.

John 2:15-17, we are told to evaluate alluring temptation and just say no. The eternal things of God should not be sacrificed for the temporal things of this world. Christians do not have to pretend that the tensile trappings of this world do not oftentimes look good. The real issue is whether the temporal pleasures of this world are worth their eternal price tag.

In the aforementioned situations, Christians like Held-Evans, my sister, and I were tempted by means of an appeal to virtue rather than a quite-so direct approach as it is with pornography, among other things. As an employee, I am to subject myself to the authority of my employer, which in that case was the administrators and so my actions in the aforementioned situation demonstrate that Satan's appeal to virtue are not creative, and have remained constant throughout the ages. Satan sought for me to abuse my own authority for the sake of helping shape and direct the lives of fatherless youth rather than submit to the authority of the leaders God placed over me at that time and helping shape and direct the lives of fatherless youth in a different way. Satan sought for my sister to reject God's Word, particularly His promise for a prolonged life. Satan tempts Christian leaders to prioritize their own interests over the interests of God by spreading false doctrine or watering down true doctrine for the sake of the gospel.

As with each of these circumstances, Satan obtains a tiny bit more authority over our lives as believers; however, he gains this authority by means of deception. Although Christian leaders like Held-Evans, my sister, and I have fallen and will again fall prey to deception and yield control to demonic authority, the truth is that Christians have been rescued out of the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. All sin has been forgiven at the cross; therefore, all demonic rights held over believers have been cancelled. Believers who find themselves tempted through an appeal to virtue must personalize the truth of the gospel, resist the temptations of Satan, and devote themselves to meditation upon the Word of God and prayer.

Ministerial Implications and Conclusion

After an exegetical review of the two most prominent passages of scripture detailing the temptations of Satan, several conclusions can be made of Satan's tactics and the appropriate responses for believers to make. As has been demonstrated in this discourse, Satan lacks creativity in his primary tactics of tempting people by appealing to virtue. We see in his temptations of Eve and in his temptations of Jesus that Satan's appeals to virtue tempt us to take advantage of God, check God on His Word and promises, and use Satan to achieve the good life.

Satan exposed his desires in his temptations of Eve and Jesus. Satan desired Eve to make her own conclusions about God—or at least think she was coming to those conclusions on her own. Satan desired Eve to doubt God's Word and character. Satan desired Eve to believe God was holding out a great deal of wisdom from her. Satan desired Jesus to prioritize himself over God. Satan desired Jesus to rely upon the wisdom of Satan instead of the wisdom of God. Satan desired Jesus to believe God was holding out the great many kingdoms of the world from him. In other words, Satan desired for Eve and Jesus to abandon, even if just temporarily, their true knowledge of God. Satan stands firmly against the true knowledge of God, and if he can erode the true knowledge of God, then he will have successfully gotten in the way of your relationship with God and inhibited our ability to be ambassadors of the gospel to unbelievers.

The Genesis 3 model of responding to temptation is to be avoided. In this model, Eve allowed doubt of God's Word to cloud her judgment of God's Word, she engaged in the dialogue with Satan, and she walked outside the gate of God's protection to see what the world God was protecting her from had to offer her. The Matthew 4 model of responding to temptation is to be sought after and applied vigorously. In this model, Jesus quoted clear, well-interpreted scripture

back at Satan, Jesus exposed a test of the Lord for what it was and rejected it, Jesus affirmed his allegiance to God and identity in God, and lastly Jesus commanded Satan to leave him alone.

Satan's desires behind his temptations and the temptations themselves are not easy to resist for the believer oppressed by them. We have a model not to reproduce in Genesis 3 and a model to reproduce in Matthew 4; however, in both cases, the temptation came to individuals lacking a sin-nature. It is critical to meditate on the added dynamic that with a sin-nature, we are ever the more vulnerable to these tactics of temptation and it is ever the more imperative that we learn from and utilize these models, and apply them to our lives as believers tempted by Satan.