

WHY WAS SATAN SO MUCH ON JESUS' SIDE AS SHOWN BY THE "TEMPTATIONS IN THE DESERT"?

TEMPTATIONS TO CHANGE BREAD

The Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John give a bit of detail about Jesus being tempted by the Devil in the desert. They think of this episode as a demonstration of Jesus' holiness and vocation as saviour of the world.

Only Jesus could have told people that he fasted for forty days and nights (Matthew 4:2). This had to have been a lie for miracles are meant to function as signs but there was nobody about to see this miracle of living without food except Satan who could not have been impressed by it for Jesus said that he wicked go to everlasting punishment. God would not perform needless miracles.

The Devil suggested to Jesus that he should try to turn stones into bread if he was the Son of God and Jesus replied quoting the Book of the Law that man does not live by bread alone but by the word of God. Either Jesus was mad and really believed that or he was being sarcastic which is a sin for it is not necessary. In any case, the verse does not refute what the Devil suggested so it is clearly an attempt to hoodwink. The quote was written about human beings not the so called Son of God who God would have been obliged to preserve no matter what danger he got into.

The Devil would not have been concerned about the health and strength of Jesus Christ unless Jesus was a fraud. He would have loved him to die of starvation in the desert. If he had to tempt Jesus, Satan would have offered him the kingdoms of the world instead for that would have been the strongest temptation and he would have all the food he wanted. This temptation to transmute stones is silly.

Telling you to turn stones into gold would be more Satan's thing!

TEMPTATION OF MIRACULOUS PRESERVATION

The Devil told Jesus to do a miracle in front of the people to convince them that he was God's Son (Luke 4). Jesus was asked to throw himself down from the Temple and show that he survived the fall by a miracle demonstrating that he was the Son of God.

Jesus told him that he would not do it for he did not want to tempt God. But if Jesus was God and did it he would not have been tempting God or trying to make God do wrong because it would have been what God chose to do. If Jesus was not God, God gave him free rein with his own magical powers so Jesus doing that still would not have been tempting God. In either case, the Devil was being accused of trying to tempt God or to make God do what he would regret which was not true.

The remarkable thing is, the only way this temptation would make sense is if Jesus did not have any miracle powers and threw himself from the Temple to try and tempt God to rescue him. I could do the same so the temptation suggests that Jesus was nothing but an ordinary fallible sinful man. Jesus was definitely saying that even if he did jump from the Temple there was no guarantee that God would save him when he said that for him to do that would be tempting God for the Son of God or God incarnate simply cannot tempt God for God will preserve him at all costs even if he does let him die. Jesus was definitely claiming to be no different to anybody else. He had no supernatural powers. He had no magic with which to come back from the dead.

Jesus went to the pinnacle of the Temple as if he were ready to jump and be saved by God in order that the temptation would become virtually irresistible. The very fact that Jesus went with the Devil to the pinnacle of the Temple shows that Jesus deliberately sought out temptation which is a sin for it means he was trying to make himself sin. Even if he intended to resist that wouldn't be right, for tempting yourself means you are trying to make yourself give in. James 1:13,14 says God cannot tempt or encourage temptation. Here we have a man who was supposedly God trying to tempt himself by accompanying the Devil to the pinnacle of the Temple so that he might give in and jump.

If Satan wanted the people to see Jesus falling and being supernaturally protected by God then he wanted Jesus to get followers. He knew Jesus would not jump unless he was sure he would survive. If the death of the Son of God would save the world, Satan would have wanted him to survive and would not have risked even suggesting that Jesus jeopardise his life. Satan would not save the Son of God and God would not save a fraud so Satan was the one who was going to save Jesus. The Devil would not have made the suggestion if Jesus were his enemy.

If Satan wanted Jesus to live and survive the fall then Satan and Jesus were on the same side. If Satan wanted Jesus dead he knew Jesus could rise again and he would be defeated. But he was sure he wouldn't be. Either way, they were on the same side though they might have differed on non essentials.

Tempting God involves blackmailing him to show his power. We are told the Devil knew that Jesus was God's Son when he survived forty days of abstinence from food and drink and spent so much time with Jesus. The Son of God could not tempt God for to tempt God means to make God prove his power which the Son of God would already know. It would be spiteful if he asked God to prove himself but it would not be tempting God. This temptation proves that the others never happened for they were about tempting God too and couldn't have done it. Satan would only try the once if he was going to tempt the Son of God at all.

Tempting God would not be sinful like Jesus implied. It is only asking for evidence for his existence. Blackmail is forcing someone to give what you are not entitled to.

Some would say the fall was not to be done in front of witnesses but when nobody could see. But then it would have been no temptation. Satan had no need to see how powerful God was for being an ex archangel he knew full well the extent of that power. And Jesus would have found nothing appealing about jumping and not being seen. So it is clear Jesus was meant to jump and survive in public.

Christians often tell the lie that Satan wanted Jesus to decide to make converts the easy way without suffering and without labouring as a missionary. If Jesus worked miracles then he gave into this temptation. He made people lepers if he had divine power and then cured them which would be no different from deliberately falling to be miraculously saved by angels. Anyway, Jesus could have jumped off the Temple and did all the other works he did the hard way. It is nonsense to say the temptation was about trying to get Jesus to take the lazy way out because he could have if he wanted to for we are told that the coming of Jesus is a gift we do not deserve and was entirely gratuitous. And the lazy way might have worked better than the hard way too for human nature is funny as God likes to keep reminding us.

The Gospel of Luke (4) says that Jesus did tempt God like Satan requested when he went to preach in an aggravating way in of all places a synagogue near a cliff where God had to intervene to rescue him. Jesus could and should have had a gang for protection to save God the trouble or should not have preached so near the cliff. He would have known what they would have been like. The fact that the gospel may just mean that Jesus might have got away without using an obvious miracle makes no difference for God still had to do a miracle albeit a secret one.

It is claimed that Jesus was not into arbitrary displays of power when he resisted the temptation even though surviving the fall without a scratch would not be arbitrary but would convert the people. But if he did public miracles then he had to be into arbitrary displays for he could have done secret ones instead. So if the temptation was to get Jesus to show off then he gave into it. Some say the temptation was to make miracles the message instead of making miracles to verify the message. This is nonsense for Satan never mentioned that miracles should be the message and indeed did not want Jesus to preach that message if it was good so he would have told him to forget the message and do the miracle. He didn't so Satan wanted Jesus to do the miracle and get fans. Moreover, Satan would not have expected Jesus to make miracles the message for people do not like miracles just because they are miracles but because they seem to offer hope of a better world so he would not have tempted him that way. Thus, the temptation shows not that Satan was trying to corrupt the good Jesus but that both were playing for the same team. Jesus was lying about his experience with Satan to make it look like they were opponents. Satan knew Jesus could do the miracle and repent and then do the message and he would not have taken the risk of trying to persuade Jesus to do the miracle unless he was sure Jesus was on his side. Jesus seems to have been a demon that even Satan looked up to. It could well be that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke which record the temptations were trying to expose Jesus as a diabolist and had to write books that looked Christian to do it.

Christians say that the reason Jesus could not go along with the miracle of jumping from the Temple and surviving by the power of angels was because this miracle would only have been for producing astonishment and not for doing anybody any good (page 65, *Why We Believe*, Leon Cristiani, Burns & Oates, London, 1959). But if that is true then why did he not change the stones into bread and do himself some good? Was there any real difference between going to the cross deliberately to rise again and what the Devil asked him to do when he could have saved the human race and died and rose without the cross? You could say this of the healings Jesus did, he didn't do them anonymously but in public to make an impression and astonish the people into conversion. Jesus did set out to astonish and try to speak to people's hearts through their wonder. The Devil never said he wanted Jesus to just go after astonishment, the Devil knew astonishment is necessary for faith to develop, but to tempt God. The Devil knew that even if Jesus tried to astonish people but it was no more than just showing off, it could still result in them converting to the ways of God.

The temptation was not about showing off or wasting power or laziness but about trying to get God to give Jesus miracle powers and protection. The gossellers may not have realised that but that is what we read. By doing miracles Jesus gave into the temptation and lied when he said he resisted it. Satan wanted him to show himself immune to danger in public

which would be a greater miracle than the resurrection in which some lunatics could have stolen the body and nobody saw Jesus rising but a few reported visions of Jesus in a world that is full of visions that all contradict and condemn each other. Satan wanted him to make quite an impression. When the Devil wanted Jesus to do the perfect miracle and then Jesus settled for less in the resurrection it shows that by no means can the resurrection be contemplated as evidence for the sanctity of Jesus Christ and the correctness and divine inspiration of his message.

In brief: the Matthew and Luke gospels say that the Devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple and suggested that he throw himself down for God wouldn't let anything bad happen to him. This miracle would impress the people and get Jesus converts easily because he would need to do it in public to make it worth his while. That is what Christians tell us. But God might have wanted Jesus to do that so why was Satan so sure it was a sin? Jesus doing that would not have stopped him going on the cross later. Obviously the only motivation that makes any sense is that Jesus was being asked to do miracles.

Satan and Jesus both believed it would be a sin for him to try. It would be a sin if you didn't have miracle powers in the first place. As we have seen, if God gives you the powers then it is up to you if you want to do a miracle and jump off a skyscraper and be found intact by people expecting to see nothing left of you but mush. This shows that the gospels of Matthew and Luke which have this story are hinting that we should not believe that Jesus was a true miracle worker. Either the miracles are symbols or they were tricks.

Perhaps Satan helped Jesus do miracles through trickery. Many have testified in the past that Satan rather than changing nature like magic manipulates it so that a miracle seems to have happened. For example, he could make a ghost seem to appear to you by making you mistake a ray of moonlight coming in your window for the shape of a person causing you to imagine that you saw a person who spoke to you. The gospels make no effort to eliminate this hypothesis for the miracles of Jesus. They just give us dubious evidence which is faulty precisely because we are not told enough. The gospels certainly do magic tricks with facts, that is what conjurers do, they don't tell all but use misdirection.

The bit added on to Mark 16 to fill the gap left when this gospel did not mention the resurrection of Jesus states that Jesus gave his disciples black magic powers. He said they could drink poison and survive and handle snakes unharmed. He was obviously telling them God would enable them to do miracles just for show – a doctrine that the entire Christian Church prefers to forget. If God would do that then it is impossible to understand why he won't do those kinds of miracles today. It is undeniable that a liar wrote this section even he was telling the truth that Jesus made this promise for he claimed that these signs happened. It may not have been the same author as the rest of the gospel for the gospel is rather sober while this new section is over the top. The section clearly states that the message was confirmed by these signs. So it was miracles that could not be from God more than the resurrection that got converts! Interesting! That means that nobody in the early Church was an authority on what was from God or not and nobody really cared if the resurrection was historically verifiable – they tried to verify it by additional miracles which they shouldn't have needed to do.

Whether human or divine this Devil was an emissary of evil. Jesus acceded to his temptation. He went over to the evil side.

SATAN OFFERS JESUS THE WORLD

Satan tempted Jesus three times. Jesus was starving in the desert and Satan advised him to turn stones into bread. Satan was very concerned for Jesus' wellbeing. It is telling that he didn't show him starving children and tell them to turn their stones to bread. Jesus tells Satan man needs bread alone so the moral of the story is that if God does not want to change the bread then do not try to force him. So why didn't Satan try to use the suffering of others to turn Jesus against God? He knew Jesus was not truly a good man and he didn't want his devoted servant to be to perish in the desert.

Satan then proving he could take Jesus' corpse from the tomb to start a resurrection hoax transports Jesus to the Temple.

"Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you' and 'with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"

The argument is that God puts you in this world to look after yourself and others so you cannot expect miracle short cuts. Jesus gave into that temptation later for he did no good works at all only miracles. And it is felt that Jesus was being asked to jump and survive miraculously to win over the people.

As a form of temptation, the Devil promised Jesus that he would give him supreme power over the world if he worshipped him. The Amplified Bible reveals that all he asked for was for him to do it just the once (Luke 4:7). Jesus had given into Satan before and all sin is devil worship so he certainly did give into this temptation.

And when the once or even a few times would have done, Jesus could have taken over the world from Satan and then repented thus defeating Satan. Or he could have offered feigned worship to Satan or made Satan hallucinate Jesus adoring

him to get the world. Strange that Satan cannot hallucinate like we can for if he has any senses at all he should be able to. God could stop Satan doing harm or as much harm by making him hallucinate. God is worse than he is yet God is the one who says Satan shouldn't be doing what he does implying he has no need for anybody to do evil. The temptation shows that Satan was really on Jesus' side for Jesus was one of his. The world must really have belonged to the Devil for the temptation could not work on the Son of God who would know if the world was not the Devil's to give if Jesus was the Son of God.

Satan was sure that if Jesus sinned that Jesus would be evil forever which implies that Jesus was full of latent evil and which certainly infers that he was not the Son of God.

When Satan left this temptation to last (Matthew 4:10,11) it suggests that he was reluctant to part with the world except as a last resort. But then he must have believed that Jesus was the Son of God and not God for God already owns the world. There was no reason for Satan not to know that Jesus was God if he was so Jesus probably never claimed to be God. This seems to contradict what I have said before but perhaps we have caught Jesus out in a lie. Perhaps Jesus said it was left to last to give the impression that he had to be the Son of God. They will reply that Luke says this temptation was the second one while the one about jumping from the temple was the last. They claim they can reconcile the two accounts by saying that one or both was not chronological. They ignore the word then in the text that denies this but of course words never stopped them from using lies to reconcile the Bible's disagreements with itself. Matthew would be the chronological one for his order is logical. Satan would start off small by suggesting turning food into bread, then he would advocate a show off public miracle and then offer Jesus the world. Matthew would be the one who is most likely to have the right order. It was because Luke saw that Satan would not offer the world except at the end and because he didn't like what it implied that he shoved this temptation between the other two.

The arrogance of Jesus claiming that the Devil gave him special attention as if he were the most important man in the world is stomach churning and what Christians take as self directed monomania in others is not that when Jesus does it. Sad. How loving and fair it all is!

If Satan wanted Jesus to do miracles to help himself then what if Jesus did that and repented? Satan's temptations would not get him anywhere then. So it is obvious that if Jesus sinned it would be permanent. He would be permanently evil. Maybe that has something to do with why Jesus did speak of sins that are never forgiven such as insulting the Holy Spirit.

Those who say that Jesus never succumbed need to be asked if they were with him all the time to know.

The temptations prove that he was the Son of Satan or that Satan saw him as his tool.