



August 27, 2021

## A Lesson From the Victorious One

*"I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me". - John 14:30*

All three temptations received the same response: "It is written. It is written. It is written." Satan did not argue back. He simply left Jesus alone—at least temporarily. We are told that after the final temptation in the wilderness "[the devil] departed from Him until an opportune time" (Luke 4:13). We are not told when, but the implication is that he came back. Indeed, you can be sure that Satan was Jesus' constant companion during the days of his flesh. He was never very far away.

Satan was fully aware that only Jesus could break his grip on the human world, devoted as it is to power and deceit, and only Jesus could deliver human beings from the mire of sin and evil in which they floundered. He knew Jesus to be the only truly radical person to enter human history, for he would refuse to use evil to defeat evil. He would set alight a new order that does not employ the devices evil persons use to try to secure themselves and get their way.

Everything rested upon Satan's defeat of Jesus. If Satan could prove that it was impossible for a flesh-and-blood human to do the will of God, he would have defeated God's great project that began with creation. He would have shown that the idea of creating an even more glorious universe by bringing God's church to fullness was impossible, a divine pipe dream. And perhaps—just perhaps, for it's hard to read Satan's mind—he thought tricking Jesus would give him a few more millennia before he met his final destiny. Whatever he thought, he was sorely disappointed by Jesus, as Jesus later told his disciples in the Upper Room just before his arrest in Gethsemane, "he has nothing in Me" (John 14:30).

How Satan wanted to find something in him! He wanted to be able to get inside Jesus' mind in the same way he got inside Eve's mind. That is what the Garden of Gethsemane was about; it was the final struggle between Satan and Jesus. From the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, Satan had tried to destroy or deflect him.

**Reflect:** *And in the final hours before the cross, Satan tried to break Jesus down by pressuring him with the hopelessness, in human terms, of what Jesus was attempting. Satan's aim was to prevent the redemptive act of crucifixion—the one thing that would open the doors to deliver humanity from the grasp of evil by demonstrating the power of good over evil—and he brought all his demonic power to bear upon Jesus.*

*(Q) Does Christ crucified hold the same elevated position in your life as that of the Apostle Paul, who preached the foolishness of the cross (1 Corinthians 1:23)?*

*(Q) Jesus is the king who goes to a cross, how does He help us better understand both the wisdom of God and the power of God to free humanity from the stranglehold of Satan?*