Battle Of Lions

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday November 26th, 2017

Text: Mt. 4:1-11

# Intro

1. There are two figures in the Scriptures that are described as lions but have distinct and different traits from each other: Jesus and Satan
   1. To understand the battle between Jesus and Satan, let us note some important things about lions…
2. Lions in the wild
3. Alpha male lions own a pride and are very territorial. In an undisturbed environment, it is said that the biggest reason for male lion deaths is other lions.
4. If another male (or more) challenge the alpha lion, the lion king must fight to hold on to his pride, which can have up to 37 or more female lions.
5. If the challenger succeeds, he will most likely kill the cubs and other young males the alpha may have sired.
6. For a lion king, there is no such thing as retirement – He must fight for his throne or be cast aside.
7. An adult lion's roar can be heard up to five miles away and is done for many reasons, including marking territory, talking to pride members, and for catching prey.
8. Lions often creep up silently on their prey when hunting. They break this silence with a large roar when just close enough to their intended target. The sound of the roar confuses and scares the prey. The prey cannot react correctly in the midst of this confusion and fear. The result is that the prey becomes easily trapped and caught by the lion.
9. The Scriptures present to us a “Battle of Lions!”
   1. Jesus, also seen as a lamb of sacrifice to save the world from sin (Jn. 1:29), is the King from the line of David, and the Lion of Judah (Mt. 25:31, 34; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 5:5).
      1. While a lion fights to protect his pride, the church is the bride of Jesus, and so all those who obey the gospel through baptism are added to the church and become part of His body and bride *(I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:23)* that He saves!
      2. Jesus’ roar is to His bride and is reassuring and one of hope and peace.
   2. Satan, though described in various ways and creatures, is also described as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (I Pet. 5:8).
      1. Though the world was created by Jesus (Col. 1:16), Satan is described as “the prince of this world” (Jn. 12:31) and “the god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), and as such he fights with Christ for control of souls!
      2. Satan’s roar is to confuse, frighten and deceive!
10. In the wilderness after 40 days of fasting, we see a “Battle of Lions!”

# The Temptation of Christ: Battle of Lions

## *Mt. 4:1-10:* The Battle of Lions: Lion of Judah *(Rev. 5:5)* Vs. The Roaring Lion *(I Pet. 5:8):*

* 1. After Jesus’ baptism by John in the Jordan *(Mt. 3:13-17),* Satan came at Jesus in three different areas.
  2. Most people forget that it is not a sin to be tempted (Heb. 4:15) but we sin when we yield to temptation (Js. 1:14-15). God always provides a way of escape so that we can handle any temptations that come our way (I Cor. 10:13).

## Temptation #1 – Self-satisfaction: Live to satisfy your needs and desires. The first temptation was for Jesus to distrust the providential care of His Father and to serve Himself.

* 1. And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread” (Mt. 4:3)
  2. **Lust of the flesh (I Jn. 2:16)** 
     1. Turn these stones to bread and eat. Jesus was hungry after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, but He resisted doing as the devil wanted Him to do, showing Himself to be God’s Son (4:1-3).
  3. “If you be” was a challenge to prove Himself “the Son of God.”
     1. Satan wanted to twist the divine mission of the Son of God.
     2. “Use Your supernatural power for physical needs.” “If You turn rocks into bread people will follow You. All You need to do is save them from hunger, meet their legitimate human needs.”
     3. It was a temptation to act independently of God. To act supernaturally to meet His needs instead of depending on God to meet them.
  4. Satan often uses a legitimate need but tempts us by seeking to fulfill that need in an illegitimate way.
     1. Many people have doubts that God can provide for their physical, financial and other human needs so they seek to fulfill their appetites and desires in sinful ways (such as sexual immorality) – Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 6:9-10; Heb. 13:4
     2. Satan sought to exploit a weakness of hunger to cause Jesus to be impatient with the Father.
  5. **Response #1** – “But He answered and said, “**It is written**, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” (Mt. 4:4)
     1. Jesus answered the devil by proclaiming that the Word of God is sufficient to sustain, sanctify and to support us in the most desperate hour of need or temptation.
     2. Rather than launch out in an independent self-satisfying life, Jesus trusted His earthly well-being to the Father. In the Father’s time He would supply Jesus’ physical need.
     3. He insisted that people need more than bread for their life. We must feed on the Word of God if we are going to sustain our spiritual life.
     4. God has said if we would follow Him completely, He will take care of our physical needs. (Mt. 6:33).
  6. True life depends not upon satisfying material wants but upon obedience in following God (Heb. 5:9).

## Temptation #2 - Self-accomplishment: Focus the attention on Himself instead of upon God

* 1. “Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will give His angels charge concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.’” (Mt. 4:5-6)
  2. **Pride of life (I Jn. 2:16)** 
     1. Satan attempts to sow doubt by saying “IF you are the son of God...” He is saying that “If You are truly the Son of God then You could prove that by throwing Yourself off this pinnacle of the temple, because God has said He would send angels to bear You up lest You dash Your foot against a stone. God will not let You get hurt IF You really are His son (4:5-6).”
     2. Satan takes a beautiful verse about trusting God (Ps 91:11-12), and he twists it out of context into an invitation to test God, [omits part of it (“To guard you in all your ways”)] and then twists it to get it to say something God never intended.
     3. God has promised His providential care for our life as we daily live it out in a normal fashion. He has not promised to supernaturally intervene when we decide to step outside of His will and jeopardize our life in order to test Him.
  3. There were many people at the temple at that time. Jesus could have popularized Himself through a sensational display of angels bearing Him up. But that was not God’s will and purpose.
     1. Sensationalism appeals to the flesh but Jesus wants men’s hearts. It was God’s will that He take on the nature of a servant, not of a dynamic celebrity!
  4. **Response #2** – “Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, **it is written**, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (Mt. 4:7)
     1. Jesus’ words come from Deuteronomy 6:16 and refers to the time when Moses struck the Rock in order to get water to satisfy the grumbling Israelites *(Ex. 17:1-7).* Because God did not immediately meet their expectations, they questioned His leadership and faithfulness. Faith is simply trusting God and taking Him at His Word no matter our circumstances or trials.
     2. Jesus refutes the notion that we have to rely on our pride, human efforts and sincere personal efforts to accomplish things – Trust in God! *(II Cor. 5:7)*
  5. Focus on God’s plan, not your own. Our desire should not be to prove or force God’s faithfulness, but to prove our own.

## Temptation #3 - Self-glorification: Instant gratification!

* 1. “Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, “All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.” (Mt. 4:8-9)
  2. **Lust of the eyes (I Jn. 2:16)** 
     1. Satan took Him to an unknown exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world which he said he would give to Jesus if He would fall down and worship him (4:8-9).
     2. Later Jesus would call Satan the ruler of this world (Jn. 14:30) and the apostle John stated that the entire world is under the power of the evil one (I Jn. 5:19), so apparently Satan believed he had the right to give them to Jesus (but Jesus created everything! – Col. 1:16; Ps. 33:6, 9).
     3. Christ would reign as King at the beginning of His ministry!
     4. God has also promised Jesus a kingdom (Ps. 2:8), but these kingdoms would not require the shame and suffering of the cross. So Jesus is faced with that age -old temptation that the end justifies the means.
     5. Seize the prize of sovereignty without the delay or suffering that God Himself had promised Him (Is. 53). The price of immediate possession was simply bowing the knee in compromise before Satan.
     6. Instead of enduring the long, bitter, humiliating, and painful road to the cross, Jesus could rule the world now! *(Overthrow Caesar!)* Not physical – Jn. 18:36
  3. He tempts each of us in the same way.
     1. “Why set your standards so high? What’s the use? You can get what you want by cutting a corner here and shading the truth there. Why wait for heavenly reward, when you can have what you want now?”
     2. When we set our hearts on money, sexual desires, prestige, popularity, power, or selfish happiness, we are doing exactly what Satan wanted Jesus to do: Put self first!
  4. Had Jesus fallen for Satan’s temptation the statement of those who mocked at the foot of the cross would have had to have been reversed: “He saved Himself; others He cannot save” (Mt. 27:42). Instead of redeeming the world He would have joined the world. Instead of inheriting the world, He would have lost the world.
  5. **Response #3** - “Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For **it is written**, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” (Mt. 4:10)
     1. There can be no compromise with the Devil. Referencing again the Word of God as Jesus’ ultimate authority He quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. God’s Word is the final argument and ultimate authority against our enemy.
     2. He advocated a focus on God! (Mt. 6:33)
  6. If you find yourself craving something the world seems to offer, quote Jesus’ words to the devil. “Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”

## Result: “Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him” (4:11)

* 1. Christ seeks to save man and protect those who belong to Him, while Satan seeks to destroy all men, especially those belonging to Christ!
  2. Js. 4:7; I Pet. 5:9: Like Jesus, saints can cause Satan to flee from us when we stand firm in our faith!

## We must know the Scriptures well to battle Satan and the twists his false teachers spin as truth.

* 1. II Tim. 2:15: (KJV) “Study to show yourself approved to God…” (Ps. 119:105)
  2. Titus 2:9-10:We are to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”
  3. Christ answered each temptation with Scripture; He was knowledgeable in God’s word!
  4. The scary part is Satan knows the Scriptures too, but will twist them (II Cor. 11:3).

## The Battle of Lions demonstrates the fight for men’s souls!

* 1. Two Lions: A Contrast

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| **Characteristic** | **Jesus** | **Satan** |
| Purpose | Lead people to salvation (Jn. 1:29; Heb. 5:9) | Lead people into sin (II Cor. 11:3; II Tim. 2:26) |
| Methods | Tells people the truth (Jn. 8:45; 16:13; 17:17) | Tells people lies (Jn. 8:44) |
| Motivation | Love (Jn. 3:16) | Hate (Jn. 15:18-19; 17:14) |
| Followers Experience | Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-25) | Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, drug use, hatred, discord, jealousy, rage, selfish, dissensions, envy, drunkenness (Gal. 5:19-21) |
| Following leads to | Freedom from sin (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5) | Enslaved to sin (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:16-18;  II Tim. 2:26) |
| Followers' Outcome | Alive in Christ (Eph. 2:5-6); Eternal life (Mt. 25:34, 46) | Dead in sins (Eph. 2:1-3); Eternal punishment (Mt. 25:41, 46) |

## Whose roar will we listen to?

### Conclusion

1. When Satan tempted Jesus he was challenging the kind of Messiah Jesus would be:
   1. A Messiah who focuses only on felt needs (“Turn stones to bread”)
   2. A Messiah who entertains (“Jump from the Temple”)
   3. A Messiah who compromises (“Worship Satan”)
2. It should come as no surprise that the followers of Jesus battle the same 3 temptations in doing the work of the church:
   1. Will we be a people that primarily focuses on felt needs or will we remember that we are first and foremost to address people’s spiritual needs?
   2. Will we be a people that confuses entertainment with worship or will we be a church that always asks, “Is God or the worshipper glorified through our worship practices?”
   3. Will we be a people that compromises so we can have bigger numbers or will we regard faithfulness as more important than earthly success?
3. The Battle of Lions rages on: One roar is a call to obey and be blessed for eternity (Jesus), and the other roar is to confuse and deceive you into staying in sin (Satan); Whose roar will you listen to?
4. If not a child of God, Repent & be baptized, obey the gospel and follow the Lion of Judah!
5. If you are a child of God and not living right, repent and walk in the steps of the King!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!

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