

Title: RECOGNIZING SATAN'S LIES, MATTHEW 4:1-11  
(Chatham, NJ; 03/13/11, AM) [Pc – Topical with Inductive Reasoning]

Theme: The temptations endured by Christ exhibit some of Satan's lies, and we must learn to recognize them.

Purpose: To expose Satan's lies and to help us be prepared to counter them with Scripture.

Introduction:

1. If man had not sinned (The Fall), this would make no sense.
2. The serpent lied to Eve; he is the father of lies (John 8:44). Here he is called "the tempter."
3. He told her a partial truth that appealed to her pride ("you will be like God").
4. He lied about the outcome; "You will not die," he said.
5. Some today are bold but blind to suggest that this knowledge was and is empowering. But what was the cost of giving in to Satan's lie?
6. Let's see if we can sort out the lies of Satan from the truths of God.

I. Not by Bread Alone, 1<sup>st</sup> Temptation.

A. What the response means.

1. Israel had learned to trust God in their desert sojourn.
2. Deprivation and discipline created trust.
3. The lesson was that they needed God not just physical food, and they had to learn to trust God for those necessities.
4. Jesus tells Satan that he will put God before food and trust him to give him the food.

B. Satan's lie. (Joke about politicians' lips? Broken clock right twice a day? Satan never true; his lies are subtle and mixed with enough truth to make them sound believable.)

- "If you are the Son of God."
- "Make bread for yourself" – a point of weakness since he was hungry.
- Is he asking him to doubt who he is or asking him to use his authority for his own benefit?
- Jesus has to choose between using his power or depending on God.
- This looks self-serving; he can choose food without God's help or God.
- He chooses God.
- Choosing to act apart from God will get him what he needs and wants, but it is a lie that it will provide true life for him. (Man doesn't live on bread alone. Satan denies the spiritual, transcendent side of us.)
- It is similar to the lie of empowerment Satan had told Eve. She did die despite his lie.

II. Don't Tempt God, 2<sup>nd</sup> Temptation

A. Putting God to the test, Deuteronomy 6:16.

- Quarreling with God at Massah, Exodus 17:1-7; Israel complained about lack of water.
- This was the first of many times they quarreled with Moses and God; perhaps this was a representative example of their continuing attitude.
- It demonstrated a lack of faith.
- The final test was their refusal to enter Canaan.
- Jesus sees through this temptation and recognizes the faithlessness inherent in it.

B. Satan's lie.

- Again, "If you are the Son of God" - an appeal to use his power?
- Satan attacks Jesus at a strong point: his trust (which he had already asserted) and his use of God's Word (which he has already demonstrated).
- On the face of these Scriptures his interpretation may seem correct.

- He calls on Jesus to exhibit daring faith; but is it really faith?
- Will God really suspend the law of gravity to save him? (Joni Erickson, a paraplegic, recognized that God didn't do this for her when she dove into shallow water.)
- Terrorists do something of this blame-shifting: they take hostages and then say if you don't give in to our demands, their blood will be on your heads.
- Satan is actually asking Jesus to put responsibility for bad behavior back on God.
- Jesus opts for a more reverent and cautious faith, one that is more consistent with the way God works.
- Satan's lie is to blame God for bad things, to expect Him to fix everything.
- Jesus will not lay that responsibility at God's feet. He doesn't test him in that way.

### III. Worship and Serve God Only, 3<sup>rd</sup> Temptation

#### A. Deuteronomy 6:13 – 14, a repeat of the first commandment (Deut. 5:7).

- Jesus adapts 6:5 to formulate the first of the two greatest commandments.
- It is part of the “Shema” that the Jews repeated; this represents the monotheism of their faith, but they often didn't obey.
- This is all a part of Moses' farewell address; it represents the most important things.
- Faithfulness to the one, true God trumped everything else.

#### B. Satan's lie

- He has finally come out of hiding and expressed his true motive.
- He wants to be God, to be worshiped. (Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals* – dedicated to Lucifer “who received a kingdom of his own.”)
- Power, prestige, and money are appealing.
- But God is the one truly in control; Satan's kingdom is about to fall.
- This is the biggest lie of all: Satan does not admit that Jesus is there to defeat him.
- He knows his end is coming when Jesus establishes God's Kingdom.
- The kingdoms of the world appear to be great, but they are like Nebuchadnezzar's statue: when it was struck by the stone of God's kingdom, it disintegrated.
- What Satan offers is a losing proposition that only appears great; this is the lie.

#### Conclusion:

1. We have given in to temptation; Jesus didn't.
2. We need to recognize Satan's lies.
3. We also need to repent and turn back to God in humility. Ps. 32 reflects this need.
4. Because Jesus succeeded where we failed, we have the Gospel to satisfy this.
5. Recognize that you have succumbed to lies, turn to God, receive forgiveness through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.