

STONES INTO BREAD

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Matthew 4:3-4

3) And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4) But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

“If thou be the Son of God” was a rhetorical mocking gesture by Satan because he knew full well who Christ was. He, too, had witnessed the recent baptism of Christ by John and heard the heavenly voice boom from above like others standing by that day. He had attempted from the very birth of Jesus to destroy the Christ child. So the gesture was indeed mocking and devilish in context. The devils know full well who Christ is, and they tremble.

We must remember that this entire setting and confrontation is primarily a temptation to reduce, if not dethrone, deity. The end game was to abort the redemptive covenant by disqualifying the progenitor of the covenant, consequently forfeiting the rights of the mediator of the divine program Himself. Henceforth, it was the temptation of Christ enticing Him to work miracles or perform in the supernatural realm as to satisfy the hungering appetite of the flesh that was experiencing great discomfort after 40 days of abstinence from food. This will always be a temptation for our religious mind to employ or exalt the spiritual and supernatural to satisfy and justify our fleshly cravings.

This type of exalting of the supernatural to promote ourselves is not exalting the spiritual at all, but rather it is the exploitation of spiritual things. To prove to the natural man and the world that we are legitimate by our overt displays of spiritual power, we worship the creature more than the creator. It is spiritual exploitation. “Look at our talents and what all we can do” is a prevailing trend today, rather than the attitude of “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” The three personal and confrontational temptations represented here in this satanic challenge cover all three spiritual dimensions whereby man is forever tempted—the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. The attack was targeting both the humanity of Christ along with His deity.

The appeal was intended to glamorize the suffering humanity of Christ and to satisfy His hungering, discomforted flesh while exploiting the spiritual gifts innate to deity to accomplish the fall of Jesus. Satan was tempting Christ to cause Him to surrender to what His flesh craved at that very moment by challenging His messianic authenticity and subsequently His identity and relevance, all at the same time.

By performing in the spiritual realm for Satan, Jesus would have essentially submitted the entire nature of deity into the hands of humanity by circumventing His own flesh. This is demonic on its face. This would have tragically forfeited redemption, knowing that the cross life depends on fallen humanity, or carnal flesh, submitting to the nature of deity, not the other way around. There is no specific scriptural prohibition within the law that would have hindered Christ from exercising His spiritual power to follow through with the miracle. So why didn't He?

His response tells us man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. There we have it. No supernatural performance would be forthcoming. Christ plainly tells each of us that obedience to the principles of God and surrendering unto the nature of God as revealed throughout the entire Torah prohibits us from sharing the intimacies of our spiritual privileges and spiritual inheritances with the world. For Christ to have performed for Satan to prove His authenticity as the one and only true God would have flown in the face of the entire Old Testament teaching of who we the people of God are and who and what God truly is. "Every word" is a reflection of the whole panoramic revelation of God throughout the entire Old Covenant. "I AM HOLY" defines God in the law. Therefore "BE YE HOLY" adequately reflects man's pitiful need for a holy God in the law. Christ's submission and obedience to the principles of the law of holiness were more powerful than any display of the supernatural. Who He was stood preeminently higher than what He could do. The greater spiritual performance that day was His submission to the principles of sanctification and holiness that defined His character, not an outward display of any subsequent liturgical prowess.

STONY GROUND!

Televised church, whether on a television set or through the venue of internet via live-stream video church, is a feeble attempt at validating who we are before the world by forcing the intimate "holy things" of worship to submit to the secular or earthy cravings of a carnal man's appetite for spiritual activity. It is an attempt at turning stones into bread to satisfy our cravings to become relevant in mainstream Pentecostalism.

It is the casting away of our long-held principles of separation from the world, and our established standards of separation from the digitally secular venues for worship, to perhaps prove to others that we are indeed somehow powerfully special and genuinely authentic. "Every word" reflects the whole teaching of the law and explains why sharing the treasure house of intimate worship unto God with the world through a carnal and impersonal digital platform violates essentially who God is throughout scriptures. Line upon line, and precept upon precept. Here a little and there a little, we can piece together the big picture of man's degenerate condition before a holy God. Stones into bread promote and exalt degenerate flesh. Jesus would have nothing of it.

Submission unto separation from the world celebrates a holy God and encompasses all that He is. It shifts the spotlight away from what man can do and celebrates who God genuinely is. God is separated from man through His own holiness. By grace through faith are we now saved, and the veil of separation from God is torn down; therefore, man is finally allowed to approach this holy God. However, there is one caveat. Our nearness to Him can only be experienced through the blood. No blood, no God.

CAN THESE STONES LIVE?

As with television, the internet has not and cannot ever become the venue for the holy. It represents what the world is building on... "stones," if you please. These building stones of the world can never pass through the blood unto holiness in an approach towards worshipping a holy God. Impossible. These platforms are distinctly designed for the secular, never the holy. The needfulness of the internet for education and the secular purposes, or responsibilities of life, is a formative concern today, as should be, for all holiness-minded men.

The fruit of temperance is certainly being greatly challenged to say the very least. But to turn these secular earthy stones into spiritual nourishment or spiritual bread to feast upon, as if they can somehow satisfy the longings of the spiritual, or perhaps fulfill our responsibilities of a vertical ascent towards worshipping the holy, is a glaring self-deception. The holy can never submit unto the secular or earthy. Christ thankfully refused to force that dynamic in the wilderness that day. Man cannot live by bread alone but by "every word" that proceeds out of the mouth of God. "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." Oh, that His nature could thrive in the hidden man of the heart through submission to the contexts, precepts, and principles of "every word."

Bill Pitman