



MESSAGE 2:

A LITMUS TEST ON WORSHIP

PASSAGE: MATTHEW 4:8-11 ESV

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. **9** And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” **10** Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”” **11** Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message is to emphasize the importance of prioritizing worshiping God above all else, even in the face of tempting offers or temptations presented by Satan, leading people to pass their test and overcome their temptations by following the example of Jesus the Christ. Ultimately, it seeks to inspire a deep commitment to worshiping God along and rejecting the offers of the world that lead away from Him.

INTRODUCTION

A litmus test is a crucial assessment or defining moment that reveals our true colors, our deepest loyalties, and our unwavering priorities. It’s a moment where we’re put to the test, and our response speak volumes about where our hearts truly lie, and this sermon has been written to help you prepare for a litmus test on worship. Interestingly enough, God presents us with a litmus test on worship through the temptations of Satan.

The underlying question that this test asks and your response will reveal is this: Do you prioritize worshiping God above all else, even in the face of enticing offers or temptations presented by Satan?

TEST PREPARATION

Definitions

1. Temptation refers to the enticement or allure towards sin or disobedience to God’s commands. It involves the

testing of one's worship by presenting attractive or desirable alternatives that go against God's word and God's will. Temptation challenges the sincerity and authenticity of our worship by testing whether we truly prioritize God above all else.

2. Worship literally means worthiness, and to worship is to acknowledge the worthiness of something or someone. Practically, to worship God means to actively choose to prioritize God above all else in our daily life. It involves offering to God the fruit of our lips through praise, prayer, and thanksgiving, and offering unto God the fruit of our life through obedience, service, and living in accordance to God's word and God's will.

Scriptures

1. Exodus 20:3-4 "“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth

beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”

2. Deuteronomy 6:13 “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.
3. 1 Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Case Study: The Example of Jesus Christ in Matthew 4:8-11

Here in Matthew 4, Jesus is simultaneously being tempted by the devil and tested by His Father. Satan, who is the prince of this world, tempted Jesus with an enticing offer of all the kingdoms and their glory. What makes this offer so tempting and so enticing is that unlike His father, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of this world and their glory without the cross, which means Satan offered a path to be crowned king without having to take up His cross. But the price for this was a very high one; to obtain such an

empire, Jesus would be required to fall down and worship the evil one. In other words, Satan was telling Jesus “if you serve me, you’ll rule the world.”

I would have you to know that all of Satan’s enticements that he offers you comes with a hefty price and that hefty price is your worship that belongs to God alone. To fall into temptation then, is to rob God of desired and deserved worship, and to give that worship to Satan in exchange for some type of temporary gain and personal satisfaction.

Beloved, Satan’s offer is on the table:

You can have the extra money, you can have the fame, you can have the approval of others, you can have the social status, you can have the popularity, you can have the riches, you can have the possessions, you can have the platform, you can have the validation, you can have the position, you can have the influence, you can have the control, you can have your cake and eat it too, you can have the crown without the cross, you can have baptism without regeneration, you can have confession without repentance, you can have faith without works, you can have Christianity without true discipleship, you can have all

the success you want, you can have all the money you want, you can have all the power you want, you can have the notoriety, but you must rob God of the worship that belongs to God, and give it to Satan.

You must redirect your time, your money, and your gifts to other things.

You will no longer read or immerse yourself in God’s word. You won’t have time for that.

You must manifest instead of Pray.

You must lord over people rather than serve people.

You must satisfy your flesh and starve your spirit.

You must rob God in broad daylight of the worship, honor, and glory that belongs to God, and give it to Satan.

Beloved, Satan’s offer is on the table.

And I will have you to know that when Jesus was in your shoes, he left the offer on the table.

When Jesus took this test, his answer was to reject the offer that Satan presented. Jesus stood ten toes down! And as we prepare to take this test over and over again throughout our lives, may Jesus' answer on the test also be our answer on the test.

Jesus responded to Satan's offer by saying to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

Notice that Jesus gave a 2-part response on this test! Part of it was a decisive rejection, and the other part is the reason for the decisive rejection.

"Be gone, Satan!" = decisive rejection

"For it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." = reason for rejection

Jesus is showing us that the only way to pass this litmus test of worship is to study the word of God! Nevertheless, studying the word of God is not enough; memorizing, reciting, or quoting scripture is not enough. If you notice, the word of God informed the decision, but was not the decision itself. You see, when it comes to resisting the devil and

overcoming temptation, the word of God is the study material to help you make the decision, but the decision to resist and overcome requires your resolve! Let me illustrate it this way: At Renaissance High School, some of the tests we were given were so challenging that the teacher would provide us with a study guide and allow us to use one notecard to write down any information we wanted and use it for the test. I used to write as small as possible so that I could fit as much information as I could on that notecard, ensuring I could provide the right answers during the test. What I am trying to illustrate is that God has given us His word for the test, and we are to take the information from His word and write it on our hearts so that when test time comes, we will make the right decision! I would encourage you to not only study God's word for this test, but also write the words on your heart, so that you will not sin against God!

In closing, it is worth reflecting that, while Satan offered Jesus sovereignty over all the earth if he would but worship him, Jesus worshipped God only and all power in heaven and on earth was given him, and may that serve as your source of encourage to not get weary in well doing because you're

Worship

SERMON NOTES
STEPHEN L. HERROD



going to reap if you faint not! And what you will reap will not come from this world, but What you will reap will come from God! What you reap will not lead to death, but what you reap will lead to life! What you reap will not be from Satan but will be from God! What you reap will not be fruit of the flesh, but what you reap will be fruit of the spirit!

James 1:12: "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."