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**Angelic Conflict:**

**What is SPIRITUAL Maturity in the Face of Suffering?**

**When is SUFFERING a Spiritual Test from God?**

**Grace Bible Church**

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The greatest battles of life are not about sin in the obvious sense, but about whether we will trust God's plan—or step outside of it.

The victory was not in a miracle, but in the Word.

The same Word that sustained our Lord in the wilderness is the same Word that sustains us today.

True spiritual victory is found not in avoiding the wilderness, but in walking through it with His Word as our weapon.

Divine Power relates to the greatest form of suffering in this life, which is the privilege of suffering in the Angelic Conflict and evidence testing.

Evidence testing is the highest form of testing a mature believer can face in the spiritual life and it is a form of suffering that is permitted by God to demonstrate, before both angels and mankind, the believer's faithfulness, integrity, and spiritual growth.

**1. Evidence Testing is Reserved for Mature Believers** – It does not happen to spiritual babes, but to those who have reached maturity in doctrine and are equipped to glorify God.

**2. Evidence Testing is Directly Overseen by God** – Satan cannot initiate evidence testing; God permits it.

**3. Evidence Testing Has Two Major Categories:**

- **Relationship to Life** – suffering or adversity in life circumstances (health, family, finances, etc.).

- **Relationship to Death** – facing undeserved suffering or challenges directly connected to mortality.

**4. Evidence Testing's Purpose** – To vindicate God's justice and grace, proving that His plan works even under maximum pressure.

**Evidence Testing = God's use of the mature believer as a living witness in the Angelic Conflict, demonstrating His justice, grace, and wisdom before angels and mankind.**

Matthew 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,<sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the desert to be tested by the devil.

When a believer reaches spiritual maturity [3<sup>rd</sup> stage of spiritual growth], Satan is permitted by God to cross examine every witness [true witness in Acts 1:8] that God enters into the historical phase of the Angelic Conflict.

If God enters you into the historical phase of the Angelic Conflict, He's also saying that with your spiritual maturity, you have enough power to handle anything that the kingdom of darkness may bring upon you.

Satan didn't try to get the Lord Jesus Christ to sin immorally, he just tried to get the Lord Jesus Christ to leave the plan of God.

MAT 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

MAT 4:2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

MAT 4:3 And the tempter [devil] came and said to Him, “Since You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

Kenosis is the doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His humanity, voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes during the Incarnation. Philippians 2:5–8, Christ “emptied Himself” (Greek: *ekenōsen*), taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.

1. To Resolve the Angelic Conflict – Demonstrating that a member of the human race, using divine power made available to all believers (the Spirit and the Word), could glorify God and defeat Satan.

2. To Provide a Prototype – Jesus Christ is the pattern for the spiritual life of Church-age believers. Just as He relied on the Spirit and doctrine, so must the believer.

3. To Fulfill Salvation – Only as true humanity could Christ go to the Cross and die for our sins (since deity cannot die).

Leaving the plan of God may not be manifested by overt sin, but leaving the plan of God is still sinful.

The details of life become exceedingly evil when they take you away from the plan of God for your life, 2 Timothy 2:4 & Luke 8:14.

If Jesus Christ used His deity or His power to satisfy His hunger by turning the stones into bread, then the Lord Jesus Christ has stepped outside of the pre-designed plan of God.

MAT 4:4 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.’”

A miracle is a false solution, just as prayer is when God provides suffering for us to bear, and therefore it is blasphemous to even want miracles when we have a far greater power.

There is an allotted time in your life ordained by God for you to go through undeserved suffering.

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted [graciously given privilege] for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, [DEU 8:3] 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

The temptation of Satan was designed to lure the humanity of Christ away from reliance upon the omnipotence of God the Father for His logistical grace, and upon the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit inside of the pre-designed plan of God.

When a person acts independently of the plan of God, they're just as evil as an immoral person.

According to Matthew 6:22-24, how great is your darkness when you think you're in the light. How great is your deception when you think that you're all right?

The Bible Doctrine that our Lord used is the same Bible Doctrine that is available to us, to learn and utilize, to handle any test in our life.

**THE POWER IS IN THE WORD.**

**THE WORD OF GOD IS ALIVE AND POWERFUL.**

We have been given a greater power than Satan's, however most believers are rejecting that power because the power is in the Word, and the average believer rejects the word in the form of independence from God's plan.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of destruction.

Our Lord deals with the problem from metabolized Bible Doctrine because He recognized the power of the Word in dealing with evidence test.

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This is what Satan is trying to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ to fall away from: Will God really provide for you? The issue is not “what you need”, the issue is “will you rely on the source”?

What really sustains the believer is the grace provision of God provided for us billions and billions of years ago, long before anything existed, such as the portfolio of invisible assets. The importance of the giver, not the gift.

All spiritual victory, in any category of suffering for blessing, is related to the Word of God.

Spiritual victory, in any category of suffering for blessing, is not related to crying out to God for deliverance, it's related to your perception, metabolization and application of Bible Doctrine.

1. Our Lord's 1<sup>st</sup> test is related to the Power of the Holy Spirit, in MAT 4:1-4.
2. Our Lord's 2<sup>nd</sup> test is related to the Power of Bible Doctrine, in MAT 4:5-7.

Matthew 4:5 Then the devil \*took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

2 Chronicles 14:6 He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the Lord had given him rest. 7 For he said to Judah, “Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the Lord our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.” So they built and prospered.

The fact that one of the titles for Satan or the Devil is “attorney” tells us that there is a conflict going on and he has a function in the Supreme Court of heaven.

MAT 4:5 Then the devil [diabolos = attorney that slanders] \*took [seized] Him into the holy city [Jerusalem, ISA 48:2; MAT 21:10; 27:53] and had Him stand on the pinnacle [edge or highest point] of the temple,

MAT 4:6 and \*said to Him, “Since You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, [PSA 91:11-12] ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

Satan’s 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation is related to a false application of doctrine.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation of Matthew 4, in evidence testing is dealing with the believer’s relationship with Bible Doctrine.

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MAT 4:7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, [DEU 6:16] ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”

1. 1<sup>st</sup> test is related to the Power of the Holy Spirit, in MAT 4:1-4.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> test is related to the Power of Bible Doctrine, in MAT 4:5-7.
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> test related to Worship & Compromise, MAT 4:8-10.

MAT 4:8 Again, the devil \*took Him to a very high mountain and \*showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

MAT 4:9 and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

MAT 4:10 Then Jesus \*said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, [DEU 6:13]‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

MAT 4:11 Then the devil \*left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

(1) The Holy Spirit may lead us into testing.

(2) The real temptation is independence from God.

(3) Victory comes, not through miracles or shortcuts, but through the Word.