



Prayer Resources

Online Articles

This Online Article is copyright © 1997 by Dr. Rob and Judy Finley

Prayer Resources

PO Box 751016
Memphis, TN
38175-1016
901.794.6999

Understanding Jesus' Prayer Priorities

Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Matthew 4:1

(see Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)

The temptation of Jesus recorded by three of the four Gospel writers was more than merely a confrontation with Satan in which to gain victory over his deceptions. Jesus was also driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to face a crisis of His personal priorities. His choice of priorities when viewed in the context of His forty days of prayer and fasting reveals to us His prayer priorities.

Jesus' first temptation was to prioritize the physical above the spiritual. (Matthew 4:3-5; Luke 4:2)

The tempter subtly suggested that Jesus meet His physical need of hunger (resulting from His forty days of fasting) by turning stones into bread. Jesus responded by stating that the Word of God was of more importance to Him than physical food. He placed the spiritual Word of God above the physical needs of His body. Had Jesus merely been praying over His physical needs, legitimate as they were, He would no doubt have succumbed to this temptation.

Jesus' second temptation was to prioritize the material above the moral. (Matthew 4:5; Luke 4:9)

The tempter took Jesus to the Holy City of Jerusalem...to the Temple of God...and to the Pinnacle! Without question Jesus' emotions were running high as he ascended the Holy City into the Holy Temple and finally stood upon the Holy Pinnacle. All of His institutional respect for the Torah, the altars, the sacrifices, the priesthood, and the worship was at a high! Then, the tempter suggested that Jesus test God's watch care over Him and jump off the pinnacle. Surely, His Father would send angels to protect Him. All Jerusalem would recognize Him as Messiah and He could bypass the Cross. Jesus responded by accusing the tempter of morally testing the will of God. He placed the moral parameters set by His Father above the material success of institutional religion. Had Jesus merely been praying over His material success, He would no doubt have succumbed to this temptation.

Jesus' third temptation was to prioritize the temporal above the eternal. (Matthew 4:8; Luke 4:5)

The tempter took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the nations and kingdoms of Man in a moment's time. Then he offered Jesus to be ruler of all of these if He would merely bow down and worship him. Jesus responded by stating that He would only worship the Lord His God. He placed the spiritual worship of His Father above the temporal gain of the world's kingdoms. Had Jesus merely been praying over His temporal needs, He would no doubt have succumbed to this temptation.

Conclusion: Jesus' responses to these temptations reveal the topics of His praying during the previous forty days of fasting. Undoubtedly He had been praying in the areas of the spiritual, the moral, and the eternal. When the Spirit drove Jesus into combat with Satan, Jesus went equipped with His commitment to the *spiritual* Word of God no matter the cost physically, the *moral* will of God no matter the loss materially, and the *eternal* worship of God no matter the price temporally. Do the priorities of our consistent prayer life serve to equip us for the three-fold attack of the tempter?