

The Attackers: The Attacks on Christ during the Incarnation: His Rote Knowledge of the Law, Prophets, & Psalms, Luke 24:44; Attacks by: Herod, Matt 2:16 cf. v.13; Lucifer, Matt 4:1–4 cf. v. 11; Pharisees, John 8:53–59; Temptation, Luke 22:39–44; Sanhedrin, Matt 26:65–67; Pilate, John 19:1–3; 19:14–15; Revilers & Mockers, Matt 27:38–44; Divine Provisions; The Attack on the Word of God, Gen 3:1

X. The Attacks on Christ during the Incarnation:

1. The true humanity of Christ was chosen to fulfill the Father's plan for the salvation of the human race which required a prototype system that could endure the challenges of *cosmos diabolicus*.
2. During the "silent years," our Lord so completely inculcated the teachings of the Old Testament that during His public ministry He was able to rely upon its guidance under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to execute to perfection the prototype spiritual life.
3. The Lord had inculcated rote knowledge of the Mosaic Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms:

Luke 24:44 - Now He said to them [the eleven disciples], "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

4. It was this inventory, plus the recall ministry of the Holy Spirit that enabled the Lord to withstand, rebuke, and dismiss the various assaults that were directed toward Him during His public ministry.
5. There were other attacks prior to these that required divine intervention and protection. We shall note several examples:
 - (a) Herod's command to slaughter the infants of Bethlehem:

Matthew 2:16 - When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the magi, his chronic bitterness flared into operational anger, and he ordered his hit men to slaughter all the male children who were in Bethlehem and its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. (CTL)

God's counterattack, or in this case, His preemptive maneuver:

Matthew 2:13 - Now when the magi had gone, behold, the angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and hurry into Egypt and stay there until I tell you, for Herod is on the verge of deploying a search and destroy mission to execute the Child. (CTL)

- (b) Lucifer's temptations of the Lord in the desert:

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

v. 2 - And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

v. 3 - And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

v. 4 - But He answered and said, [**Deuteronomy 8:3b**]
"It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

God's counterattack:

Matthew 4:11 - Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

(c) The attempts of the Pharisees to stone Jesus:

John 8:53 - "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make yourself out to be?"

v. 54 - Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom I say, 'He is our God';

v. 55 - and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

v. 56 - "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

v. 57 - So the Jews [**Pharisees**] said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

v. 58 - Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am [ἐγὼ εἰμί (*egō eimi*); אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh*): I Am that I Am; the self-existing One]."

John 8:59a - Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him ...

The Lord escapes the grasp of the Pharisees:

John 8:59b - ... but Jesus hid [κρύπτω (*kruptō*): withdrew] Himself and went out of the temple.

(d) Temptation to evade the cross:

Luke 22:39 - And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.

v. 40 - When He arrived at the place He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

v. 41 - And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

v. 42 - saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

v. 43 - Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

v. 44 - And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

Verses 42 and 44 are sometimes viewed as the Lord's desire to avoid physical death. But Jesus knew He was prophesied to die physically. His desire was to avoid being identified with the sins of the human race while experiencing spiritual death. From His true humanity He could have said, "No," yet He submitted to the Father's plan by praying, "Not My will, but Yours be done."

(e) Attacks on Jesus before He reached the cross:

Matthew 26:65 - Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy;

v. 66 - what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!"

Matthew 26:67 - Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him.

John 19:1 - Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him.

v. 2 - And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him;

v. 3 - and they began to come up to Him and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him slaps in the face.

John 19:14 - Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!"

v. 15 - So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

(f) The temptation to come down from the cross:

Matthew 27:38 - At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.

v. 39 - And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads

v. 40 - and saying, "You are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

v. 41 - In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him and saying,

v. 42 - "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.

v. 43 - "He trusts in God; let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

v. 44 - The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with their words.

The Lord's attitude toward these mockers is likely expressed in His response to Peter in:

Matthew 26:53 - "Do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions¹ of angels?"

Divine Provisions:

(1) The Father's Reassurance:

John 12:28 - "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

(2) The Son's determination through positive volition to obey the Father's will:

John 17:4 - "I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do."

John 19:30 - Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

(3) The Son's sustenance by the Holy Spirit:

Luke 4:1 - Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness.

(4) The Son's sustained by recall of doctrine:

Psalms 31:5 - "Into Your hands I commit My spirit; you have delivered Me, O Jehovah, God of doctrine."

XI. The Attack on the Word of God:

Genesis 3:1a - Now the serpent [נָחָשׁ (*nachash*): snake indwelt by Lucifer] was more crafty [עָרוּם (*'arum*): shrewd & deceptive] than any of the lower creatures of the field which the Lord God [יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (*YHWH 'Elohim*): Jesus Christ, (Col 1:16)] had made [עָשָׂה (*'asah*): to create according to a pattern].

1. Snakes were universally feared in the ancient Near East but Ishah's absence of fear indicates that before the fall they were considered harmless. The serpent's innocence and attractiveness became the perfect vehicle through which Lucifer could communicate the lie to his human target.
2. In the King James Version, a demon that possessed a person was referred to as a "familiar spirit," a nebulous term for the phenomenon. The Hebrew word is אֹבִיב (*'obib*) and it refers to a medium. When a demon possesses a person, or in this case a reptile, he is able to manipulate its vocal cords to communicate with the intended target of deception.

¹ "In practice, the number of men in a legion during the period from Marius to Augustus [157 B.C.–A.D. 14] when known appears to average around 4,000 men. Either the centuries were nominal centuries, or they were under strength. The establishment of the century under the Empire was probably 80 men, except in the first cohort, which was of double strength. When to these are added centurions and *principales* (non-commissioned officers), the legionary establishment during the Empire was probably in the order of 5,500" (G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969], 22). (Note: 5,500 times 12 = 66,000 angels.)

3. The 'ov demon functions as a ventriloquist and in the case of Genesis 3, it is Lucifer who speaks but his words are assumed by Ishah to come from the serpent.
4. The serpent is one of the creatures which the "LORD God" created on the Sixth Day in Genesis 1:24 and we know from Colossians 1:16 that the Agent of that creation was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:1b - And he [**Lucifer through the serpent**] said to the woman [אִשָּׁה ('*Ishshah*)²], "Is it really true that God [אֱלֹהִים ('*Elohim*)] has said, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"

1. Note that the very first deceptions that Lucifer verbalizes were attacks on the deity of Christ and His integrity.
2. He refers to the One who issued the mandate as God – '*Elohim* – thus denying the legitimate authority of the LORD – *YHWH 'Elohim* – over them. He then attacks the Lord's integrity by implying that if the couple may not eat from every tree of the garden is this really being fair to them?
3. Lucifer knew about the prohibition found in Genesis 2:16–17 against eating from the tree of human good and evil and intends to exploit it to his advantage.
4. Lucifer asks a leading question which is designed to see how much the woman knows and understands about the prohibition. He begins with the interrogative formation of the particle אִף ('*aph*) translated "really," plus the demonstrative particle כִּי (*ki*) translated "that." This arrangement is used to introduce an interrogative of surprise. In this case feigned surprise since Lucifer is fishing for what the woman knows or does not know.
5. The verse begins with an ellipsis therefore the verb has to be supplied: "Is it really true that God has said."
6. The use of the proper noun God ('*Elohim*) instead of Lord God (*YHWH 'Elohim*) is a ploy by Lucifer to also distract her from the personal aspect of her relationship with Jesus Christ.

² "Hebrew *Ishshah*, because she was taken out of the man (*Ish*)" (C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Study Bible: NASB* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 7n2:23 Woman).