



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

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The Head-to-Head Duel

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how, from infancy, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

Watching two great players go head-to-head in the final round of a major championship is pure joy. And that's exactly what happened in the 1977 Open Championship at Turnberry, Scotland.

Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus were tied for the lead at seven under through 54 holes. In the final round, after several lead changes, the match was even with two holes to play.

On #17, Watson grabbed the lead with a birdie while Nicklaus could only manage par. Jack hit a wild drive on #18 and watched from the rough when Watson's second shot landed just two feet from the flag.

Already leading by one and facing a short birdie putt, it appeared Tom had won the duel. But the Golden Bear slashed an eight iron that managed to find the green, 35 feet from the hole, and then incredibly sank the birdie putt for a bogey-free 66.

With the crowd roaring, Nicklaus graciously called for silence, and Watson converted the winning putt for a final round 65. How good was this duel? Watson's total of 268 beat the previous Open record by eight strokes. And Hubert Green, who claimed third place, finished a distant 10 strokes behind Nicklaus.

After Watson's final putt dropped, Nicklaus offered a warm handshake, and they walked off the 18th green with their arms draped over each other's shoulders. It was a fitting ending to what is fondly remembered as "The Duel in the Sun."

In Matthew 4:1-11, we learn about another classic confrontation. The 1st verse sets the stage: "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." This was no accidental meeting; Jesus was intentionally directed to meet Satan face-to-face.

Satan probably figured he held the advantage. Jesus had fasted for forty days and nights. He was starving, so naturally, Satan first tempted him to turn stones into bread. Jesus would do later miracles with bread (Matthew 14:13-21), but not this time. He told Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

The second temptation involved performing a miracle that would abuse His power for His own benefit. Again, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture: "You shall not put your Lord God to the test."

For the third and final test, Satan proposed what seemed like a sweetheart deal. He offered Jesus an earthly crown, but in a way that avoided His future suffering and sacrifice on the Cross.

All Jesus had to do was bow down and worship Satan. But Jesus defeated his foe with a final rebuke: “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

If you ever wondered if there is a benefit to memorizing God’s Word, look no further than this story. Three different times, Satan deceptively tempted Jesus, and all three times, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture.

Jesus endured temptation to demonstrate how we can respond when Satan comes calling. Jesus didn’t call on divine spiritual power; He called on the Word of God. Satan’s lies are no match for the truth of God’s Word.

Prayer: Lord, give us strength to persevere during the challenging times by trusting in you and relying on the truth expressed in your Word. Amen

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