

Matthew 4:1-11 • The Temptation of Jesus

Introduction

There are two things going on in parallel to this event which need to be kept in mind. One has to do with the fact that before a king can rule according to God's Word and ways, he must prove that he can rule himself. This is why King Saul lost his kingship, because he was unable to control himself and obey God. As the Son of David and rightful King, Jesus proves Himself. The other has to do with the fact that Jesus is referred to as the "Last Adam" (1 Co. 15:45). Unlike the first Adam who was unable to survive Satan's temptations, Christ meets His enemy, "the ruler of this world" (Jn. 14:30) and defeats him, resolving things that have been left hanging in the balance ever since man's failure in the Garden of Eden. In the process, Jesus provides a practical example of how to deal with Satan and temptation.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

⁴But 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.'"

[Read v.1-4]

Q: To what perceived weakness is Satan trying to appeal?

A: The body, the desires of the flesh.

Q: Is it a sin to be hungry?

A: No.

Q: Then why is Satan suggesting that if Jesus truly were God's Son that God would not allow Him to be hungry?

A: Satan always wants us to think that God is "holding out" on us. It's the same tactic he used on Eve in the Garden.

"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3:5

Point: Satan is suggesting, "God must not love you because if He did He would take better care of you." Satan wants us to believe that our circumstances directly mirror God's attitude towards us.

Q: Why did Jesus never use His divine powers other than when it was absolutely within the will of God to do so?

A: Jesus never did what pleased Himself, but only what pleased God.

"And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

John 8:29

Point: The reason that our circumstances don't necessarily reflect God's attitude toward us is because we're never supposed to live to please ourselves, but Him alone.

Q: What is Jesus' basic response in quoting Deuteronomy 8:3?

A: Jesus affirms that feeding the inner, spiritual person is far more important than feeding the physical. Also, this verse is found in the overall context that God tests and proves us in the ordinary things of life such as eating and drinking.

"All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers. You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

Deuteronomy 8:1-6

Point: Jesus' example is that we're to live under the authority of God's Word.

Q: What else does Jesus' example teach us where the Word of God is concerned?

A: That God's Word should be retained to the point that we're able to quote and apply it at the right time as needed.

*Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You.*

Psalm 119:11

Application: How might your present circumstances be used to cause you to doubt in God? How might they be part of God's testing of your faith? How might physical needs distract from the greater priority of spiritual needs? How does Satan attempt to undermine our trust in God's Word?

[Read v.5-7]

⁵Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

'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.'

⁷Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Q: How is Satan's second challenge really an extension of Jesus' answer to the first?

A: Satan is implying that since Jesus believes the Word of God, why not prove one of God's promises.

Q: How is Satan's basic tactic here really the same as what he tried to do the first time?

A: In both cases he is misquoting God's Word, twisting it into something that it was not originally intended; he omits part of Psalm 91:11-12 from which he's quoting.

*For He will give His angels charge concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways. [This line omitted.]*

*They will bear you up in their hands,
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.*

Psalm 9:11-12

Q: Why is this omission important?

A: Without this line, Satan misrepresents it to mean that **ANYTHING** done will be remedied supernaturally, when in fact the promise is qualified by the phrase "in all your ways". In other words, God keeps His promises when we keep His ways, not acting independently on our own.

Q: How did Jesus respond?

A: He quoted Deuteronomy 6:16, which is really the practical application of His reply to the first challenge that we should live by every Word that God utters and therefore not put God to the test.

Point: Satan can twist the Bible and give carnal or nominal Christians biblical reasons to support their foolish actions only because they take it out of context or claim a promise when the proper conditions have not been met.

Application: If we've learned the right lesson from the first challenge and do not judge God's love and will merely by circumstances, then we certainly do not "dare" God to intervene and rescue us based on our assessment of those circumstances. As Paul states in Romans 14:23, "whatever is not from faith is sin". How might this be reflected in your own life now or in the past? How does Satan attempt to undermine our trust in God's circumstances?

[Read v.8-11]

⁸Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

¹¹Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Q: Could Satan have made good on his promise?

A: We know that he is called "the ruler of this world" (Jn. 14:30) and he wrested authority in the Garden, so Satan is permitted to have a certain amount of control.

Q: But Jesus, knowing God's Word and trusting not in current circumstances would have known what about the ultimate disposition of "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory"?

A: Jesus knew that even though Satan retained temporary control, God had already promised these kingdoms to Christ His Son.

*"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.
I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.' "*
Psalm 2:6-9

Q: However, since Jesus knew the whole of God's Word and will, what did He also know He had to do in order to obtain His kingdom?

A: It could only be obtained by fulfilling God's will for Him by dying on the cross. Satan was attempting to prevent the cross from happening.

Point: While our circumstances may not always be pleasant, as long as they're following God's will they will work out for the greater good of His glory and work instead of our own. All things will work out for us according to **HIS** will and timing.

Q: What was Jesus' response?

A: Quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, Jesus established that whatever we worship is the god we serve, whether it be money or power or whatever. If we worship the One True God, we live for and obey Him alone.

Application: What are the things which if taken away you would miss the most? How well do they reflect your greater trust in God than in those things? How is this like Job in how he endured loss of everything physically precious to him but not the most precious spiritual things? How does Satan attempt to undermine our trust in God's sovereignty?

The Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45)

How does Jesus compare to the Old Testament type of Adam in the course of His temptation?

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Adam

1. Tempted in a beautiful garden.
2. Physically perfect when he was tempted.
3. The king of the old creation. (Gen. 1:26)
4. Sinned and lost his dominion. (Heb. 2:6-9)
5. Defeated and brought death to humanity.

Jesus

1. Struggled in a lonely wilderness.
2. Very hungry at his physically weakest.
3. King of the new (spiritual) creation (2 Co. 5:17)
4. Obeyed and regained what Adam lost and more. (Rom. 5:12-21)
5. Victorious and brought life to all who will trust Him.

The Son of David (Mt. 1:1)

How does Jesus compare to the Old Testament type of David in the course of His temptation?

David

1. Both came from Bethlehem.
2. Both were chosen and anointed by God.
3. Both were “exiles” and persecuted before being crowned.
4. Goliath dared Israel for 40 days; Satan attacked Jesus for 40 days.
5. David used one stone from five to slay the giant; Jesus used one book (Deut.) from five (the Law of Moses) to defeat Satan.
6. Goliath was a strong man; Satan is compared to a strong man. (Mt. 12:22-30)
7. David cut off the giant’s head with his sword; Jesus overcame Satan with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. (Heb. 4:12)

Jesus

Overall Application

- *How does Satan attempt to undermine our trust in God’s Word?*
- *How does Satan attempt to undermine our trust in God’s circumstances?*
- *How does Satan attempt to undermine our trust in God’s sovereignty?*
- *Why is the most significant part of the answer to each of the above questions to know and compare all things to God’s Word, applying it to our daily walk?*