

04. Mark 1:12-13

“Tempted and Victorious”

(9/13/26)

Mark 1:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹ It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹ Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹² **Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.** ¹³ **And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.**

Matthew’s account provides a lot more detail—so turn to Matthew chapter 4.

Matthew 4:1 (NKJV)

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

In Luke’s gospel chapter 4 verse 1 we read—

Luke 4:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

As we have already said, after Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the waters of the Jordan—He was then baptized by God the Father with the power of the Holy Spirit. (Explain)

This is the empowering for service that Jesus would need in His humanity to do the work His heavenly Father had given Him to do.

But here is what we need to understand—when we get serious about God—the devil gets serious about us!

And yet, “*greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world*”—(1John 4:4)

The Temptation in the Wilderness—Matthew 4:1-11

A. The purpose of the temptation

Now the question that most Christians have when they read this account of Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness is—why?

What purpose did this temptation serve? Why was it necessary?

Well, as our great High Priest, this time of temptation and testing was very important so that Jesus could relate to and sympathize with our weaknesses—

Hebrews 4:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points tempted as we are, yet* without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So, the question as to why Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil isn’t all that difficult to understand.

However, it presents a much bigger problem and begs a much tougher question—could Jesus have fallen for the devil’s temptation and sinned?

This has been debated among Christian theologians for 2000 years and gives rise to two camps on the issue.

1. Those belonging to the first camp contend that based on the immutable statement made by James in chapter 1 verse 13 of his epistle, “...*for God cannot be tempted by evil...*”—that this proves that Jesus could not have sinned in the face of these temptations.
2. Those belonging to the second camp say, “*No, but because He was a man, the possibility of sin existed or else the temptation would been a farce and therefore meaningless.*”

So which side is right? → I think they’re both right.

Jesus’ Divine nature could not be tempted—and yet Philippians 2 says when He came to earth, He took on a human body and became susceptible to human frailties like you and me.

Therefore, I believe Jesus *could* sin because of His humanity, but because of His Deity, there was no chance that He *would* sin.

This means that the temptation of Jesus was absolutely legitimate so that the writer to the Hebrews could say in all truthfulness that Jesus can now sympathize with us in our weaknesses because He was tempted in every way the devil tempts us yet—Jesus never sinned!

B. The preparation for the temptation

Matthew 4:2 (NKJV)

² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

So here we read that Jesus spent forty days and nights fasting in preparation for Satan’s temptations—forty days He fasted *before* the devil was allowed to hit Him with these three very powerful temptations.

The fact that Jesus took forty days to prepare before the devil was allowed to tempt Him tells me that these temptations were *legitimate* and had real ‘*teeth*’ to them which means that Jesus needed to strengthen Himself against them by fasting for a prolonged period.

Now the statement that when Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights, “...afterward He was hungry” is interesting because it sounds as if He wasn’t hungry until He passed the fortieth day.

From what I have heard from physiologists and others who have fasted for prolonged periods of time that after ten to fourteen days your appetite goes away and doesn’t return until you begin to starve to death.

Now, I don’t know that firsthand, so I’ll have to take their word for it—but it does seem to fit the language here in v.2.

C. The presentation of the temptation

Matthew 4:3 (NKJV)

³ Now when the tempter came to Him...

I want us to look carefully at the three temptations that Satan leveled at Jesus—remember what the writer to the Hebrews said that Jesus was tempted “*in every way as we are.*”

And so, I believe that the same three temptations that Satan used against Jesus—he uses against all of us! (If you’ve got something that works you stick with it!)

These 3 temptations seem to be what John had in mind in his first epistle chapter 2—

1 John 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.

1. First temptation—stones to bread (*the lust of the flesh*)—v.3

Matthew 4:3 (NKJV)

³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

The “**If**” in the Greek is actually “**Since**”—“**Since You are the Son of God...**”

Satan is not challenging Jesus’ divinity nor His relationship with His Father, but in fact was no doubt picking up on what the Father said at the end of Matthew 3—“**...This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**”

In the wilderness, there are millions of round, limestone rocks which look just like little loaves of bread.

No doubt as Jesus fasted those rocks must have taken on the *appearance* of bread—a fact that Satan seems to be playing on in this first temptation.

Satan comes to Him and says, “*Since You’re the Son of God—prove it by turning these stones into bread.*”

What is the devil doing here?—he’s questioning the Father’s provision and ultimately His love for His Son.

During Jesus’ baptism, the Father called Him His “**beloved Son**”—and now Satan comes on the scene, challenging those words and that love by saying,

“Since You’re really the Son of God, why is Your Father putting You through this?” (Luke 4:1)

“When is God going to release You from this fast and provide You with some food?”

“How could Your Father love You when He treats You like this? Take matters into Your own hands and satisfy Your hunger—You’re Father doesn’t care about You!”

Satan does the same thing in our lives, when he comes to us and says,

“Since you’re a child of God, where’s the Father’s provision?”

“Why are those bills piling up?”

“If God really loved you would this be happening?”

He comes to us and whispers in our ears, *“Do something in your own power. You need it now, God isn’t coming through, take matters into your own hands!”*

But God wants us to be patient because He’s testing our faith, obedience and our perseverance.

We are His children and He has promised to meet our needs, but we need to wait on His timing—it is a test of our faith.

Jesus’ response to this first temptation—

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

Here Jesus is quoting from Deut. 8:3 and the lesson here is that if we make the feeding of our spiritual man a priority over the physical man, we will walk in the Spirit and have victory over the lust of the flesh—even as Jesus admonished us:

“Seek first the Kingdom of God...and your physical needs will be supplied by your heavenly Father.”

2. Second temptation—jump from the pinnacle of the temple (*the pride of life*)—v.5-6

Matthew 4:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If [since] You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "

Now here Satan quotes from Ps.91:11-12 proving to us that the devil knows the Word of God and can twist it, misapply it and quote it out of context to use against us.

Satan is saying to Jesus, **“Well, if man doesn’t live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God—prove it! Jump from the pinnacle of the temple because it is written—‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”** (a Messianic promise)

In this temptation Satan is trying to get Jesus to act in a way that puts the faithfulness of God the Father to a foolish test.

Jesus' response—

Matthew 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt [test] the Lord your God.' "

Here Jesus quotes from Deut. 6:16.

It is wrong for me to deliberately put myself in a dangerous situation just to test my faith or to test God's faithfulness.

Pastor Chuck Smith—

"I think of those people in the Ozarks who practice snake handling in their prayer meetings, attempting to prove that they have great faith in God and that He is with them. (Mark 16:17-18) At the heart of those kinds of stunts in the church is pride—the very thing Satan was trying to bring out in Jesus through this temptation."

You see the pinnacle of the Temple was about four hundred feet above the Kidron Valley.

The temptation was for Jesus to demonstrate that He was really the Messiah by jumping off the very uppermost part of the temple to force the Father to send His angels to rescue Him by gently carrying Him down to the Temple Mount where hundreds if not thousands of Jews would have witnessed the incredible spectacle.

This would have been totally outside the will of God and falls under the second category of the three ways Satan tempts us and that is through the ***"pride of life"*** (1 Jn. 2:16).

Of course, these kinds of 'stunts' that put God to a foolish test are very popular in certain circles in the church today.

You see this quite a bit in the Word of Faith movement where Word of Faith preachers encourage their congregations to go out and buy expensive cars and houses and then trust God to provide the monthly payments.

That's nothing more than encouraging their people to take a *leap* into financial suicide that puts God to a foolish test in rescuing them and in the process showing everyone how spiritual they are.

3. The third temptation—by-pass the cross and opt for immediate gratification (*the lust of the eyes*)—v.8-9

Matthew 4:8-9 (NKJV)

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

Through this temptation Satan essentially invited Jesus to take a '*shortcut by by-passing the cross.*'

Jesus came to win all the kingdoms of the world and their glory back from Satan's domain by dying on the cross.

In the beginning, when God first created this world, He gave it to Adam and Eve (mankind) to care for it—it was under man's dominion and control. (Explain what happened to change that)

And so, Satan is in control of this fallen world system at the present time.

He is spoken of as "*the god of this age*" (2 Cor. 4:4), and John tells us that "*the whole world lies under the sway (control) of the wicked one*" (1 Jn. 5:19).

Jesus came the first time to not only redeem the lost, but also to redeem the world lost by man by going to the cross—and when He comes again, He will take control of the world which He bought and paid for with His blood.

Revelation 11:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ ...And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

And because Satan knows this, he is trying to get Jesus to opt for immediate gratification by telling Him, *"I know why You're here. You've come to die on the cross to redeem this world back to God and reign over its kingdoms. Don't go to the cross! Worship me and I'll give You the kingdoms of this world."*

To which Jesus responded—

Matthew 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, '*You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.*' "

Here Jesus quotes from Deut.10:20

Of course, the application to the people of this world is clear.

A person can either live for this life, by-passing the cross (not receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior) laying up for themselves treasures on earth and enjoying all the pleasures they bring—or they can die to self, take up their cross and follow after Jesus. (Elaborate)

A cross-less Christianity is a Christ-less Christianity—and a Christ-less Christianity won't save anyone.

To truly be one of His disciples, He said we must *"deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow after Him"*.

Warren Wiersbe—

"The devil offered Jesus a shortcut to His kingdom. Jesus knew that He would suffer and die before He entered into His glory (Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:11; 5:1). If He bowed down and worshiped Satan just once (this is the force of the Greek verb), He could enjoy all the glory without enduring the suffering...There are no shortcuts to the will of God. If we want to share in the glory, we must also share in the suffering (1 Peter 5:10)."

Matthew 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Conclusion

Notice that three times Satan '*thrust*' at the Lord Jesus with three different temptations and three times the Lord '*parried*' those blows by saying "*It is written*".

However, a lot of Christians are under the mistaken impression that by simple quoting Scripture, Satan is going to run away, but the devil can also quote Scripture (as this passage teaches us)—and so can his demons and so can atheists and agnostics.

The devil will try to use God's own Word against us if we let him.

How can we stop him? By knowing the Word well enough ourselves to counter Satan's temptations and condemnations.

Let me show you how this works in your life.

When the devil attacks you with condemnation by whispering in your ear—"*The Lord is tired of putting up with you because you keep blowing it and falling into this or that sin*".

You can counter with—

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

¹ *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...*

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

⁵ ... For He Himself has said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*"

How about when the devil attacks you with doubt about God's love and concern for you in providing your needs?

Matthew 6:31-33 (NKJV)

³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Ephesians 6:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Now you might be thinking—“*What do these ‘fiery-darts’ of Satan represent?*”

Well, some think they refer to various *temptations* that promote the “*works of the flesh*” (Gal. 5:19-21)—adultery, fornication, moral uncleanness, hatred, drunkenness, jealousies, violent outbursts, and even murder.

When Paul says to “*take up the shield of faith*”—he isn’t saying that *faith* in and of itself will protect you from the devil or any other problem.

In Genesis 15:1 God said to Abraham, “*Fear not Abraham; I am your shield...*”

In Psalm 18:30 the Psalmist said, “*The Lord is a shield to all who put their trust in Him.*”

When Paul speaks of ‘*taking up the shield of faith*’—it means my faith is nothing except for what it puts in front of me—and that is God Himself!

He is the One who is my shield—not really my faith:

Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Faith alone will do nothing for you—faith in Jesus will do everything! (Heb.12:2)

Again, faith is not a power we can use to ‘play’ God or use to control God, it is simple childlike trust in God—in His power, promises and Person (His character).

The shield of faith is totally sufficient in its ability to protect us against the devil’s attacks.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

When the devil comes against you, say to yourself, “**It is written...**”