

## **Temptations in the Wilderness**

**February (R), November 10 (K), 25 A.D.**

**Matthew 4:1-11**

**Mark 1:12, 13**

**Luke 4:1-13**

## Jesus' Temptation

### Text:

**Matthew 4:1-11, Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of god.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.**

### Commentary:

I. We are surrounded by temptation, bombarded by enticements to sin.

II. Job's wife asked him, "Are you still holding onto your integrity?"

III. We must hold fast our integrity.

**A. Hebrews 4:15, For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one**

**who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.**

**B. James 1:14, 15, Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.**

**C. Ephesians 6:17, Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**D. Philippians 2, 3-8, Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!**

#### IV. Meet your enemy, the devil.

**A. brazen: Job 1:6-12, One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.” The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and**

**his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Job 2:1-8, On another day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. And the Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.” Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.” “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.” So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.**

**B. cruel: Revelation 2:9, 13, 24, I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. I know where you live – where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city – where Satan**

**lives. Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you):**

- C. deceitful: 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14, For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.**
- D. doomed: Revelation 20:10, And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**
- E. liar: 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14, For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.**
- F. accuser: Zechariah 3:1-4, Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."**
- G. powerful: Acts 26:18, Open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'**

**H. ravenous: 1 Peter 5:8, Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

V. Being “led up of the spirit” does not mean that the Holy Spirit enticed Jesus to sin.

**A. James 1:13, When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.**

B. The Holy Spirit did guide Jesus to the wilderness for the purpose of allowing Jesus to experience the kinds of temptations which the devil throws against humans.

VI. The other great occasion on which Jesus was tempted was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night of his betrayal and arrest.

**A. Luke 22:42, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.**

**B. Matthew 26:39, Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”**

VII. Jesus was tempted at other times and perhaps all the time.

**A. Luke 4:13, When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.**

**B. Hebrews 2:18, Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**

VIII. The temptation of Adam took place in a lovely garden. The temptation of Jesus took place in a wilderness.

IX. Jesus went to the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, who wants all men to turn their backs on God the way he did.

**A. Jude 6, And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day.**

**B. 1 Timothy 3:6, He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.**

**C. Matthew 13:28, “An enemy did this,” he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’”**

**D. Matthew 13:19, When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.**

**E. 2 Timothy 2:26, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**

**F. 1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.**

G. Satan is not simply an evil influence, he is a real spirit person.

1. The same Bible teaches the existence of God and Satan.
2. We trust God's word to be true on both counts.

X. Temptation is not a sin. Sinless Jesus was tempted. Yielding to temptation is sin!

XI. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights.

**A. Deuteronomy 18:15, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.**

**B. Exodus 34:28, Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant – the Ten Commandments.**

**C. I Kings 19:8, So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.**

XII. Should Christians fast?

A. Jesus fasted. Should we imitate his example?

B. Many of us **need** to fast!

**C. Matthew 11:18, For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'**

**D. Luke 7:33, For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’**

XIII. After fasting Jesus was very hungry!

A. Out of this need arose the first temptation.

B. Satan “kicked Jesus when he was down.”

XIV. Satan appears in different guises. He is deceitful and uses any approach that has potential for success.

**A. Revelation 20:10, And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

**B. Revelation 20:2, He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.**

**C. 1 Peter 5:8, Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

**D. 2 Corinthians 11:14, And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.**

XV. In the Garden of Eden Satan tempted Adam and Eve with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

A. He used the same approaches on this occasion with Jesus.

**B. 1 John 2:16, For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.**

XVI. “If you are the Son of God” was a snide remark. Jesus could have responded without thinking by saying, “I’ll just show that old devil that I am the Son of God.” Satan very well knew this already.

XVII. Hunger is basic!

XVIII. Satan tempted Jesus to use his supernatural power inappropriately; that is, to ease his own personal discomfort.

XIX. Jesus answered Satan with, “It is written!”

A. Satan had no answer to a “thus says the Lord.”

B. A correct scriptural answer should always be our response.

XXI. Man shall not live by bread alone . . .

A. Physical life apart from spiritual life is really not the fullness of life that is available to us in Christ.

**B. John 10:10, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**

**C. Deuteronomy 8:3, He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live**

**on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.**

XXI. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the temple, and on a high mountain.

A. Satan tempts us in every place and in every way possible.

B. Satan lost the first round, but the game was not over!

XXII. Jesus trusted God. Satan now attacked that relationship.

A. Satan urged Jesus to cast himself from the top of the temple entrusting himself to God's care.

B. Even the devil quotes (misapplies) Scripture.

XXIII. This quotation is taken from **Psalm 91:11, 12, For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**

A. God would have taken care of Jesus. However, God was not to be put on trial nor tempted.

B. Jesus immediately put things in perspective.

C. God's will is to be understood by the study of everything God has written on a subject, not by isolating a favorite verse and taking it out of context.

D. Jesus did not argue with the devil. He quoted scripture and that was the end of the matter.

E. Did the devil here lie to Jesus or would/could he have followed through on his promise?

F. Satan is not known to be honest and trustworthy!

**G. John 8:44, You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

XXIV. Many millions still believe they can gain the world if they worship Satan in their businesses, dealings with others, politics, etc.

A. He delivers enough to entice others while keeping his servants under his influence.

B. At the end he lets his followers come up empty for the devil has no lasting power!

XXV. The idea of the devil's demanding that Jesus fall down and worship him is arrogance without equal!

A. Again Jesus answered Satan by quoting scripture. Jesus made it clear that the scriptures, God's will, would be his guide.

B. This quotation is taken from **Deuteronomy 6:13, Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.**

C. It is sinful to worship anyone or anything other than the triune Almighty God.

**D. Revelation 19:10, At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”**

**E. Acts 10:26, But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”**

XXVI. The devil had had enough for this time, but he would be back!

A. Only at the resurrection was the devil absolutely defeated by Jesus.

**B. Luke 4:13, When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.**

XXVII. Satan tempts us. If we overcome, he leaves us for a while. When we think we are free of him and relax our vigilance, he returns unexpectedly with full force.

A. Having overcome the devil for this time, angels came and ministered to Jesus.

B. God did not forsake Jesus.

C. He will not forsake us.

**D. Jesus, a son of Abraham, knew that “The Lord will provide.”  
Genesis 22:14.**

**Mark 1:12, 13, At once the spirit sent him out into the desert and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.**

I. All that Mark said about the temptation of Jesus is contained in these two verses.

II. Immediately after Christ's baptism "straightway" (This is a word frequently used by Mark.) the Holy Spirit drove (led, sent) Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

III. During these forty days of fasting and tempting, the physical Jesus also had to contend with wild beasts.

A. Israel wandered in the wilderness 40 years.

B. Jesus fasted 40 days.

IV. Angels ministered to Jesus.

A. Jesus and the New Testament clearly taught the existence, reality of angels.

B. Angels announced the birth of Jesus, ministered to him in the wilderness, strengthened him in the Garden of Gethsemene, announced his resurrection, escorted him to glory, and announced Christ's second coming.

**C. Hebrews 1:14, Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**

**Luke 4:1-13, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert, where for forty days he was**

**tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread,” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’” The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.**

I. Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit,” that is, he had the Holy spirit without limit, without measure.

- A. It was God’s will that Jesus contend with the devil and show his power over the forces of darkness, evil.
- B. The human Jesus was subject to sin (peccable). If it were impossible for the human Jesus to sin (impeccable), this account of the temptation would have been pure fiction.
- C. Jesus was tempted at the end of the forty days of fasting and perhaps all during the forty days, before and after.

II. At the time the devil told Jesus, “If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread,” Jesus was intensely hungry having fasted for forty days..

- A. “**If**” you are the Son of God was sarcastic ridicule. “**If**” can also be rendered “since.”
- B. Satan tempted Jesus to use his divine power to meet his personal physical needs.
- C. For Jesus to have yielded to this temptation would have indicated a failure to rely on the Father to provide for his needs and care.
- D. If Jesus had miraculously satisfied his hunger he would have corrupted his sinless incarnation.

III. Jesus replied, “Man shall not live by bread alone.”

- A. **Deuteronomy 8:3, He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.**
- B. Jesus appealed to Scripture as the way to overcome temptation, to set the record straight.
- C. Important as physical needs are, meeting spiritual needs is infinitely more important.

IV. Satan then in a brief moment showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world.

- A. In exchange for the gift of the kingdoms of the world, Jesus would be required to worship the devil.
  - B. The power Satan exercises on earth is horrendous, but he has assumed this power illegally.
  - C. Satan promised something he in truth could not deliver.
  - D. However, this would not have been a temptation to Jesus if there had not been an element of truth in his offer.
  - E. Jesus again answered Satan by quoting Scripture. **Deuteronomy 6:13, Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.**
  - F. Jesus in essence said, “I will not do what God has forbidden.”
- V. Jesus was then taken to the pinnacle of the temple and was tempted by the devil to cast himself down to test God’s promise to take care of him.
- A. Satan quoted Scripture but he did not handle the Word correctly.
  - B. It is not enough to quote scriptures. We must interpret it correctly and, most importantly, we must live by it, obey it!
  - C. **Psalm 91:11, 12, For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**
  - D. The Father would have cared for his son, but the Son was not going to put the Father to the test, put God on the spot.

E. Shakespeare has Antonio say, “The devil can cite scriptures for his purpose.”

F. **Deuteronomy 6:16, Do not test the Lord your God as you did at Massah.**

G. Scriptures harmonize! Men’s use of them conflicts.

H. **Philippians 1:6, 7, Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.**

VI. When Jesus had met and successfully resisted the devil three times in a row, the devil retreated *for a while*.

A. **1 John 2:16, For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.**

B. Satan hit Jesus with everything he had and “struck out.”

## Temptations in the Wilderness

### Questions

1. Jesus was led by the \_\_\_\_\_ into the \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. After \_\_\_\_\_ days and \_\_\_\_\_ nights, Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_.

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ came to Jesus and said, "If you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, tell these \_\_\_\_\_ to become \_\_\_\_\_."

4. Jesus answered, "It is \_\_\_\_\_, 'Man shall not live by \_\_\_\_\_ alone, but on \_\_\_\_\_ that comes from the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.'

5. The \_\_\_\_\_ took him to the \_\_\_\_\_, which was \_\_\_\_\_, and had him stand on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

6. The devil said, "If you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, throw \_\_\_\_\_ down, for it is written, He will command his \_\_\_\_\_ concerning you, and they will \_\_\_\_\_ you up in their \_\_\_\_\_, so that you will not \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ against a \_\_\_\_\_."

7. Jesus answered the devil, "It is written, 'Do not put the \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.'"

8. Again the devil took Jesus to a very \_\_\_\_\_ and showed him all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ and their \_\_\_\_\_. “All this I will give you if you will \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ me,” the devil promised.

9. Jesus said, “Away from me, \_\_\_\_\_! It is written, ‘\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_, and serve him \_\_\_\_\_.’”

10. The \_\_\_\_\_ then left \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ came and \_\_\_\_\_ him.

11. The devil is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, an \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

12. The temptation of Adam took place in a \_\_\_\_\_ . The temptation of Jesus took place in a \_\_\_\_\_ .

13. \_\_\_\_\_ is not a sin. \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ is sin.

14. The devil quoted \_\_\_\_\_ but he did not apply it correctly. Jesus answered each temptation with an appropriately applied, “\_\_\_\_\_”

15. Millions believe they can gain the whole \_\_\_\_\_ if they worship \_\_\_\_\_ in their \_\_\_\_\_, their \_\_\_\_\_ with others, \_\_\_\_\_, etc. \_\_\_\_\_ may well finish \_\_\_\_\_!