

The Temptation Of Jesus

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Matt. 4:1-11

One of the blessings of having Jesus as our Savior is His ability to comfort and aid those who are tempted.

This is because He too was tempted.

Heb. 2:18, *“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”*

He is sympathetic, and can provide help in time of need.

Heb. 4:14-16, *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

One of His greatest periods of temptation was at the beginning of His public ministry.

Immediately following His baptism by John.

Matt. 3:13-17, *“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Just prior to starting His preaching ministry.

Matt. 4:12-17, *“Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Studying “The Temptation Of Jesus” can be fruitful for several reasons...

- It reminds us that Jesus can understand our own temptations.
- It reveals how we can be more successful in overcoming temptation.

With that in mind and using Matt. 4:1-11 as our basic text, let’s begin with...

The temptation of Jesus reviewed

The setting of the temptations...

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Matt. 4:1, “*Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*”

It was likely the wilderness of Judea, a desolate place to be tempted by the devil.

Where Jesus fasted and was tempted for forty days.

Matt. 4:2, “*And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*”

His fasting is like that of Moses and Elijah.

- Exo. 34:28, “*And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.*”
- 1 Kings 19:8, “*And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.*”

Luke reveals that temptations occurred over the period of forty days.

Luke 4:2, “*Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.*”

Mark mentions wild beasts.

Mark 1:13, “*And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.*”

Thus it was after forty days of temptation that we find Satan approaching Jesus for a “climax” involving three particular temptations.

The climax of the temptations...

The first temptation.

Matt. 4:3-4, “*And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*”

Satan appeals to the lust of the flesh.

Having fasted for forty days, Jesus was naturally hungry.

Challenging Jesus’ identity, Satan appeals to His fleshly hunger: “*command that these stones be made bread*”.

Jesus responds with scripture...

Quoting Deut. 8:3, “*...man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD...*”

There is more to life than just fulfilling physical desires; man is dependent upon the Word of God to truly live!

The second temptation.

Matt. 4:5-7, “*Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*”

Satan appeals to the pride of life.

Again challenging Jesus’ identity, Satan sets Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple, tells Him to “throw Yourself down”.

Quoting scriptures himself, using:

Psa. 91:11-12, “*For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*”

Jesus responds with Scripture.

Deut. 6:16, “*Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God,*”

While the passage Satan quoted is true, it would be an abuse of it to purposely test God.

The third temptation.

Matt. 4:8-10, *“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”*

Satan appeals to the lust of the eyes.

Taking Jesus to a high mountain and showing Him the kingdoms of the world.

Offering to give Jesus all the kingdoms if He will worship Satan.

Jesus responds with Scripture.

Deut. 6:13, *“Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, ...”*

Though offered a shortcut to receiving power over the nations, Jesus does not take the easy path.

- Rev. 2:26-27, *“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”*
- Rev. 3:21, *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”*

At the end of the temptations...

Angels came and ministered to Jesus.

Matt. 4:11, *“Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”*

Exactly what they did is not mentioned.

Perhaps they provided bodily nourishment.

This would not be the last time Satan would seek to tempt Jesus.

- Luke 4:13, *“And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”*
- Matt. 16:21-23, *“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me:*

for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

With forty days of overcoming temptation behind Him, especially the temptation of taking a short cut to His rule as the Messiah, Jesus was now prepared to begin His public ministry.

What observations might one make regarding “The Temptation Of Jesus”?

Here are a few...

Observations from the temptations of Jesus

We have the same adversary.

Jesus was tempted by the devil, and so are we.

1 Pet. 5:8-9, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”*

The devil now directs his attention towards the disciples of Christ.

Rev. 12:17, *“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

We should not treat him lightly, for the conflict is real!

Eph. 6:12, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

We have similar temptations.

- **The lust of the flesh — immorality, especially when young.**
- **The lust of the eyes — materialism, especially when middle-aged.**
- **The pride of life — pride and arrogance, especially when elderly.**

These we must overcome, if we wish to have the love of the Father.

1 John 2:15-16, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in*

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

We have the same tools to overcome.

Jesus appealed to the Word of God, and so can we.

Eph. 6:17, *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

Jesus had faith in the plan of God (victory through suffering), we need a similar shield of faith.

- Eph. 6:16, *“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”*
- Heb. 10:35-39, *“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”*

Jesus undoubtedly prayed, for He taught us to use prayer in overcoming temptation.

Matt. 26:41, *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

The Word of God, faith, and prayer — against these the devil has no chance!

We have similar blessings when we overcome.

Jesus was administered to by angels; angels will carry us home.

Luke 16:22, *“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;”*

Jesus received wonderful blessings when He ultimately overcame and ascended to heaven. He has promised similar blessings for us.

- Rev. 2:10, *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”*
- Rev. 2:26-27, *“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he*

shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”

- Rev. 3:21, *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”*

We can learn some important lessons.

Material sustenance alone cannot truly satisfy; we need the spiritual sustenance from God’s Word.

While we are to trust in the Lord, we should not foolishly tempt Him.

Scripture can easily be abused, as well as used.

2 Pet. 3:16, *“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”*

The way to glory is not quick and easy, but long and hard.

- Acts 14:22, *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”*
- Rom. 2:7, *“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”*

Conclusion

But perhaps the greatest lesson to glean from “The Temptation Of Jesus” is that we have a Savior who in all things was made like us...

That He might be our merciful and faithful High Priest.

Heb. 2:17, *“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”*

That having suffered, being tempted, He can aid us who are tempted.

Heb. 2:18, *“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”*

That He might be sympathetic, providing grace to help in time of need.

Heb. 4:15-16, *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Are you burdened with temptations?

Look to Jesus as your example in learning how to overcome temptation in your life!

Look to Jesus as your High Priest when you need to approach God in prayer and receive grace for those times when you succumbed to temptation!

As in all things, look to Jesus, as the writer to Hebrews exhorts us...

Heb. 12:2-3, *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”*

