



What is Behind Every Temptation?

The Temptation of Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11



Jesus's Temptation and Our Temptation

“For we do not
have a high priest
who cannot
sympathize with
our weaknesses,
but One who has
been tempted in
all things as we
are, yet without
sin”

(Heb. 4:15)

The Divine Purpose of Christ's Temptation

- “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt. 4:1).
- “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil...and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:1-2, 14).
- “The Spirit...drove [impelled] Him to go out into the wilderness and He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him” (Mk.1:12-13).

The Benefit of Christ's Temptation for Us

- Satan's strategies are revealed and exposed (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11; James 1:14-15)
- Reveals Jesus's compassion in the incarnation (Matt. 1:23; John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15)
- Shows us that Satan's temptations can be resisted (Rom. 6:14; Heb. 4:15; James 4:7)
- What do we learn about Satan in Christ's temptations?



What is at Stake in Every Temptation?

- Your future
- Future of someone you love
- Your trust and confidence in God



The First Temptation: “Will God Take Care of Me” (Matt. 4:1-4)

- Reasonableness: “What good is supernatural power if you cannot even feed yourself?”
- Intense Desire: Jesus was hungry and physical desire can weaken our resolve.
- Ease of solution: Changing stones to bread would not have been difficult for Christ (Satan is the master of the quick fix)
- Depth: This temptation was more than food – it questioned God’s provisions for His own Son and Jesus’s role as servant

Jesus's Reply:
"I will trust God
and His
promises"

- Reliance on Scripture (quotes Deut. 8:3)
- Trust in God's word (1500 yrs. old)
- Exercises courage through confidence in God and His truth

The Second Temptation:

“To presume on the Father’s will”
(Matt. 4:5-7)

- Subtle appeal to Christ’s strength
- He appeals to Jesus’s reliance on His Father by quoting Scripture
- Satan accurately references Psalm 91 but misapplies it
- He also tries to get Jesus to bargain with and manipulate God

Jesus's Reply:
Holds on to God's
word and exposes
the temptation

“It is written again”

- Jesus's answer exposes Satan's distortion of Psalm 91
- Satan was guilty of the error known as the “*Fallacy of the General Rule*”
- Vast difference between relying on God and testing or taunting Him
- Jesus shows us how to apply Scripture: “*Law of Harmony*”

Jesus's Reply:
Holds on to God's
word and exposes
the temptation

“You shall not put the Lord...
to the test”

- Applies Scripture in its context
- Ps. 95, cf. Exod. 17:1-7, addresses what he is tempting Jesus to do, not Ps. 91
- Ironically, Satan appeals to faith to bring about unbelief

Third Temptation: “You can have it all without the sacrifice” (Matt. 4:8-11)

- Satan was not merely offering physical prosperity – He was offering Jesus the people
- The devil did not understand all the details of Christ’s mission, but he knew there would have to be sacrifice
- Satan offers the temptation to sacrifice what is important for what is immediate

Jesus's Reply:

“Away with you
Satan...”

“Then Jesus said to him,
‘Away with you, Satan! For
it is written, ‘You shall
worship the Lord your
God, and Him only shall
you serve”

(Matt. 4:10; cf. Deut. 6:13)

What We Should Learn From Christ's Temptation

- Know the Scripture and wield the Sword of the Spirit (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Eph. 6:17)
- Watch for temptation at the high points of your life through pride (Matt. 3:16-17; then 4:1)
- Watch for temptation in times of vulnerability: when you are in the wilderness surrounded by threatening influences (Mark 1:13)
- Be alert (Matt. 6:13; 1 Pet. 5:6-9)





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