

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

# JESUS IS KING



## The Temptation of Jesus

**Text:** Matthew 4:1-11

### 1. Jesus is led to temptation. - Matthew 4:1-2

After identifying with sinners in His baptism, Jesus then identified with them again in severe temptation.

Jesus did not need to be tempted to help Him grow. Instead, He endured temptation both so that He could identify with us, and to demonstrate His own holy, sinless character.

See ***Hebrews 2:18***

See ***Hebrews 4:14***

See ***James 1:13***

But the Holy Spirit may lead us to a place where we will be tempted. This is not to prove something to God (who knows

all things), but to prove something to us and to the spiritual beings watching us.

Still yet, we should ask the Lord not to lead us into temptation.

**Tempted by the devil:** Temptation is a certainty for everyone. Yet Jesus' temptation was more severe. It was more severe because He was tempted directly by **the devil** himself, while we contend mainly with lesser demons.

It was also more severe because there is a sense in which temptation is "relieved" by giving in, and Jesus never did yield. Therefore He bore levels of temptation we will never know by experience.

Matthew points out both the barren desert (the Judean **wilderness** was and is exactly that), and Jesus' severe physical condition after such a long fast.

It is said that when hunger pains return after such a fast (**He was hungry**), it indicates the person is beginning to starve to death.

**Forty days and forty nights:** This is a familiar period of testing in the Bible, both in the days of Noah and for Israel in the wilderness. Jesus will succeed where Israel as a nation failed.

See ***Hebrews 5:8***

**2. The first temptation: the lust of the flesh. - Matthew 4:3-4**

Notice that Matthew writes **when the tempter came**. In our lives, it is not a question of *if* the tempter will come, but **when** he will come.

We will face temptation until we get to heaven.

**If You are the Son of God:** Satan did not question Jesus' deity; he challenged Him to prove it or demonstrate it through miraculous works.

**Command that these stones become bread:** This was a temptation to use God's gifts for selfish purposes. Satan suggested that Jesus use His miraculous powers to provide food for Himself.

This wasn't a temptation to miraculously create great riches or luxuries, only **bread**. The Bible has many accounts of miraculous provision, some at the hands of Jesus. Yet Jesus would not **command that these stones become bread**, especially at the prompting of Satan.

**But He answered:** Jesus didn't silently disagree with Satan, **He answered** him – and He answered him from the Word of God. When Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus shows that **every word that proceeds from the mouth of God** should be more precious to us than food itself.

What Satan suggested made sense – “Why starve yourself to death?” But what **is written** makes even more sense.

**It is written:** By relying on the power and truth of God's Word, Jesus was willing to fight this battle as a man; He

could have easily rebuked Satan into another galaxy, but resisted him in a way that we can imitate and identify with.

Jesus used *Scripture* to battle Satan's temptation, not some elaborate spiritual power inaccessible to us.

We effectively resist temptation in the same way Jesus did: by countering Satan's seductive lies by shining the light of God's truth upon them. If we are ignorant of God's truth, we are poorly armed in the fight against temptation.

### **3. The second temptation: the pride of life. - Matthew 4:5-7**

Satan tempted Jesus to "force" the Father into a supernatural event. Satan appealed to the desire within every man to sense approval from God and to have that approval publicly demonstrated.

**Set Him on the pinnacle of the temple:** The **pinnacle of the temple** arose some 200 feet from the floor of the Kidron Valley. A leap from there, and the appearance of the promised angelic protection, would be a remarkable spectacle.

**For it is written:** The devil can use this phrase also. We can know that the devil has memorized the Bible himself, and is an expert at quoting it out of its context to confuse and defeat those he tempts.

Here the devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12, and took it out of its context to say, "Go ahead, Jesus; if You do this the Bible

promises angels will rescue You, and it will be spectacular self-promotion.”

God had never promised, nor ever given, any protection of angels in sinful and forbidden ways.

Jesus knew how to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). Sadly, many are willing to believe anyone who quotes from the Bible today.

A preacher can pretty much say whatever he wants if he quotes a few proof-texts, and people will assume that he really speaks from the Bible. It is important for each Christian to know the Bible for themselves, and not to be deceived by someone who quotes the Bible but not accurately or with correct application.

**It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God:** Jesus replied with Scripture, but applied it correctly. He knew that attempting to force or manipulate God the Father into such a demonstration would **tempt** God, which the Scriptures strictly forbid.

This is a warning to us against demanding something spectacular from God to prove His love or concern for us.

He has already given the ultimate demonstration of His love for us at the cross (Romans 5:8), and He can do nothing more “spectacular” than that.

**4. The third temptation: the lust of the eyes. - Matthew 4:8-10**

Essentially, this vision invited Jesus to take a shortcut around the cross. Jesus came to win **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory** back from Satan's domain, and Satan offers them to Jesus, if He will only **fall down and worship** him.

It again may seem a small thing; Jesus could lay claim to **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory**, and do so without enduring the cross.

Quote: "The danger is greatest when the end is *good*."

All He would have to do is give Satan what he has been longing for ever since he fell: **worship** and recognition from God Himself.

This is a revealing insight into Satan's heart; worship and recognition are far more precious to him than the possession of **the kingdoms of the world and their glory**.

**I will give You:** Satan *has* authority over this world and its governments. The temptation could not have been real unless there is some real sense that Satan does "possess" **all the kingdoms of the world and their glory**.

Adam gave the devil this authority. God gave Adam the earth as a stewardship (Genesis 1:28-30), and Adam willingly turned it over to Satan.

Of course, ultimately, all things belong to God; but God allows Satan to function as *the god of this age* for a purpose. This is why the fallen world is in the mess it is.

See **2 Corinthians 4:4**

**Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written:** Jesus replied with Scripture again, and commanded the devil to leave. In the same way we can *resist the devil and he will flee from you* (James 4:7). It worked for Jesus (**Then the devil left Him**) and it will work for us.

The temptations of Jesus also remind us that *it is no sin to be tempted, as long as the temptation is resisted*. Even horrible temptations – Jesus was tempted to worship Satan – are not in themselves sin if they are resisted.

## **5. The devil leaves and angels minister. - Matthew 4:11**

Jesus won. He won because He recognized Satan's mode of attack: lies and deception.

Primarily, Satan is a deceiver, and for those who live in light of the cross, deception is his only tool, because demonic powers were disarmed at the cross of their "real" weapons and power

See **Colossians 2:15**

But deception is extremely effective at leading us into sin, and at causing us to live lives of fear and unbelief.

Jesus showed the only effective counter to deception: God's truth, not man's wisdom.

First, we must see temptation for what it is – a lie.

Then, we must combat temptation with the Word of God.

Then, we must always build ourselves up in the truth, and have it in our heart.

**Behold, angels came and ministered to Him:** God never forsakes those who endure through temptation. Even as **angels came and ministered to Jesus**, God will find a way to minister to us and meet our needs as we endure temptation.

**Conclusion:** I want to go back to something as we close. The Bible says in verse 1, “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit”

The life and ministry of Jesus is a power example of what it means to be Spirit led.

I have heard so many people lately talking about how to live the Christian life, avoid temptation, or stay on the right path.

They say the key to remaining in the will of God is to set high standards of righteousness in your life! Avoid anything that may possibly lead to temptation including, if necessary, other Christians!

I saw this tweet this week, *“If I veer left doctrinally from my dad’s position & my son veers left from my doctrinal position, and his son were to veer more liberal from his stance... Where will these next generations be when it comes to the doctrine of the Word of God?”*



If all Jesus gave us was a doctrinal position we are desperately without hope. But Jesus left us the Holy Spirit to guide and shape us in our journey through life from the Word of God!

A famous baptist reacher said this recently, "I wish I had taught my kids to be Spirit-filled more than I taught them to be separated. If they are Spirit-filled, they will be as separated as the Holy Ghost wants them to be."

Christians today, sadly, have marginalized the work of the Holy Spirit and in its place put up man-made rules and traditions that only will serve as whited sepulchers for the next generation.

Christian we have got to learn to be led by the Spirit of God from the Word of God to be like the Son of God.

If I only teach my children one thing I want it to be led of the Spirit. Only then will they truly be equipped to overcome temptation.



## GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why does it feel wrong to be tempted?
2. How does knowing Jesus was tempted help us?
3. What is the significance of Jesus' hunger after his fast of 40 days and 40 nights?

4. Explain how Jesus was being tempted in each of the three temptations?
5. How did Satan use the Word of God deceitfully?
6. Why is understanding the context of a passage and paying attention to each word so important?
7. Why is it so vital to be led by the Spirit?
8. Can you relate with this social media post, "I wish I had taught my kids to be Spirit-filled more than I taught them to be separated. If they are Spirit-filled, they will be as separated as the Holy Ghost wants them to be."?
9. How are we led by the Spirit?"