

**Class Project**

**A presentation on Matthew 4:1-11**

**A paper prepared for**

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**BLS 502, Prophets and Gospels**

**By:**

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# **A Presentation on Matthew 4:1-11**

## **The Temptation(s) of Jesus**

Outline of Biblical Text, Matthew 4:1-11:

1. Introduction – Jesus is lead by the Spirit (4:1)
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  - b. To be tempted by the devil (4:1)
  - c. For 40 days and nights (4:2)
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IF you will bow down and worship me.
    - ii. Jesus Responds (4:10)
      1. Says “You are to worship the Lord your God Only” (4:10)
      2. Reference Deut 6:13, 10:20 or Ex 20:3-5
3. Conclusion
  - a. Satan Leaves (4:11)
  - b. Angels come and minister to Jesus (4:11)

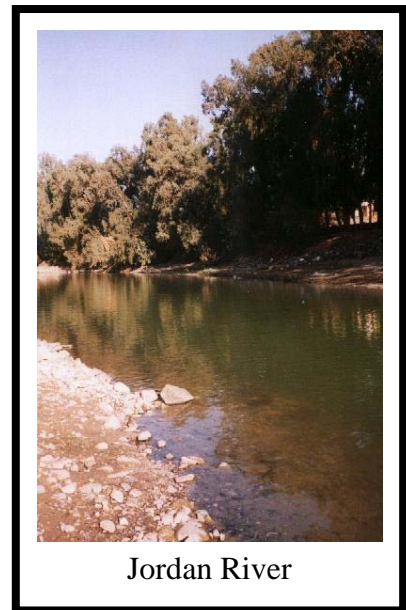
## **A Presentation on Matthew 4:1-11**

### **The Temptation(s) of Jesus**

#### Introduction

Matthew is writing his gospel to the Jews to show them that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the King, the Promised One. He starts the book with the genealogy of Jesus, and then introduces John the Baptizer. He is the “Elijah” promised before hand and is in the wilderness by the river Jordan preaching to the people, “REPENT, the Kingdom is at hand”. People are listening, responding to John’s message, and being baptized unto righteousness.

Then, Jesus arrives at the Jordan and asks John to be baptize Him<sup>1</sup>. John, immediately declines the request, and replies that he has need to be baptized by Jesus<sup>2</sup>. John’s baptism was for repentance unto righteousness and he knew that Jesus did not need to repent because Jesus was the righteous one of God, the Lamb of God. Jesus however tells John that He must be baptized to fulfill all righteousness<sup>3</sup>. Jesus was to be associated with man, and He needed to be baptized to be identified with man, with sinful mankind. John accepted Jesus’ request, and proceeded to baptize Jesus. John immersed Jesus and as He was being brought out of the water the Heavens opened up and the Spirit of God came down in the form of a dove, landed on Jesus, and a voice from heaven was heard saying, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”<sup>4</sup>. All three parts of the Trinity were present at this, the coronation of Jesus. God the Father showing pleasure with His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit who is indwelling Jesus and giving Him the power to do the Fathers will.



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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 3:13

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 3:14

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 3:15

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 3:16-17

Jesus has now been identified as the King, the righteous one. He has been crowned but has yet to be proven, to be shown to be pure. For this, Jesus will need to leave the Jordan, and being led by the Spirit he heads to the wilderness<sup>5</sup>. Tradition holds that Jesus went to the Judean wilderness. This is a region that is 35 miles North to South and about 15 miles East to West that is along the west bank of the Dead Sea and West of Jericho. The area is arid, with desert regions, contorted limestone strata and mountains.

Jesus went led by the Spirit to be tempted, NOT to make him fail, or to sin, but to prove that He is the righteous one and worthy to be the King. The Greek word used for tempt is “pierazo”, which means to make a proof of, and when used of God it is always in the positive sense. For example, a trestle designer having completed a high bridge, may drive out on it with several locomotives to test the bridge – NOT to break the bridge but to prove beyond a doubt that the bridge is secure. That is why the Spirit lead Jesus to meet the Devil.

Throughout this text, three Names are used for the Devil. The first, “Devil<sup>6</sup>”, which comes from “diabolos” meaning slanderer, false accuser, Satan.. The second name is “Tempter<sup>7</sup>” from “pierazo” which as stated above means to make a proof of, but when used of Satan or the Devil is always used in the negative meaning “to tempt to sin”. The third name used is “Satan<sup>8</sup>” from “satanas” meaning an opponent, specifically the arch enemy of good. The Devil is clearly here to do the tempting with the intent to try and make Jesus sin, to do something that is not in the Father’s will.

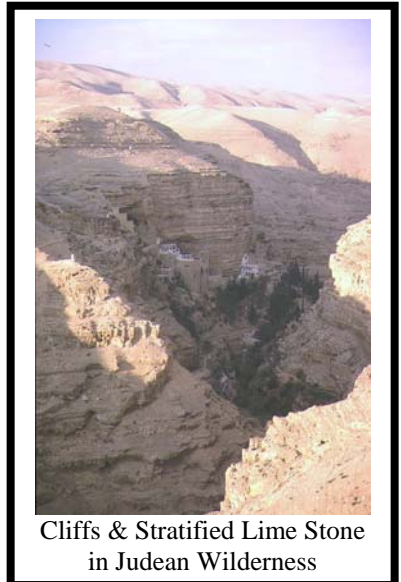
Mark 1:12<sup>9</sup> tells us that the Spirit impelled Jesus to go immediately to the wilderness to be tempted. Even though it was part of God’s plan to prove Jesus’ righteousness, Satan was to be used as the instrument to do it.



Dead Sea & Judean Wilderness



Judean Willderness - Rocks



Cliffs & Stratified Lime Stone in Judean Wilderness

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 4:1

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 4:1,5,8

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 4:3

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 4:10

<sup>9</sup> **Mark 1:12 (NASB)** <sup>12</sup>Immediately the Spirit impelled\* Him *to go* out into the wilderness.

Christ was baptized unto righteousness, His kingdom is based on His righteousness, and the coming testing is to verify His righteousness.

### Three Temptations, Satan Came (4:3)

Matthew and Luke both recorded three specific temptations of Jesus by Satan. They agreed on the first temptation, but Matthew and Luke have the second and third swapped. After reviewing this, I believe that both accounts are accurate with the Matthew account being in the chronological order and the Luke account being in the topical order. The reasons for this belief are several.

Ancient historians were concerned more about understanding the story than they were about rigid chronology. Matthew and Luke were writing to two very different audiences. Matthew was writing to the JEWS. They were aware of and concerned about the Kingdom and Messiah. To have Christ offered the Kingdoms as a “gift” from Satan would be viewed as the ultimate temptation by the Jews. Luke however was not writing to Jews. He was writing to Theophilus and his goal was to show that Jesus was the “Son of Man” and that through Him, salvation is attainable. Reordering the second two temptations makes the concluding temptation for Jesus be to proving His Deity and that better fits Luke’s arguments. Therefore topically, there is some justification for the two orderings being different.

Looking at the Greek text however does give us good additional information about the chronology of the three temptations. Matthew uses the Greek temporals for “then<sup>10</sup>” and “again<sup>11</sup>” to connect the three temptations. This defines that the first happened, then the second happened, and again he was tempted for the third time. Luke however does not use temporals but rather uses the simple connector “and<sup>12</sup>”. This would give us the three temptations, but not include any chronological information. Thus, I believe that the Matthew text is the chronologically ordered list of temptations and Luke’s ordering of the temptations deviated from Matthew’s account for topical understanding..

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 4:5

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 4:8

<sup>12</sup> Luke 4:5,9

## The First Temptation (4:3-4)

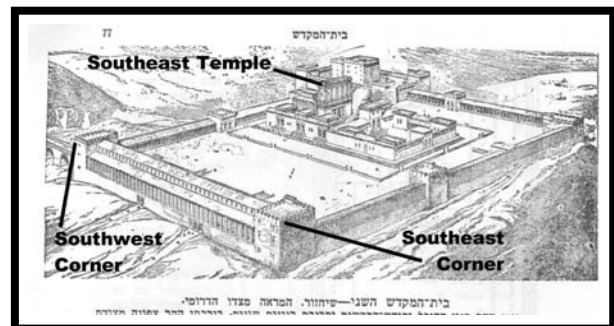
Satan came and met Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus had been there 40 days at this time and had been fasting the entire time. Jesus was hungry and He hurt. Satan looked up and said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these Stones become bread<sup>13</sup>” The Greek text includes a first class conditional for the “if”, so really Satan is saying, “Since you are the Son of God, you have powers, come on now go ahead and solve your hunger, just change a few of these rocks into bread – we both know you can do it” .Satan wanted Jesus to use His powers as God to solve His hunger problem to put aside His humanity and to live as God, and not be like man living in obedience and conformance to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus responds, not from His own wisdom but from Deuteronomy 8:3<sup>14</sup>. Like Jesus the Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness, they were there for 40 years and had to learn a dependence on God for their food. They had to learn to wait for the daily manna from heaven that God provided. Jesus responds to Satan, “Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God<sup>15</sup>”. Jesus chose not to use His divine capabilities that he had set aside as a part of His incarnation and wholly waited on God the Father to solve His needs. He proved to every age that human needs depend not upon bread but upon God’s unfailing Word of Promise. Jesus refused to act independently of the Spirit, even in His present discomfort.

## The Second Temptation (4:5-7)

Satan then took Jesus to Jerusalem and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple. We cannot be certain but the three spots that are traditionally thought to be this point include the SE corner of the Temple, and either the SE or the SW corner of the Temple Wall.

Recent archaeological finds have shown the SW corner to

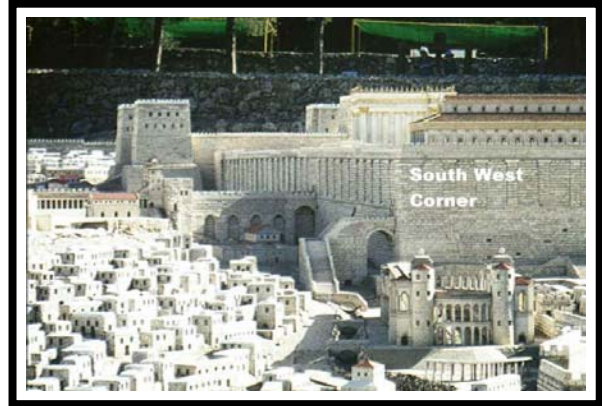


<sup>13</sup> Matthew 4:3

<sup>14</sup> **Deuteronomy 8:3 (NASB)** <sup>34</sup>“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 4:4

be where the “bugle” blew from and some propose that this would be a prime location for Satan to have taken Jesus but this is only conjecture.



Satan again introduces his challenge with a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional., “If you are the Son of God throw yourself down<sup>16</sup>”. Satan then quotes Psalm 91:11-12<sup>17</sup> which says, “He will command His angels concerning You. On their hands they will bear You up so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone”. In reality, Satan misquoted the scripture by leaving out the middle phrase that says, “To guard You in all Your ways”. Satan is saying OK Jesus, you didn’t change the loaves into bread, but the scripture says that the angels will catch you, go ahead and do it.

Jesus again responds with scripture quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16<sup>18</sup>, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test”. Israel was told by Moses not to test the Lord their God like they did at Massah by questioning whether God was still with them or not. Jesus did not need to be caught by the angels to know he was in the Fathers care, and doing His Fathers will. If Jesus would have jumped, he would have been out of the Fathers plan, so we do not know whether the angels would have caught Him. Jesus does not address this issue nor the misquote with Satan. Jesus’ focus was in His faith and trust of God, even in times of stress or doubt. Jesus would need this trust later as he is arrested, deserted by all, unjustly accused, illegally prosecuted, sentenced to die, scourged, crucified and forsaken by God as foretold in Psalm 22:1<sup>19</sup>

## The Third Temptation (4:8-10)

Satan now takes Jesus to the top of a high mountain and shows him the glories of the world and all their kingdoms. Luke adds that it was in a moment of time<sup>20</sup>. Whether Jesus literally saw the world with it’s kingdom and all their glories or Satan “flashed” it through Jesus’ mind is not certain but Satan communicated - Look at all

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 4:6

<sup>17</sup> **Psalm 91:11-12 (NASB)** <sup>11</sup>For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways.

<sup>12</sup>They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.

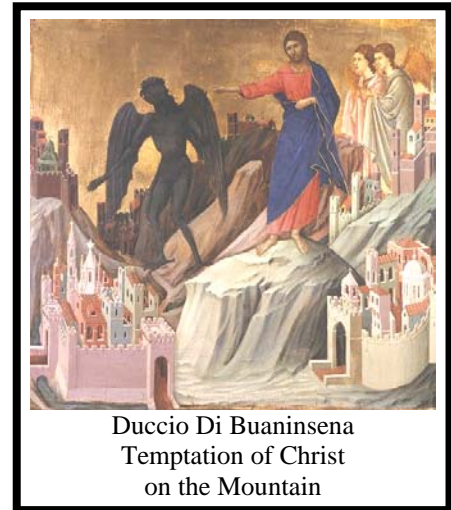
<sup>18</sup> **Deuteronomy 6:16 (NASB)** <sup>16</sup>“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested *Him* at Massah.

<sup>19</sup> **Psalm 22:1 (NASB)** <sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning

<sup>20</sup> **Luke 4:5 (NASB)** <sup>5</sup>And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time

these kingdoms and the wonders of them. He continued, “All these I will give you if you fall down and worship me<sup>21</sup>.”

Satan is known as the ruler of the world<sup>22</sup>, the god of this world<sup>23</sup>, and him that has power of death<sup>24</sup>. Luke adds, “It (the world) has been handed over to him (Satan) and he can give it to who he pleases<sup>25</sup>”. Satan offered supremacy commensurate with his own. Jesus could have the throne of the world under Satan, “IF he would fall down and worship him”. Satan changes the “IF” here, and uses the 3<sup>rd</sup> class conditional meaning that the outcome was uncertain – at least to Satan.



Note, in the prior temptations Satan is trying to get Jesus to slip on a little bit of pride, get Jesus to go out on His own just a little. Now Satan is unblushingly declaring his rivalry with God, and asking Jesus to bow down to him and pay homage as a man with a bribe that included the throne to all the kingdoms of this world. Jesus had come to occupy the throne and here Satan was offering to give it to Him.

Jesus came to fulfill the kingdom but he had to do it God’s way. Again he turned to Deuteronomy<sup>26</sup> and said, “You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only<sup>27</sup>”. Moses in this section of Deuteronomy is exhorting the people when times are good, don’t forget, that our God is a jealous God and if you depart to other gods, His anger would be kindled. Jesus kept His focus on God, and on God alone accomplishing the proof of His righteousness and confirmed His coronation as King.

## Conclusion

Israel was tested by God for 40 years in the wilderness and failed. Jesus was tested 40 days in the wilderness and succeeded. He was tempted every way as we are yet He did not sin<sup>28</sup>. Jesus defeated Satan not by His divine office but as a man through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew 4:9

<sup>22</sup> John 12:31

<sup>23</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4

<sup>24</sup> Hebrews 2:14

<sup>25</sup> Luke 4:6

<sup>26</sup> **Deuteronomy 6:13 (NASB)** <sup>13</sup>“You shall <sup>o</sup>fear *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 4:10

<sup>28</sup> **Hebrews 4:15 (NASB)** <sup>15</sup>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



Satan left Jesus, but Luke adds that he was leaving for a more appropriate time<sup>29</sup>. Now the angels came and ministered to Jesus: bringing food and meeting His physical needs. Just think how great Jesus' joy must have been receiving the ministry of the angels on behalf of His father. Elijah received sustenance before a 40 day journey. Jesus received sustenance after His 40 days of testing.

Satan tempted Christ just as he tempts all mankind. Consider our distant relative Eve<sup>30</sup>. Satan told her the fruit was good for food; Satan told her she would not die; Satan told her she would be wise like God. This sounds just like the temptation of Jesus: Satan told Christ to make bread from rocks; Satan told Christ the Angels will catch Him (He will not die); Satan told Christ he will reign in glory (be wise like God). In both of these cases, Satan, the father of lies had lied, misrepresented God's Word and questioned God's motives. Both Eve and Jesus were sinless before their encounter with Satan, but Eve took her eyes off of God and doubted His purpose for her in life and she sinned. Jesus kept His eyes on God, and used God's Word and the Power of the Holy Spirit to defeat Satan.

There are at least two reasons Matthew may have had for including the temptations of Jesus in his gospel. First, it demonstrated His divine kingship and power over Satan confirming that Jesus was indeed the righteous King worthy to sit on the throne as the Messiah. Secondly, it illustrated the pattern Jesus used for victory over sin. When we face temptation as Christ did, we can be victorious over Satan's attempt to usurp the Lord's rightful place in our life.

Satan usually attacks at times of weakness and distraction. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told the disciples to, "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation"<sup>31</sup>. When we are weakest, and when we are distracted we need especially focus our attention on watching and praying. John tells us, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world"<sup>32</sup>. These are the world's distractions that Satan so often attacks us with. To overcome them we need to know God's Word accurately, we need to trust His judgment completely and we must obey knowing God's choices are both right and best.

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<sup>29</sup> **Luke 4:13 (NASB)** <sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time

<sup>30</sup> Genesis 3:1-6

<sup>31</sup> **Matthew 26:41 (NASB)** <sup>41</sup>"**Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**"

<sup>32</sup> 1 John 2:15