

# The Gospel of Matthew

Title: The Temptation

Text: Matthew 4:1-11 - Part Two

**INTRODUCTION:** Review from last week vs. 1-4. Key point is you must spend time in the word of God, communing with Him, praying, and saturating yourself with the Scriptures to be able to defend and honor God when test and temptations come. The devil tempts with evil to do evil and sin against God, but God tests not with evil. Cf. Genesis 22:1

**POINT 1 - TESTING GOD.** After having failed to get the Son to rebel against His Father's will, he attempted to get the Son to put God's love and power to a test. The first temptation, a lack of food already existed, now in the second a need was created.

**1A** - Throw yourself off this roof and God will take care of you. Prove to all that you are the Messiah and God is truly the Father. The devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12. False religions, cults and bad theology often begins with a twist of truth.

John MacArthur says *"With the subtle and clever twist, the tempter thought he had backed Jesus into a corner. If Jesus lived by the Word of God, then He would be confronted by something from the Word of God. If you claim to be the Son of God and live by God's Word, then demonstrate your Sonship and prove the truth of God's Word by putting Him to the test, a scriptural test? If you won't use your divine power, let God use His. Give your Father a chance to fulfill what was quoted to you."*

**1B** - For Jesus to have followed the devil's temptation, it would have been a sign to many Jews this was the Son of God, but it would have been disobedient to God. Sensationalism has always appealed to the flesh, and many people are willing to believe anything as long as it's claims are accompanied by fantastic happenings. Jesus warned of such false teachers in Matthew 24:24 **"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."**

- Such dramatic signs, even when they are from God, don't produce faith, but strengthen the faith of those who already believe
- Many miracles done by God for Israel, yet many didn't believe
- Jesus said of those looking for a sign, **"An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet"** (Matthew 12:39)
- Jesus was the greatest sign given to mankind, yet He was opposed, Isaiah 53:3 **"He was despised and forsaken of men"**

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**1C** - Those who acclaimed Jesus by only His miracles later turned against Him. The crowd astounded by Jesus' miracles wanted to make Him king, cf. John 6:14-15, 12:13-18; 37. Demanding sensational proof is not evidence of faith, but doubt. Many look for the sign, the big miracle, the dramatic proof. There are two primary reasons we don't need a spectacle or sensationalism to know God is God and none other.

- People are never satisfied, they want one ore miracle, one more show. To have maintained influence over those who want miracles and signs, you have to have greater and greater sensations. This years miracle is next years bore. The carnal heart is never satisfied, and following this only means your a lover of sensations rather than a lover of God.
- No matter how noble and important we may think our reasons are, to test God is to doubt God. And to doubt God and not trust in Him is sin. To live as you wish and prove God's grace is to presume upon His grace. To live carelessly, without respect or concern is to assume or test God. A recent example has been those who handle snakes saying God will heal them if they are bit. Those who willingly put themselves in danger and temptation often end up blaming God when harm comes their way. Adam's response to God was first to blame Him for giving him "that woman."
- Our need is not to prove God's faithfulness, but to demonstrate our own. Trust Him to supply your needs, to care and help you according to His will.
- There are risks we take to obey His will. Becoming a missionary in a land where the gospel is hostile.

**POINT 2 - WORSHIPPING SATAN.** By some supernatural way, the devil showed Jesus the glory of Egypt, the world, the splendor of Rome, the great city of Athens and the wonders of Jerusalem. It could have been something like this "*why wait for all these, just get them now.*" Satan was offering Jesus the world on his own corrupt terms. I am sure Psalms 2:8 was in the devil's mind "*I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.*" That's God's way, satan tried the wrong, evil way.

John MacArthur quotes, "*Satan always comes at us this way. He suggests that the world of business, the world of politics, the world of fame, or the world of whatever our heart desires can be ours....if only.*" Satan promised Eve she would not die, as God said, but she would become a god herself. He tempts us in the same way:

- Why set your standards so high?
- What's the use?

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- You can get what you want by cutting a corner here and there, why wait for the heavenly reward when you can get it now?

When we set our hearts on prestige, power, self will, popularity, we are doing exactly as satan wants us to do, Matthew 6:33 "**Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.**" Abraham sought for himself what God had promised with Sarah, but he did so with Hagar, and tragedy resulted. Pastors and leaders who preach and teach crowd pleasing things, become popular, but they are false shepherds.

- Satan is a liar and often says "God wants you to prosper doesn't He"?
- Everyone else is doing that, follow the crowd, be the one who is in the know

God is the only one to be worshipped. He is the only one to be served. All others are idols and failures. Isaiah 45:21 "**Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.**"

**POINT 3 - THE TRIUMPH.** The devil left Him at His command. He had no choice. Victory over the temptations of the devil bring glory to God and comfort to us in a helpful, faithful, sovereign God. Satan tempts us in the same way he did Jesus:

- He wants us to distrust God's providential care and solve our own problems our way
- He wants us to presume (tempt) God to put ourselves in danger
- He wants us to appeal to our selfish ambitions and use our own schemes to satisfy ourselves, 1 John 2:16 "**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.**"

When temptations come don't look at the temptation, look to God. Keep your eyes on His example and what He did. Let's close with some verses, cf. Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 1:13-15, Hebrews 12:1-2