

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

Matthew 3:13-4:11

I. Introductory statement:

On December 2, 1804, a short and balding man from Corsica stood before Pope Pius VII in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, France... his name was Napoleon Bonaparte, and that day was to be the day of his coronation as Emperor over all of France; Napoleon had reached this point by brilliance as a military commander, and incredible skill at manipulating his political enemies into silence or self-destruction... He was the pinnacle of the French Revolution, a triumph of the will and intelligence of man. Napoleon wore shimmering and splendorous robes as the moment arrived for his coronation. But at that supreme moment, he arrogantly waved off the Pope, grabbed the crown and placed it triumphantly on his own head! Thus went the coronation ceremony of the epitome of a human, worldly king—Napoleon Bonaparte.

On a muddy riverbank in Palestine, an unknown man stood in front of John the Baptist... surrounded by crowds of repentant sinners, he looked down at John and asked to be baptized. While there was nothing unusual about this, since thousands of sinners were being baptized by John, what was unusual was John's shock at the request... what the crowd failed to recognize was that they were about to witness a coronation far more glorious than that of any earthly king... a coronation fitting for the Kingdom this King would rule; a coronation appropriate for the humble Lamb of God whose death would make it possible for sinners like you and me to enter the Kingdom of Heaven—today, in considering Jesus' baptism and temptation, we are seeing more of the character of our heavenly King than we've ever seen before

John 8:50 Jesus said **"I am not seeking glory for myself..."**

He also added "but there is One who seeks it and He is the judge."

II. The Baptism of Jesus: The Coronation of the King

A. The Baptism of the Son B. The Anointing of the Spirit C. The Declaration of the Father

A. The Baptism of the Son

vs. 1 "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John..."

1. Jesus makes his first public appearance at John's baptism

a. David was privately anointed, but Jesus would be publicly presented

b. remember that thousands of people were going to see John every day

2. Everything Jesus did, everything Jesus said... everything was for a purpose, though the purpose was not always clear even to the most pious of His followers

vs. 14 "But John tried to deter him saying, 'I need to be baptized by you and do you come to me?'"

4. Remember that John's baptism was a baptism of water for repentance from sins
- John cannot accept that Jesus needs his baptism
 - THUS John openly testifies to Jesus' sinlessness
 - he refused to baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees because they saw no need for their own repentance
 - here, he hesitated to baptize Jesus because he saw no need for Jesus' repentance
5. NOTE what this shows us about John
- humility: "I am a sinner and I need YOU to baptize me!!"... John sees his own need for repentance!
 - spiritual perception: sinless lamb of God before Jesus had said or done anything
 - YET ignorance: not totally with the program... the Greek verb used here suggests that John repeatedly tried to prevent this by Jesus... a sustained effort by John; some things Jesus does surprise him... later, he will openly question whether Jesus is the messiah or not!
6. Jesus persuaded John forcefully:

vs. 15 "Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; we must fulfill all righteousness.'"

- this king loves righteousness, and always does what is right
- for this very reason God loves Him perfectly

Psalm 45:6-7 "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and a scepter of righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

- BUT what does Jesus mean "We must fulfill all righteousness?" Simply that it is right for Him to be baptized as though he were a common sinner

Isaiah 53:12 "...he was numbered with the transgressors..."

- this is the only way that righteousness comes to us... for we are wicked and unrighteous...

2 Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

- the beautiful humility of Jesus our King... perfectly righteous in Himself, He becomes as though He were a sinner so that we could become perfectly righteous like Him

7. Jesus' baptism a symbol of his death

Luke 12:50 "I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!"

- a. baptism is a total immersion... this is the clear sense of the Greek word
 - b. for Jesus to be totally immersed under the water is a symbol of His death for sin
8. Baptism now commanded for all true disciples of Jesus Christ
- a. later Jesus commanded His disciples to go throughout the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
 - b. Paul told us in Romans 6 that Christian baptism represents death to our old way of life and rebirth into Christ's new life... it is total identification with Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the grave
 - c. Jesus gave EXAMPLE... not too proud; LATER COMMANDED OF US ALL
 - d. first major step of Christian discipleship and obedience when someone becomes born again

SUMMING UP: Righteousness Identification Symbolism Modelling

vs. 15 "Then John consented."

B. The Anointing of the Spirit

vs. 16 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him."

1. Each of the Kings of Israel and Judah were anointed in a ceremony that showed their right to rule
2. the anointing was representative of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the ruler

[Samuel when he anointed Saul as King] *1 Samuel 10:6 "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power... and you will be changed into a different person..."*

[The anointing of David] *1 Samuel 16:13 "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power."*

3. the word "Christ" or "Messiah" means "anointed one", specifically referring to His right to rule over Israel and the coming of the Holy Spirit to equip Him to rule

Isaiah 11:1-3 "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse: from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him--the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord-- and he will delight in the fear of the Lord."

Isaiah 61:1,2 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor." [Jesus preached from this prophecy in Nazareth to begin his preaching ministry... Luke 4:18-19]

5. whereas the oil poured upon David's head was just symbolic, the Holy Spirit actually descended onto Jesus by means of the dove
6. BUT FIRST... HEAVEN WAS OPENED...
 - a. occasionally, God allows the veil to be torn to allow a glimpse of heaven to us earthly people
 - b. "Lord, open his eyes" prayed Elisha about his servant
 - c. Stephen saw heaven opened right before he was stoned to death
 - d. HERE the Holy Spirit himself comes down as a dove from the opened skies

Isaiah 64:1 "Oh that you would rend the skies and come down!!!"

AT JESUS' BAPTISM, THE SPIRIT DID PRECISELY THAT!!

7. WHY A DOVE???
- a. symbol of **lowliness** in that a dove was the sacrifice offered by poor people
 - b. symbol of **peace** because it was a dove that came to Noah on the ark
 - c. symbol of **gentleness**... and what a perfect one, too.. for John the Baptist in John 1 called Jesus the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world..."
BOTH LAMB AND DOVE SYMBOLS OF MEEKNESS and gentleness
 - d. IN ANY CASE, THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF DESCENDED ON JESUS TO ANNOINT HIM KING
 - e. Jesus was saturated in the Spirit in EVERYTHING HE DID
 - f. he also came to saturate us in the Spirit as well, just as John had said

vs. 11 "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit..."

C. The Proclamation of the Father

vs. 17 "And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

1. God speaks audibly, here... proclaiming to all the bystanders that Jesus is His Beloved Son...A CLEAR STATEMENT OF THE **IDENTITY** OF JESUS CHRIST!!
2. Clear demonstration also of God's incredible love for and pleasure in His Son...
 - a. the Father & the Son ... intimate fellowship from eternity past
 - b. Jesus is absolutely totally pleasing to the Father... FATHER HAS STARED AT THE SON
 - c. words cannot describe the depth of pleasure that the Son brings the Father...

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being..."

3. there is incredible joy in the Father's statement "THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE; WITH HIM I AM WELL PLEASED."
4. that joy is the foundation of our salvation... WE ARE UNITED WITH CHRIST

SUMMARY: Trinity energetically active in every stage of our salvation... so open display at the beginning of Jesus' ministry; we also see Jesus as our IMMANUEL God with us in our sin

TRANSITION: mountaintop experience... the Holy Spirit immediately drives the Son on to do that difficult work

III. The Temptation of Jesus

4:1 "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil."

A. The Spirit's Role

1. MARK'S GOSPEL says Spirit drove the Son... BUT WHY??
 - a. specifically for the purpose of being tempted by Satan himself
 - b. WHY? AGAIN... "God with us..." we suffer temptation, Jesus also had to undergo it as well

Hebrews 2:17-18 "For this reason he has to be made like his brothers in every way, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God... because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

Hebrews 4:15-16 "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin."

Jesus the MOST TEMPTED MAN IN HISTORY!!! We all give in... He never did!

- c. so the Holy Spirit DROVE Jesus to fulfill this portion of His salvation mission

2. Luke's bookends

BUT note the marvelous bookends in Luke's account

4:1 "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert where for forty days he was tempted by the devil."

4:14 "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit..."

WHEN YOU GO THROUGH TEMPTATION, DO YOU ENTER FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND LEAVE FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?? If so, you have successfully defeated Satan that time

B. What is temptation? TEMPTATION OR TESTING??

1. common experience

1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man."

2. pulling to evil

James 1:13-14 "When tempted, no one should say 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desires he is dragged away and enticed."

Illus.: LIKE MAGNETIC FORCE ATTRACTING US

3. exhibition of character

Genesis 22:1-2 "Some time later, God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, and sacrifice him on a mountain...'"

4. Jesus' time in the desert revealed His purity... fit to be our eternal King

C. The Meekness of the Son vs. The Viciousness of the Devil

1. submitting to the leadership of the Spirit

vs. 2 "After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry."

- a. fasting purifies the soul & concentrates it on the things of God
- b. simply being in the desert is a fast of sorts... Jesus went past that

NOTE: Not like Ramadan!!

- c. NOTE Matthew's simple statement: "He was hungry..." NO EMBELLISHMENT

2. The Devil's viciousness...LIKE A ROARING LION

1. vicious timing... when Jesus was hungriest and weakest
2. vicious intent.. to destroy Jesus' mission before it started
3. vicious intelligence... clever temptations unlike any you've experienced

2 Cor. 2:11 & Ephesians 6:11 both mention the devil's "schemes"

D. The Temptations: Unique Yet Familiar

1. Temptation #1: Stones Into Bread (vs. 3-4)
2. Temptation #2: Falling from the Temple (vs. 5-7)
3. Temptation #3: Worship the Devil (vs. 8-10)
1. Temptation #1: Stones Into Bread (vs. 3-4)

1) "Serve your stomach and rule God's power" (4:3-4)

vs. 3-4 "The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'"

- a. simple but powerful... use your supernatural power to meet your own needs
- b. essence of Satan's kingdom is serve yourself

c. essence of Kingdom of Heaven is serve God and others

SAME AS LATER:

Matt. 27:40 “Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God.”

This struck at the heart of Jesus’ mission of self-sacrifice

Satan constantly tries to get us to focus on meeting our own needs... to live for our appetites as though this world is all that matters

Philippians 3:18-19 “their god is their stomach Their mind is on earthly things.”

THUS this temptation is simply restated... “Serve your stomach and rule God’s power.” Use the power of God to meet your temporary earthly desires

d. Jesus’ answer is powerful and effective, just like the Word of God itself

vs. 4 “Jesus answered, ‘It is written, “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

ABSOLUTELY POWERFUL AND ELEGANT!!! Our true life is found in moment by moment obedience to God

Greek says “every word that is coming out from the mouth of God.” Jesus’ view of Scripture clearly emerges...

John 4:34 “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.”

We eat for nourishment, for fellowship, and for pleasure... God’s will expressed in God’s written word gives me everything I need... I will NOT use God’s power to serve my stomach, Satan!

2. Temptation #2: Falling from the Temple (vs. 5-7)

2) “Serve sensationalism and rule God’s plan” (4:5-7)

vs. 5-6 “Again the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you and they will lift you up in your hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.””

a. “highest point of the temple” a parapet on Herod’s temple which overlooked the Kidron Valley... a drop of over 450 feet according to Josephus

b. Satan quotes Scripture too!! BUT NOT WELL!

2) “Serve sensationalism and rule God’s plan”

c. sensationalism more effective than the quiet plan of God

d. constant theme in John’s gospel... do something dramatic!!

e. Satan’s key: force God’s hand... make Him march to your tune

f. Jesus' quiet response puts Satan in His place and God in His

vs. 7 “It is also written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Israelites were testing God to keep doing miracles or they wouldn't believe in Him anymore... you can't dictate terms to God... follow His leadership; don't force His hand

3. Temptation #3: Worship the Devil (vs. 8-10)

vs. 8-10 “Again the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan, for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

3) “Serve the devil and rule the world”

- a. Satan's most basic desire... to be worshipped as God
- b. Satan's basic tactic... offer worldly benefits
- c. he thinks to tempt Jesus with a lust for power when Jesus sees all the kingdoms of the world... NO CROSS JUST GLORY!!
- d. how many kings, how many emperors, how many premiers, how many dictators, how many CEO's of multi-national conglomerates, how many presidents have sold their souls to the devil to win earthly prizes??

Matthew 16:16 “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world and yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”

- e. the devil's basic way... “The ends justify the means...” Compromise, serve the devil, and then you'll be in position to do lots of good!”

Something deep with Jesus' being erupted with revulsion!! “ABSOLUTELY NOT!! For it is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only!” AWAY FROM ME SATAN!!

All these temptations have one thing in common... immediate gratification of selfish ends for temporal gain with no regard to the will of God

1 John 2:15-18 “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life, come not from the Father but from the world. THE WORLD AND ITS DESIRES PASS AWAY, BUT THE MAN WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD LIVES FOREVER.

E. The Devil Always Leaves! (4: 11)

vs. 11 "Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."

Total victory by Jesus! The devil must leave when someone resists him... how much more when the Son of God commands him to be gone!

Angels came from the Father to care for the needs of the Son... Jesus was patient and waited for God to meet His needs

NOTE: everything Satan tempted or offered, Jesus has gotten already or will someday get!

So, Satan flees away, but Luke 4:13 says he left Jesus until a more opportune time... HE'LL BE BACK! The devil is nothing if not persistent!!

"...he knows his time is short." Revelation 12:12

IV. Applications

A. Baptism: humility and holiness

Jesus demonstrates total humility in His baptism... and willingness to be identified with us sinners... but what about you? Have you been baptized yet like Jesus was, or are you too proud to admit you're a sinner in need of God's grace? And if you have been baptized, are you living up to your baptismal vows?

Romans 6:3-4 [If you're baptized into Christ you should be dead to sin & walk everyday in holiness!!]

B. Temptation: Jesus' transferable strategy

1. Begin filled with the Spirit
2. Recognize the tempter & his temptations

"Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, boastful pride of life..."

3. Determine to resist
4. Use the Word of God!!!! Saturated world view, immediate assistance

Ephesians 6:17 "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Psalms 119:11 "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

5. Stand firm until Satan flees

James 4:7 "Resist the devil and he will flee from you!"

6. End filled with the Spirit

C. The devastating power of sin; the incredible joy of obedience

1. Everything Satan offered was temporary
2. Jesus inherited it all anyway!!
3. Live up to your baptism and your inheritance