

The Temptation of Jesus
Mark 1:12ff

Intro: Going from spiritual 'high' to a valley
Today we see the same thing happens to Jesus.
A voice from heaven then a voice from hell
Comfort, then stress, conflict
Strength then weakness
Water then desert

A frequent question that comes up in times of difficulty and trial is, "Does God have anything to do with this?" If we take the example of Jesus as a guide, then we would say, "Yes."
Let's see why we could say that...

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

12 Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

Matt 4

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.' "

5 Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and *said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command His angels concerning You';

and

'On their hands they will bear You up,

So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'

7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.' " 11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Did God have anything to do with this trial and temptation? YES. The SPIRIT led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After the great affirmation of v. 11 Jesus is sent into the wilderness.

NOTE: God DID NOT TEMPT Jesus, but the Father did not shield Him from it.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

Jesus got the spiritual blessing in baptism, then was led into a spiritual battle.

We like to think that if our lives are pleasing to God then nothing bad will happen to us. We like to think that bad things won't happen to 'good people', and we always put ourselves in the 'good people' camp. The example of Jesus sheds light on that fallacy.

THE TEMPTER??

A big issue that is front and center in Mark and the rest of scripture is the reality of Satan. A cursory reading

of the Bible shows an affirmation of an evil spiritual being who is active in this world. He is called the prince of darkness, the ruler of this world, the Devil, the Father of lies.

Dr.G.C. Berkouwer “Without demonology there can be no theology” i.e. the same source that gives us the theology of the majesty and grace of God also gives us the teaching about the spiritual enemy, Satan.

There is a spiritual world that is not fully explained in scripture, but it is sufficiently explained for us to be aware and on the alert. There is an invisible spiritual world, and the Devil is presented as real. He is the enemy of our souls.

We are involved in spiritual warfare.

Don't listen to these passages and think, “That was what the uneducated, unscientific, superstitious people thought long ago. Today we don't believe in such stuff.”

Really? I see and hear as much uneducated superstitious stuff in our world today.

Leading medical institutions and governmental organizations believe that men can become women and have babies.

In the April 5 edition of the UGA student newspaper Culture section online they have the April Horoscopes...

“The end of the semester is near, and your horoscopes have some good news predicted for some.”

JUST ONE EXAMPLE...

Aries March 21-April 19

With the arrival of spring, you will find a new energy and strength to persevere. You will be organized and efficient this month, proving to be a helpful asset in your work. With everything you do, don't forget to nourish yourself and rest.

This simplistic horoscope is a small example of modern neo-paganism in our world today.

Anyone who says, “Give your life to Jesus and your problems will be over” is not teaching true Christianity. Christianity is a fight against The World, the Flesh, and the Devil. If you don't believe that the Christian life is spiritual warfare, there is a great chance that you are already losing but don't know it.

The battle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan has been going on since Gen 3. Jesus entered the battle and was consistently facing demonic realities. The enemy who opposed Christ also opposes His followers, even today.

The stakes in this spiritual warfare are eternal, and the scope of the war is universal.

Our involvement is personal, so we see instruction for the spiritual battle in Eph 6 and elsewhere.

In Mark, the tempter is identified as Satan i.e. ‘false accuser, devil, slanderer’. In Matthew, the terms used are ‘tempter’ and ‘devil’ (diablos)

Matt 4:1 Jesus ENTERS THE BATTLEZONE

The Spirit led Jesus out to be tempted. There was no time to bask in the glow of the words of affirmation from the Father. Jesus had a mission to fulfill, and part of that was to show that he, as the Second Adam, would be faithful in obedience to his calling.

The temptations came with a design to lead Jesus away from His redemptive mission as the “sin bearer.”. Satan sought to get Jesus to take an easier path than what would be required as the Lamb of God.

This set of temptations is Round 1 with Satan as we'll see various instances of Jesus facing the legions of the Devil. 1 John 3:8 tells us that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and the Gospels give us the record of how that battle played out with the final victory of Jesus over sin, death, and Satan.

In the narrative of the gospels, Jesus is baptized, tempted, then sent out to begin His ministry. It is noteworthy to draw the contrast between the First and Second Adam.

In the Garden of Gen 1-3, Adam was in paradise with all he needed provided by God. He was given one command to abstain from the tree in the middle of the garden, yet he failed the test and ate.

Jesus was also tested, but he was in a desolate wilderness with wild beasts and he no food for 40 days. In terms of location and comfort, the contrast with the first Adam is stark. Jesus was approached at the end of a 40 day fast while Adam had an abundant provision of food.

As with the first Adam, Satan sought to twist or misuse 'what God had said.'

With Jesus, the Devil is misusing or distorting scripture and Jesus corrects him with a proper translation or interpretation.

Scriptural critics would likely accuse Jesus of being an unsophisticated 'bible thumper' because he was using scripture to make his point.

THREE TEMPTATIONS

What is certain in the narrative is that Jesus became hungry, so the devil seeks an opportunity to tempt him. All of these temptations come to Jesus from the outside; they do not originate in His own heart.

As in the Garden of Gen 1-3 the tempter, Satan, seeks to call into question the truth of God's Word. Remember that Jesus had just heard the great affirmation, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Satan starts off with "IF YOU ARE THE SON OF God..." He wants to sow seeds of doubt. No real son of God would be left hungry out in this wilderness, right? So, prove that you are the son of God by doing this one thing.

The tempter plays the food card and seeks to undermine Jesus' trust in the Father's will and provision. Jesus rebuffs Satan by going to the Word. . The Bible says, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'

It is the Word of God that is the final court of appeal as Jesus resists the tempter. But Jesus, the beloved Son, knows that the Father will not fail Him in this time of need.

One aspect of this temptation is self-gratification. It's as if Satan were saying, "God's not going to provide for you, his son, so go ahead and satisfy yourself now. Surely it will be easy."

The same sort of thing worked on Adam and Eve. "God is holding out on you. If you eat the fruit, then you will be like God. go ahead."

It worked on Adam in the Garden paradise, but Jesus did not fall for the temptation in the desert wilderness, so Satan moved on.

*** APP – There are times when we are feeling the strain of a trial or temptation and we get the idea that "I can't trust God to be sufficient and good", so I need to get things done my way.

There is hope because The Spirit of Jesus enables us to trust God to fulfill the right desires His way. When we are led by our desires and we get out in front of God, it usually leads to a regret. Just think of Adam and Eve. As soon as they ate the fruit, they realized that everything had changed for the worse.

Then the temptation continued. Satan said, "If You're really the Son of God, jump off the temple, because the Bible says He will give His angels charge over You lest You dash Your foot against a stone."

Jesus responded: "That's correct, the Bible says that, but the Bible also says, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord your God.' Don't put God to the test. (Deut 6:16) Jesus knew that He didn't need to jump off the temple to know that God will take care of Him.

Satan cherry picks scripture and leaves out the truth that God does not condone rashness, folly, trifling with providence and rushing toward unwarranted danger. (Gen 13:10,11; Ps 19:13; Esther 5:14, 7:9, 10 Dan 4, Rom 1:30 ; 2 Pet 2:10).

Jesus refuses to substitute presumption for faith. The false trust of the Father, which the devil demanded in

the second temptation was not any better than the distrust he had proposed in the first. (Lenski via Hendriksen p. 277).

*** APP – we can be tempted or be guilty of presumption with God. We twist His Word to fit our preferences. One of the main ways I've seen that over the years is when people say, "The bible teaches that God wants me to be happy, so this isn't really wrong if it makes me happy."

In the Third Temptation Satan offers Jesus the world if he'll but worship him.

The temptation is to obtain the crown without enduring the cross.

Satan is offering what he says is his, but we must remember that he is a liar. While he has some influence as the ruler of this world, he is limited and is on a leash.

This is also a temptation to self-exaltation while skipping the cross. Jesus knew what was before him – Joy. He also knew that shame was before him, but He kept His eyes on the future not momentary exaltation, Heb 12:2 "For the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross, despising the shame" His own exaltation at the Father's right hand, would come with the completion of our salvation crowning his head. This was his joy.- John Piper

Satan tried to get him to seize the reward right now.

"Go on. You're a King, so why suffer like a servant. You deserve a break today. Go on, you're worth it."

Again, Jesus answered with the Word, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only. Jesus knew that it would be an act of idolatry to bow to Satan and that there is no profit in gaining the world if you lose your soul.

** APP – the temptation of the world comes at us in the same way - 1 Jn 2: love of the world. 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

The temptation of the world says, "You can have it all."

The scheme of Satan is to start with little things and then build on it.

It would have been a small easy thing for Jesus to turn a stone into bread. "What's the harm, right?"

Let's apply to some real-life issues. We could go back to the list of "common sins" discussed in that short series – Pride, envy, gossip, murder (with our words), greed, etc.

The initial temptation may come in a small way, and 'everybody's doing it'.

We can look at some specific items addressed to all- young and old.

Phil 2:14 "Do all things without grumbling and disputing". It is so easy to do in our culture. Grumbling and complaining are the glue that hold many relationships together – work, social, political, family, etc They are so common that we don't realize that we're doing it.

We can look at some specific items addressed to men and women – young and old, and Yes, they relate to sexual morality. Why??????? BECAUSE THAT IS WHERE THE ENEMY IS CLEARLY AT WORK. That is an area where many couples and singles have struggles in their lives.

We have three daughters and three sons and three sons and daughters-in-law, and among them they have 22 children, so these topics have been relevant for us for YEARS. As a pastor of singles, couples, and families, these are also relevant for me and YOU. In an age of confusion about male & female, we dare not forget that there ARE differences, nor forget the wisdom from God that addresses each group.

2 Tim 2:22 "Flee youthful lust" 1 Thess 4:3 "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you

abstain from sexual immorality.” We tend to think of these as men’s issues and overall that would be true. The word for sexual immorality is porneia. That word should sound familiar since it has an estimated global income of 97 Billion \$\$ The lucrative sex industry doesn’t start with first time users spending large amounts of money. It starts very subtly and leads to more pervasive engagement.

WE live in such a sexually saturated culture that wisdom demands that we be vigilant with our own hearts and with the hearts of our kids, especially as men.

There are helpful resources available such as Jay Stringer’s book, UNWANTED

A relevant word from God which speaks to women is in **1 Tim 2:9 “...that women adorn themselves in appropriate apparel with modesty and sobriety...”** It’s a huge topic, and I recommend Rosario Butterfield’s chapter on Modesty from her recent book Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age.

One valid concern from the women’s side is often expressed this way: “Some guy’s lust problem is NOT my problem. I’m not responsible for His thought life.”

TRUE..... BUT YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for YOUR modesty in its many facets.

Just as Christian men have to consider what “flee youthful lusts” means, so too Christian women have to consider what “appropriate apparel with modesty and sobriety” means. Neither men nor women can hide behind the cliché of “that’s just legalism”, especially if they haven’t given serious consideration to what scripture teaches.

Rosario Butterfield explains how biblical modesty is MORE than, but does include, appropriate dress. “Our social media-saturated world encourages women to replace modesty with exhibitionism.” I would add that it encourages men in the same way. Our culture encourages men and women to PURSUE sexual immorality. The fashion industry promotes immodest clothing styles for women and men.

“Modesty for women and men is a frame of heart that is commended in 1 Tim and 2 Peter 1:5-9 Modesty, as a biblical virtue, is like a rich compound oil, marinating valor, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to achieve a stunning embodiment of moral beauty. Modesty is a high point of moral beauty and a vital virtue ..., It requires God’s grace and personal grit... Modesty is an active not a passive grace.” (Butterfield P. 268, 279)

Modesty in behavior or apparel is harder to recognize that lustful immorality, therefore it requires wisdom, discernment, and a mind oriented toward the glory of God 1Cor 10:31

**App

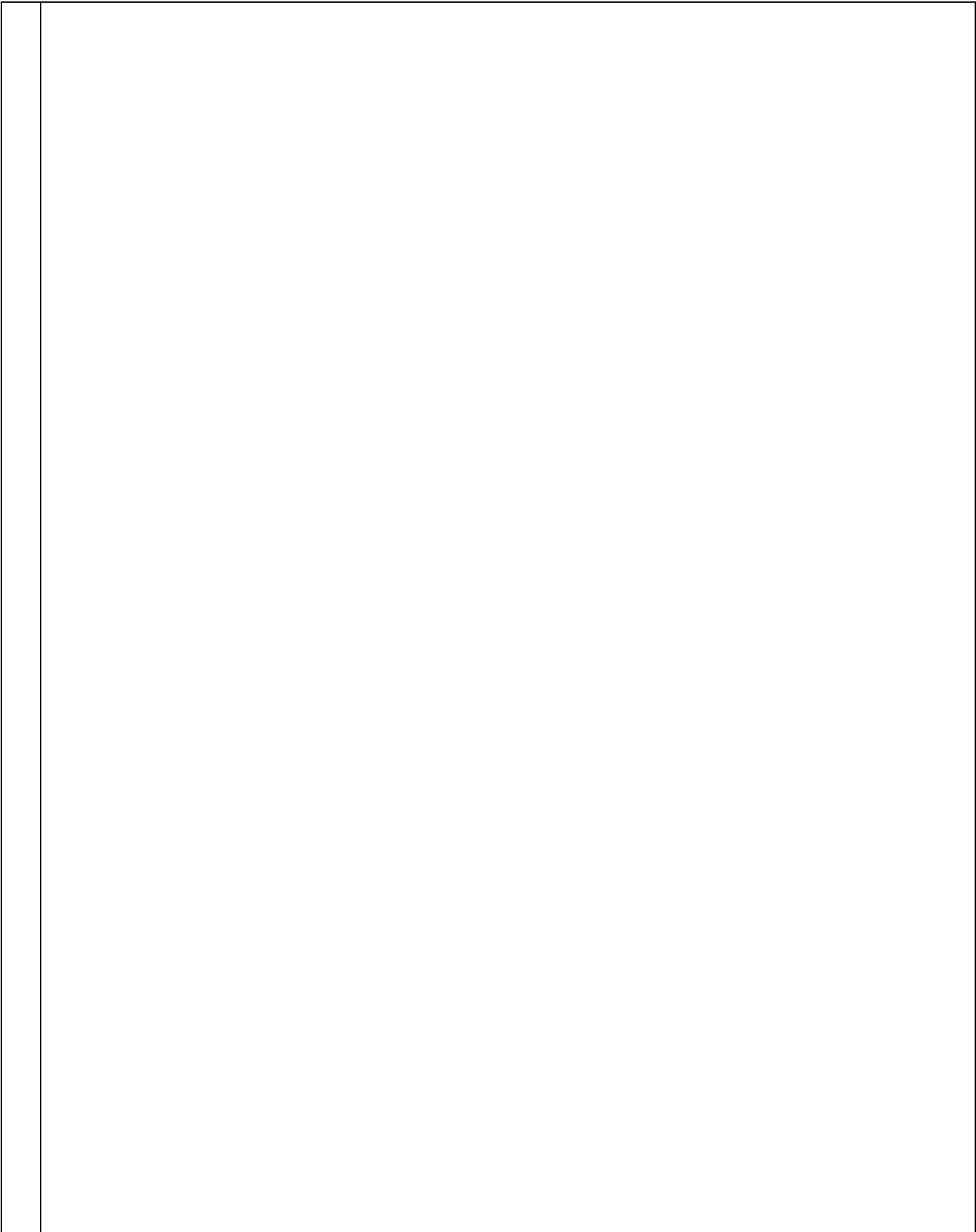
Notice how Jesus dealt with temptation... WITH THE WORD. If Jesus needed the Word, how much more do we?

Matt 4:11 Jesus commands Satan to leave, and he does, but as we see in Luke 4:13, Satan left him for a season. It would not be the last time in Jesus’ life or ministry that Satan would throw everything he had against the Son of God. No sooner had Satan left than the angels showed up and ministered unto Him. As the text says, the angels came to Him while He was with the wild beasts.

Remember that the people who were hearing this in the catacombs might be thrown to the wild beasts in the Colosseum for the sake of the gospel. When they were led in chains to the floor of the arena, they could say these words:

“My Savior has been here and done this, and He said He will never leave me or forsake me. He’s my champion who has resisted all things and who has stayed the course. And He is present with us.”

HE is present with US as well. THE TABLE...



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https://www.redandblack.com/culture/april-horoscopes/article_2110d4a8-f2cd-11ee-bf63-ef6fb332f4eb.html