

**Series:** From Israel to Everyone: Disciples who Demonstrate God's Presence (a study of Matthew).

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 4:1-11  
questions. Color Pg)

(App to get lesson/slides, ask

Today, we're going to study the temptation of Jesus in Matthew Chapter 4 verses 1-11. I must say when I was asked if I wanted to be a part of this Mathew series and that I would be teaching on the temptations of Christ. I remember thinking, "Oh yeah, this was about Jesus showing us how to fight back with the word of God against temptations we face in our own lives." I said to myself, "This is going to be cake walk!" Well can I just say...this is so much deeper and foundational than I first realized. I'm so excited to bring *the word from the mouth of God* this morning. I hope I can stay calm. And by the way, for the third straight sermon I'm going to be in Genesis. It's almost like everything points back to Genesis and then to the cross. Just saying, I'm starting to see a pattern! Today, I hope we'll see this...

**BIG IDEA: Trusting Jesus means trusting every word that comes from the mouth of God.**

*Chapter 3* ends with Jesus being baptized. Let's remember the picture that Matthew wanted us to see:

- **Ch 1:** Jesus, not Israel, is the true promised son of Abraham's family tree.
- **Ch 2:** After being chased to Egypt by Herod, Jesus came out of Egypt in victory like Israel had.
- **Ch 3:** Jesus came through the waters of baptism, like Israel had crossed the Red Sea.

*Verses 1-2* say that *Jesus is being led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.* This shows us the humanity of Jesus, remember Jesus is fully God and fully man. He was weak, as anyone would be and hungry. And here comes Satan to tempt Jesus for 40 days like Satan had tempted Israel for 40 years. But, where Israel failed over and over, Jesus succeeded. *Verse 3* says: *If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.* The devil knows He is the Son of God, but let's be reminded what that meant. We often think it's about Him being fully God, but in this case, it's more about Jesus being a fully human person who trusted God by faith. During Jesus' baptism, God was repeating what He said to Moses in Exodus

4:22: “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son.’” So, Satan was saying: “If you really are this special person, this better Adam, this better Israel, this perfect servant of the Lord we’ve all been expecting, then let’s make you shine!” This raises questions like: “When have you ever let the hype about who you are or what you can do go to your head? How can that keep us from living in loving relationships with God and neighbor?”

Jesus responded in *verse 4* by saying, ***“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*** Now, before jumping to conclusions, realize that Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 where Moses told Israel: “God humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” So, this wasn’t about Jesus using His God powers, it was about whether He would trust God to supply every need or be like Israel who grumbled and complained until God fed them. I also find it interesting that Jesus just called the bible the mouth of God. Adds a little more meaning, doesn’t it? I mean, “When you read from God’s Word, do you hear it and trust it like words directly from God’s mouth?”

Next, Satan gets a little craftier, when he takes Jesus to the holy city and has him stand on the highest point of the temple. *Verses 5-7* say, ***Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 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, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”*** Jesus said to him, ***“Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*** According to Jesus, this temptation was about not putting God through ridiculous tests. It’s also about not taking Scripture way out of context. Satan was right about that angel stuff in Psalm 91:11-12. What’s scary is that He knows the Word of God really well which makes him really good at confusing us. But what Satan doesn’t understand is you don’t pit scripture against scripture, you interpret scripture with scripture. Jesus didn’t need to jump off the temple to prove Psalm 91 true. That came from ***the mouth of God*** but so did

Deuteronomy 6:16 where God told Israel, "*You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.*". You see, Israel grumbled in Exodus 17 about not having water and basically said, "*If God doesn't perform a miracle here and now, then we won't trust Him.*" Jesus didn't have to jump to know who he is—that came from ***the mouth of God***. Jesus didn't have to jump to know angels had been assigned to protect Him that came from ***the mouth of God***. I wonder, "*When have you been tempted to command God to perform rather than just trusting His written Word and past works?*"

Next, *verses 8-11* say: ***Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.*** Isn't that interesting? Angels ended up doing what God had promised! Here we see what these temptations were really about...convincing Jesus to follow His own dreams instead of entrusting Himself to the story God spoke over Him at His baptism. The story where He is part of something bigger than Himself and is more than one super person who doesn't need others. You and I face this temptation all the time! I wonder, "*When was the last time you were tempted to believe you didn't need others?*"

Finally, let's connect all the dots! Adam and Eve failed their test in the garden when God said they could eat any tree, except the central one, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan said, "*Did God actually say that? Surely, you won't die!*" He convinced them to not believe what God said, and they took the forbidden fruit and sin entered the world. And all who came after them are born into sin, and we keep repeating their grave error (cf. Romans 5). Think about it, "*When have you acted more like the first humans than like Jesus who trusted every word from God's mouth?*" Next onto the nation of Israel, held captive, in bondage in Egypt. God sent Moses and 10 plagues. Let my people go! Finally, Pharaoh lets his people go, and God takes them out over the Red Sea and into the wilderness. God feeds them with manna. He takes care of them. He's with them by day and by night. God promised

them their own land of milk and honey and promised it would happen if they just followed the plan in faith. Like us, fear kept them from trusting God's words after all He had brought them through. They failed the test and for 40 years they wandered around the wilderness until a whole generation had died who never got to see God's promises fulfilled.

If I could set the stage by using some military terms for my military brothers and sisters that are out here. Time began in a garden which was turned into a wilderness of spiritual warfare. The divine Director of military operations, the Holy Spirit, led the great general Jesus Christ into the wilderness to face down the enemy. The Spirit is the connecting link between the heavenly operation center and the battlefield. The General, Jesus Christ (AKA) the new Adam, entered enemy occupied territory as the scriptures says in Genesis 3:15, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.*" Here we see the way Jesus won the cosmic battle and how we can participate in that victory by grace activated through faith.

The connections are clear:

1. Adam and Eve fell for Satan's tricks.
2. Israel fell for Satan's tricks.
3. Jesus did NOT fall for Satan's tricks by trusting every Word from God's mouth!

Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus can "sympathize with our weaknesses" because He "has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." This means Jesus not only understands every temptation we could ever experience, but most importantly, that He is the perfect partner to help us keep trusting what comes from **God's mouth** instead of the voices created creatures. So, what is Satan's goal? He wants us to forget the story God spoke over Jesus and over us at our baptism. He uses the voices of this world to say, "*You do you! Forget about who God says you are or His dreams for you.*" Professor NT Wright (p. 24-25) said, "These suggestions are all ways of distorting the true vocation: the vocation to be a truly human being, to be God's person, to be a servant to the world and to other people." For now, remember, wherever you are

on your journey of trusting Christ, you need not work through anything alone. Reach out and let us help!

### **Sunday to Monday Connection:**

- **Question:** See questions in the lesson above.
- **Next Step:** See questions in the lesson above.
- **Note:** If you are not a Christ follower and would like to explore what all this might mean for you, please speak with someone you know here or one of our church leaders.

**Takeaways to discuss with your people** (in addition to the underlined questions above!):

### **Considerations for discussion leaders:**

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Single underlined sentences are for discussion, while key points are double underlined.
3. Keep the discussion around 30 mins. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

**Other Articles/Songs/Videos:** Please ask us for help obtaining other resources.

- Bible Project - Gospel of the Kingdom [Videos](#) and [Podcast episodes](#).
- Bible Project - Heaven and Earth [Videos](#) and [Podcast episodes](#).
- Bible Project - Temple [Videos](#).
- Bible Project – Day of the Lord [Podcast episodes](#).

**Quotes related to this passage:**

**Bibliography** (Note: Our use of these materials does not imply full agreement with them)

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