

Matthew chapter 4:

Before Jesus Christ could begin his public ministry, he had to formally (ritually) declare his dedication to the Father's plan via water-baptism which we saw in chapter 3, and he had to be tested (cross examined) by Satan, the defense attorney for the fallen angels. Since the humanity of Christ had now reached spiritual maturity, the Father would use him as a witness in the appeal trial granted to Satan in prehistoric times, and the testimony of Jesus would be used as evidence against Satan and the fallen angels (Matthew 4:1-10). The tests (cross examinations) in the form of temptations were designed to attack his relationships. The humanity of Christ through doctrine in his soul would need to defeat these temptations. In the temptations, Satan attacked Christ's relationship with the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the Plan of God.

- a. Relationship with the Holy Spirit, Mt 4:1-4.
- b. Relationship with the Word of God, Mt 4:5-7.
- c. Relationship with the plan of God, Mt 4:8-10.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about our Lord's testing (See the doctrine of Evidence Testing by R. B. Thieme Jr.) was that instead of performing miracles (turning stones into bread etc.) by means of His own divine power, Jesus Christ used the greatest power ever known in the history of the human race. He used Bible doctrine circulating in the stream of consciousness of His humanity to defeat the temptations of Satan. (You might want to contrast this with the majority of Christians today who are constantly trying to solve their problems through praying for miracles.)

4:1. Then [after his baptism] Jesus [humanity] was led into the desert [of Judea] by the Spirit [under the Filling of the Spirit, the Spirit was his authority] to be tested by the devil.

The word Jesus comes from the Greek which in turn comes from the Hebrew. Both the Greek and the Hebrew word for Jesus mean savior (the one having provided salvation). Since the work of salvation took place on the cross: "and he himself bore our sins on his body on the cross," the name Jesus emphasizes his humanity (1 Peter 2:24a).

Jesus must be tested alone. The desert can be a very beautiful and wonderful place and at the same time a very hostile one. If isolated from friends, it can be a place of great loneliness. In all of these temptations, Jesus Christ was isolated from any human encouragement. Doctrine in his soul was his only encouragement. (Encouragement from friends once in awhile is a wonderful thing, but if you depend upon that, you will not advance in the spiritual life.) To avoid any compromise, he must be alone. He must handle these temptations from his own thoughts, motivations and decisions, not from someone else's.

There will be three temptations each in a different location. The first will be related to his relationship to the Holy Spirit: will he continue to apply doctrine under the authority of the Holy Spirit or will he solve the problem of hunger by producing a miracle by the use of his deity? Using his divine power would have been a violation of Kenosis (He was not to use his divine power to solve his personal problems (Philippians 2:7)! The second in his relationship to the Word: will he understand and reject Satan's distortion of Scripture? The last temptation is related to the plan of God the Father: Will he wait for the Father to bless him with the rulership of the world at the 2nd Advent or will he accept Satan's offer to rule the world (a bona fide offer since Satan is the ruler of the world)? The temptations will take place

in three different locations: the first in the desert, the second on the highest point of Herod's temple and the third on a high vantage point in space.

Satan understood well the Hypostatic Union and the doctrine of Kenosis. The definition of the Hypostatic Union is as follows: in the person of the incarnate Christ there are two natures, divine and human, inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal (two natures united forming one person) and eternal. The definition of Kenosis is as follows: During the dispensation of the hypostatic union, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the use of His divine attributes in compliance with the Father's plan for the Incarnate Christ during the First Advent. This means that Jesus Christ did not use the attributes of His divine nature to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, or to glorify His human nature, rather he relied on the Problem Solving Devices provide for him to solve his personal problems.

“Keep on thinking this [correct thinking and correct values] within you which also was in Christ Jesus. Who, though He existed in the essence of God, did not think equality with God a gain to be seized and held [to remain as God only], but deprived himself [The Greek verb “kenoo”. He laid aside his privileges: He did not use his deity in violation of the Father's plan: he did not use miracles to solve his personal problems] taking on the form of a servant, having come to be in the likeness of men [but without a sin nature and without Adam's Original Sin], and being found in outward appearance as a man [inwardly he was different]. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of [substitutionary spiritual] death [He was punished for the consequences of our spiritual death] that is the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-6).

4:2. And having fasted forty days and nights afterwards he was very hungry [suffered hunger].

The purpose of fasting is to give a person more time for prayer and for learning God's word. Each one of us spends a certain number of hours eating. If this time were not spent on eating, it could be used for these other purposes. Also, fasting enhances ones concentration level. So, Jesus Christ after 40 days and nights of fasting was prepared to meet Satan.

When a person stops eating food, he will have great hunger for two or three days until his stomach shrinks. Then, he will not experience hunger again until after 30 days. Somewhere between day 30 and 40 the body will provide warning signals that the body is facing a critical situation. At that point the person will become extremely hungry.

When a typical person is under extreme hunger, he thinks only about food, not about the opposite sex or anything else. Even his conversation will be about food. Christ was not typical and so even though His body was beginning to suffer starvation, he concentrated on making correct application of God's word. While applying the Word, His temptation to use his deity to solve his extreme hunger must have been phenomenal; a temptation he resisted. The average person would have been concentrating on himself and on food, and many would have been praying for a miracle.

All the attacks were against his human nature. In the first temptation, Satan tried to put so much pressure on his human nature that he would use his divine nature to solve the problem of hunger. In Eternity past, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit agreed to provide sufficient assets for the humanity of Christ so that he would not have to rely on his divine nature to solve His problems and pressures.

4:3. And the Tempter [Satan] came and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God and you are [1st class Greek conditional clause], speak [imperative of entreaty] that these stones might become bread.

Just as Jesus Christ was to use the eight problem solving devices (He didn't need Rebound nor did he use Occupation with Christ since he was Christ.) to solve his person problems. So we are to use the ten problem solving devices to solve our problems, pressures and adversities. If Jesus had manufactured a miracle to solve these problems, he would have been disqualified from going to the cross. Yet many Christian prays to God that He might solve their problems with a miracle.

When the Tempter came, he came with great confidence since he knew that Jesus was made lower than the angels in body and mentality. "You [God the Father] have made Him for a little while (1st Advent) lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:7). However, Satan underestimated the power of Bible doctrine in His soul. Jesus with God's thinking circulating in his soul had great wisdom, humility and integrity whereas Satan lacked all three of these virtues. This gave Jesus the edge to defeat Satan in this testing.

Satan tempted the human nature of Christ: the temptation to use his divine nature to solve the problem of his hunger instead on relying on the authority of the Holy Spirit [apply Deuteronomy 8:3] and the provision provided in the Father's plan [angels will bring food after the test]. Satan knew that it was not possible to tempt the deity of Christ directly. So, he tempted the humanity of Christ, the weakest link of the Hypostatic Union.

Satan approaches Christ with pseudo humility. In his pseudo concern, he entreats (the imperative of entreaty) Jesus to turn the stones into bread. "If you are the Son of God and you are." Satan understands very well the doctrine of the hypostatic union and the Doctrine of Kenosis. Based on his knowledge of the hypostatic union, Satan knows that Jesus could use his deity to solve this problem of hunger. Based on Satan's knowledge of Kenosis, he knows that if Jesus does use his deity to solve the problem of hunger, Jesus would have violated the Father's plan and thus be disqualified to go to the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

4:4. But He answered and said, it has been written, "Man shall not live by means of bread alone, but on the basis of every word which proceeds through the mouth of God." [Jesus applies Deuteronomy 8:3]

Jesus makes clear his values: the soul is more important than the body; the Word of God is more important than anything related to this life. Applying the Word of God is far more important than solving a hunger problem.

4:5. Then, the devil took [historical present] him into the holy city [Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:1)] and caused him to stand [Satan selected the location] on the highest point of the temple.

Satan took Jesus to the highest point of Herod's temple [a wing of the temple: Herod's porch] overlooking the Valley of Kedron. From that point it is a 450 foot drop to the rocky floor of the valley.

4:6. And Satan said, "Since [if . . . and you are] you are [static present] the son of God, throw yourself down [The Greek idiom means to jump] for it has been written, 'He will give command of his angels concerning you [omitted: to guard you in all your ways] and they [guardian angels] will lift you up on their hands [angels have hands] so that you should not strike your foot against a rock.'"

Jesus had just said that he would live by the word of God. Then Satan having replied in effect, if you desire to live by the Word, then apply Psalm 91:11, 12 and jump into the Kedron Valley. Satan is an expert in distorting Scripture, and leaping into the Kedron Valley would have been a distortion of a promise made to the Jews in their desert wanderings. In that passage, likely written by Moses, God promises protection for the Jews as they moved through the Sinai Peninsula. In order to provide protection, God assigned guardian angels to these Jews to safeguard them from the wild animals of the area and from falling to their death as they passed over some high, rocky and treacherous terrain. God does not condone senseless or unreasonable action which can come from distorting Scripture. Satan was actually quoting Scripture which did not apply and giving it a false application in order to get Christ to act in violation of Scripture by what would be tantamount to suicide.

In his distortion of Scripture, Satan deliberately skipped the line, “to guard you on all your journeys [the second line of verse 11].” This line is the basis for the correct interpretation. Since Jesus is not journeying across treacherous terrain, it would have no application to him. If someone were dumb enough to jump from a 450 foot cliff, his guarding angel would probably say, “I’ll see you in heaven moron”.

In his reply, Jesus didn’t deal with Satan’s omission and his suggestion of nonsensical action (to leap from a high structure), but Jesus did make an issue out of Satan’s distortion of Scripture. Distortion of Scripture is tantamount to blaspheming God. Thus, any creature who distorts Scripture is testing as it were the patience of God. In effect Satan made a mistake when he admitted that Jesus was deity.

4:7: Jesus replied to him once more [the situation demands the right application], “It has been written. You shall not put to the test the Lord your God [the one who created Satan].”

Satan has a right to test the humanity of Christ, but not his deity. The mishandling and distortion of Scripture is an attack on the deity of Christ. So, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16 in his command to Satan. In this way, the Lord turned the first conditional sentences of verses 3 and 6 against Satan. (In those two verses Satan admitted that Jesus was God).

4:8, 9: Again, the devil took him to a very high vantage point (possibly a high point in space) and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glamour; and he said to him, “All these [reference to the kingdoms of the world] I will give to you if you will fall down and worship me [3rd class conditional sentence: maybe you will or maybe you won’t; the aorist tense: just once will be enough].”

Since the devil is the ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11), it was a genuine offer. The Greek word *horos* means mountain or high vantage point. Obviously, it can’t mean mountain in this passage since the kingdoms of the world cannot be seen from the top of any mountain in Palestine nor any other mountain including Mount Everest. On the best day from Mount Everest, the most one can see is more mountains in China, Tibet or India, beautiful, but not the glamour of the world.

Satan goes to a 3rd class conditional sentence, the only option left to him. He has already been defeated in his use of the 1st class conditional sentences and the 2nd and 4th would be admitting defeat. In his desperation, he reverses the order of the conditional sentence – putting the conclusion first. Before he requested that the Jesus jump 450 feet into the Kedron Valley; now just drop to the ground and worship me for a second or two; it is easy and not dangerous.

Satan is telling Christ to put on the crown and to take his Kingdom now. Do not follow the Father's plan and go to the cross. This is rather appealing: the Lord can have the crown without the suffering of the cross and he doesn't have to wait for it.

Satan is always trying to bring about improved environment without truth and without the cross. This is impossible for only when a people in a nation accept truth can great environment come about. Thus, the United States' little experiment in nation-building in the Middle East was doomed before it even started. The Muslim religion not only rejects the cross and other forms of truth, but is also anti-Semitic. These rejections of divine truth can only be punished by the justice of our Lord. If a nation desires to help the Arabs in the Middle East, it needs to send qualified missionaries.

4:10: Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan for it stands written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" (Deuteronomy 6:13)

Jesus is pointing out that all creature loyalty is to God. No creature is to worship another creature rather all creatures are to worship God.

4:11: Then the devil left him [obeyed the command] and behold angels came and began to minister to him.

4:12: When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee.

4:13: Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum which was by the sea in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali.

Jesus Christ set up Capernaum as his command post.

4:14: To fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: (Isaiah 9:1, 2)

4:15: "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles.

This is a description of Northern Galilee at that time.

4:16: The people [specifically northern Israel] living in darkness [no truth] have seen a great light [John 8:12] to them who sat in the land of the shadow of death [the sin unto death and the 5th cycle of discipline], a light has dawned [sprung up: the 1st Advent]."

The 4th cycle began in 63 BC when Pompey the Great conquered this area. Under the 4th cycle of discipline the Jews were controlled by a foreign power. Israel will go under the 5th cycle of discipline in August of 70 AD. The cycles of discipline are explained in Leviticus 26:14-33 (1st cycle: verses 14-17, 2nd cycle verses 18-20, 3rd cycle verses 21-22, 4th cycle verses 23-26, 5th cycle verses 27-33).

4:17: From that time on [from the imprisonment of John] Jesus began to preach, "Change your thinking [about Christ] for the kingdom of heaven is at hand [near since Christ was on the earth]."

4:18: As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea for they were [professional] fishermen.

If Jesus is going to accomplish his objective of reaching the lost sheep of Israel, and to prepare apostles for the Church age, he will need a staff.

4:19: "Come, follow me, "Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men."

Fishing for men is more important than fishing for fish. At the same time, Jesus is establishing an analogy for witnessing.

1. A fisherman must have a desire to fish; he must be enthusiastic. The believer must have a compassion for the unbeliever.
2. He must be equipped to fish. By analogy, the believer must know the gospel well.
3. A fisherman has to go where the fish are located. There are areas of the world where the people are completely negative toward the gospel and other forms of truth. In such areas, evangelism and the teaching of God's word will not be successful.
4. He must know how to bait a hook analogous to the principles of personal evangelism: there are many ways to approach people with the gospel.
5. A fisherman has to keep out of site. The issue must be the gospel, not our personality.
6. A good fisherman is rewarded. In the eternal state, the believer will be rewarded for any ministry accomplished through the two power options namely the power of the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the power of metabolized doctrine circulation in the soul.

4:20: At once they left their nets and followed him.

They were authority oriented and possessed the correct values.

4:21: Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee [thunder: apparently a dynamic personality] and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called to them,

4:22: And immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

We don't have the rest of the calling of the disciples for it will be given in chapter 10.

4:23: Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Though Jesus had compassion on their physical infirmities, the two main reasons for healing were first to present his credentials as Messiah and secondly to draw a crowd that he might be able to present the gospel to them (the soul is infinitely more important than the body). If healing the physical infirmities of the people were his objective, then he would have been remiss in this responsibility since he did not heal all in Israel though he could have.

4:24: News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

4:25: And a great multitude of people followed him from Galilee [primarily gentiles: non educated, but successful in making money], Decapolis [Greek culture, the center of Hellenism], Jerusalem, Judea

[Jerusalem and Judea, the theological center and the center of legalism] and from beyond the Jordan [Arabic group].

Some Christians think that only certain types of people will respond to the gospel. This is just not true. People from every culture, race, social and economic status will respond to the gospel if they are seeking the truth.