

Matthew 4 The Test of the Savior

Peter speaks of “the precious blood of Christ, like that of a Lamb without blemish or spot” and that “He was foreknown before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet 1:19-20). Jesus knew in eternity before “all things were made through Him” (Jn 1:3) that His purpose for coming was “to seek and save the lost” (Lk 19:10). Although no angel could take His place (Heb 1:13) since according to the Mosaic law the only sacrifice that would be acceptable to God would be a spotless (Num 28 & 29) blood sacrifice (Lev 17:11), and the Son, Who is God (Heb 1:8) and as God could not die, the Father arranged for “a body... [to have been] prepared for [Him]” (Heb 10:5) as God’s best offer, according to His own requirement. And through His Son’s blood, “He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him” (Heb 7:25), those who “have now received reconciliation” (Rom 5:11).

Heb 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned (Gk.3129- to learn: -understand) obedience (Gk.5218- compliance or submission) through what He suffered (Gk.3958- to experience a sensation or impression [usually painful]).

Isa 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed.

Jesus took on Himself, what should have been our punishment, God’s wrath, even though He “knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). The phrase “in Him” refers to Gal 3:27 as it pertains to putting Christ on in baptism, the only place salvation and eternal life in Heaven can be found.

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Mat 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (Gk.3985- to test, scrutinize, entice) by the devil (Gk.1228- a traducer; specifically Satan: -slanderer). 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.

- Temptations should never be what we ask God to take away from us since in many cases they are what might just strengthen our faith, and thus bless us in ways we may not quite understand at the time when they come. In His model prayer Jesus taught His disciples to ask that the Father “lead [them] not into temptation” (Mat 6:13). Why would God lead us into temptation? The saying “you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink” applies here in that God may test us, but He does not force us to yield to sin. Just as Jesus was “led up by the Spirit... to be tempted”, God did not force Him into submitting to it. It was His choice, thus He was given ‘free agency’ having been “made (Gk.3666- to assimilate) like His brothers in every respect” (Heb 2:17).

1Co 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able (our choice) to endure it.

- after fasting- Luke states that “He ate nothing during those days” (4:2). When Moses was “with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water” (Ex 34:28). That was before he received the Law. He did that a second time in Deu 9:18 after he broke the tablets of stone because of Israel’s sin “in doing what was evil in the

sight of the LORD.” Elijah “went in the strength of that food (*that the angel told him to eat*) forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God” (1 King 19:8). When Jesus, “led [Peter, James and John] up a high mountain by themselves... He was transfigured before them... and behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him” (Mat 17:2-3). These three individuals, on these three mountains, Moses representing the O.T. law, Elijah representing the prophets and Jesus representing the New Covenant, are recorded to have fasted “forty days and forty nights”. At that time, though, (v. 5) “a voice from the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased; **listen to Him.**” Just as with when Jesus was baptized (Mat 3:17), an acknowledgment from Heaven stating Their relationship, but in this case in the hearing of Peter, James and John as an announcement of Jesus being the preeminent of the three, thus the fulfillment of both the law and the prophets.

Luk 24:44 Then (Jesus) said to them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

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1Jn 2:16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust (Gk.1939- *a longing [especially for what is forbidden]*) of the flesh (Gk.4561- Thayer: “the animal nature with cravings that incite to sin”), and the lust of the eyes (Gk.3788- *vision; figuratively envy*), and the pride (Gk.212- *braggadocio, that is, self-confidence*) of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (KJV)

Jesus was about to be tested with the same sin that brought Satan down in the beginning (Gen 3); pride was what brought God’s judgment on Satan. Just as a “recent convert” should not be considered for the office of overseer (*elder*) lest he “become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil (*i.e., the same judgment the devil fell into*)” (1 Tim 3:6). Jesus, because of His recently having been endowed with the fullness of the Holy Spirit (3:16/Lk 4:1) was about to be ‘enticed’ into showing off His miraculous power by commanding “stones to become bread”. He had no power to perform miracles until after He was baptized and “the Spirit of God [descended]... on Him” (Mat 3:16). In each case that He was tested, His response should be the one used in any situation when we are asked to do something that would lead to sin. And Jesus understands our weakness to temptation in that “He Himself has suffered when tempted” (Heb 2:18).

Mat 4:3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But He answered, "**It is written,** "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

- “**It is written**”- In this temptation, Jesus quoted a passage He Himself was familiar with since, as Deity, He was there with God when...

Deu 8:3 ... He humbled [the children of Israel] and let [them] hunger and fed [them] with manna, which [they] did not know, nor did [their] fathers know, that He might make [them] know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Imagine what restraint it would take, after forty days without food, knowing you have the power to satisfy that hunger by miraculously changing what was everywhere (*stones*)

into something that would instantly satisfy your hunger. Food is a necessity but Satan often twists what is good into something that is evil as he did with Eve (Gen 3).

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Mat 4:5 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.'"

- It needs to be understood that Satan knows scripture too! (*It's evident today by the way those of the denominations have twisted it by mastering 'the lie'.*) Since Jesus rebutted him with scripture over the first try, the devil then used scripture on a second attempt to entice Him into committing the sin of pride. In this quote, Satan is correct since angels are "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14). The passage quoted here by him is...

Psa 91:11 For He will command His angels concerning You to guard You in all Your ways.

Jesus fired right back with an opposing scripture (Deu 6:16) which exposed the devil's misapplication of the context.

Mat 4:7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

- Satan "put... God to the test" by tempting Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit (Gen 3). He once again attempted to test God, here as Jesus "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3), but "God (as Deity) cannot be tempted with evil" (Jas 1:13). Satan here used Jesus' newly acquired 'manhood' as "the Son of man" (Mat 9:6) to appeal to His "human nature" since he was unable to entice His Godly nature into committing the sin of pride. This only shows, once again, that Jesus, as both God and man, was given the choice and was able to either fail or succeed.

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Mat 4:8 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 I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me."

- As "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2), Satan vainly felt that he had the ultimate power over "all the kingdoms of the world" to give them over to whomever as he chose to. Again, he can quote scripture so he should have remembered Dan 2:21 and how God "removes kings and sets up kings" thus the devil could not give Christ what He already owned. But the part of this verse that reveals Satan's pride and true intention from the beginning is when he requested the Son of God to "fall down and worship" him.

Mat 4:10 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.'"

- Emphatically, Jesus seems to shoo Satan away, thus showing Who is the "preeminent One" (Col 1:18) by quoting Deu 6:13. At that point "the devil left Him (*"until an opportune time"*) - Lk 4:11), and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him" (v.

11). Just as the pre-incarnate Christ appeared to Abraham in Gen 18 in bodily form as one of the “three men... standing in front of him” (v. 2), here the angels appeared in such a form to minister to His physical needs. And after “He heard that John (baptist) had been arrested, He withdrew to Galilee... and lived in Capernaum by the sea... [which] was spoken by the prophet Isaiah” and “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Mat 4:12-17).

- at hand- Gk.1448- to make *near*. ‘Near’ does not mean two thousand plus years or more into the future or there would be some pretty old brethren if we trust what Jesus said about ‘when’ the kingdom would come.

Luk 9:27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death **until** they see the kingdom of God.”

The fact is that the kingdom did come almost two thousand years ago with the feast of Pentecost in around 33 AD. So what, one might ask, is the kingdom?

Col 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, Who has **qualified** you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us (*Christians/past tense*) from the domain of darkness (*Eph 2:1-3*) and transferred (*past tense*) us to **the kingdom** of His beloved Son (*a.k.a., “churches of Christ”- Rom 16:16*), 14 **in Whom** (*in Christ*) we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

*Eph 2:1 And you **were** dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you **once** walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- 3 among whom we all **once lived** in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.***

Act 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord **added to the church** (*Gk.1577- assembly*) daily such as should be saved. (*KJV*)

Interlinear: “...and the Lord added those who were being saved daily to the assembly”. Assembly- Gk.1577- a *calling out*, especially a religious congregation: - church. Putting these passages together, the Lord having “transferred us into the kingdom” and “the Lord [adding] to the church” we find that the kingdom and church are one and the same and those Jesus said who would “**not taste death until they see the kingdom of God**” would have witnessed it in their lifetimes, almost two thousand years ago. It is the same kingdom Daniel spoke of in Dan 2:44 that God would set up during the time of the Caesars which would “break in pieces all these kingdoms (*Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman*) and bring them to an end, and it (*the kingdom of God, the church*) shall stand forever”. So then, according to Col 1:12, how does God “qualify” a person “to share in the inheritance of the saints of light”? First a person needs to have a ‘down payment’ toward sealing their right to this inheritance which can only be found....

Eph 1:13 **In Him** (*Christ*) you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed (*Gk.4100- to entrust one’s spiritual well-being to Christ*) **in Him**, were sealed (*Gk.4972- to stamp [with a signet ring or stamp] for security or preservation*) with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 **Who** is the guarantee (*Gk.728- a*

pledge, that is, part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest) of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

When and how can a person receive this 'security' of the Holy Spirit?

Act 2:38 And Peter said to them (*as this applies to everyone since, who is mature enough to understand*), "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name (*Gk.3686- authority*) of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...

There is a pattern throughout the book of Acts (*and other N.T. writings*) that is consistent where salvation is concerned as it applies to the phrase "in Him" or "in Christ" (*etc.*). And there are steps to follow to get to that point of having God "qualify" (*Col 1:12*) a person in order to obtain that covenant relationship with Jesus. Have you made those steps?

#1. Have you heard?

Eph 1:13 In Him you also, when you **heard the word of truth**, the gospel of your salvation, and believed (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ]*) in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

#2. Do you believe?

1Th 2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that **when you received** the word of God, which you heard from us, you **accepted it** not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in **you believers**.

#3. Have you repented?

Mar 2:17 When Jesus heard *it*, He saith unto them, **They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

#4. Have you acknowledged Christ as the Son of God, Who alone can save you?

Mat 10:32 **So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father Who is in Heaven, 33 but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father Who is in Heaven.**

#5. Have your sins been washed away?

1Pe 3:21 Baptism, ... now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an **appeal to God for a good conscience**, through the resurrection of **Jesus Christ**,

#6. If you've done all these things, have you remained faithful?

Rom 6:4 ... we too might walk in newness of life.

#7. Are you growing?

2Pe 3:18 But grow in the **grace** and **knowledge** of our **Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

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