VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF CHRIST'S TEMPTATION
IN MATTHEW 4:1-11, AND HIS USE OF
DEUTERONOMY 6:13,6:16;& 8:3

by
Vincent S. Sawyer

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Dr. Wayne Knife
Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary
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TABLE OF CONTENTS
AND
SERMONIC OUTLINE
OF
MATTHEW 4:1-11, and DEUT. 8:3,6:16,6:13

INTRODUCTION ii

I. THE PURPOSE OF TESTING (v.1,2). 1

II. THE TIME OF TESTING (v.1,2) 4

III. THE CONFLICT OF TESTING (v.3-10). 6

A. THE FIRST TEMPTATION (v.3-4) 6

1. Satan's method of temptation (v.3). 6
(Satisfy yourself - independently)

2. Christ's means of victory (v.4; Deut.8:3) . . . 9
(Depend on God's Word - continually)

B. THE SECOND TEMPTATION (v.5-7). 13

1. Satan's method of temptation (v.5,6). 13
(Surrender yourself - foolishly)

2. Christ's means of victory (v.7; Deut.6:16). . .15
(Deny the opportunity to test God - confidently)

C. THE THIRD TEMPTATION (v.8-10). 19

1. Satan's method of temptation (v.8,9). 19
(Submit yourself - disobediently)

2. Christ's means of victory (v.10; Deut.6:13) . .22
(Devote yourself to God - exclusively)

CONCLUSION (v.11). 25

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 28

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history (since the Garden of Eden) men have battled with temptation. On the one hand men have attempted to avoid it, flee from it, resist it, isolate themselves from it, ignore it, or even deny it; on the other hand they have succumbed and yielded to it. "According to the Word of God, there are only three channels, or gates, through which Satan can gain access to the citadel of a man's life." These are stated in I John 2:16 as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." To such a dilemma the question needs asking: "how can believers gain victory over temptation?" In Matthew 4:1-11, which unfolds the struggle of the Son of God with the son of perdition, we are given clear and applicable insights into Satan's <u>strategy</u> against God and His people and also into Christ's way of

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"Pentecost, p.123.

victory over the tempter. Side by side we are shown the way of danger and the way of escape, the way that leads to defeat and death and the way that leads to victory and life - in short, the way of Satan and the way of God.

ii

THE PURPOSE OF TESTING (v.1,2)

In Matthew 4:1, it is recorded: "**Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil**." This verse indicates that Christ went into the wilderness to do battle with Satan, not according to His own will but according to the will of His Father. The verb "led up" is passive in the Greek indicating that it was the Holy Spirit who led ("drove" Mk.1:12) Jesus to the impending confrontation. God then uses a purpose infinitive to demonstrate that His Son was led by the Spirit **for the purpose** of being tempted by the devil. At this point many would find such a "set up" unthinkable. They would ask the question "what is God's purpose for allowing such testing as this?" One must consider the use of the terms "temptation" and "testing". Is there a difference between the two? If so, what is it? In his book, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, J. Dwight Pentecost quotes from Fairbairn, who states the following:

> What is Temptation? Seduction to evil, solicitation to do wrong. It stands distinguished from trial thus: a trial or test seeks to discover the man's moral qualities or character; but temptation persuades to evil, and deludes that it may ruin. The one means to undeceive,

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.MacArthur, p.85.

the other to deceive. The one aims at the man's good, making him conscious of his true moral self; but the other at his evil, leading him more or less unconsciously into sin. God tries; Satan tempts.

God never tests (tempts) in the sense of enticing to evil. "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" (James 1:13). Therefore from God's perspective, Christ's conflict with Satan was a test; from Satan's it was a temptation. The difference was the **intent**. It is also important to note at this point that God in His sovereignty **allows** Satan to tempt. Under God's ultimate control, Satan is like a dog on a leash - he can only go as far as God allows him. As He did with the Old Testament righteous man Job, God the Father **allowed** His beloved Son to be placed into the fires of testing.

God's purpose of testing is basically singular - to teach. For example God's purpose for testing O.T. Israel (Dt.8:3), was to demonstrate to the people their utter sinfulness and dependance upon Yahweh. His purpose for allowing His Son to be tested was to demonstrate to the world His sinlessness (His impeccability).

There are striking parallels and contrasts between the testing of Jesus and the testing of Israel. For example, just as the Spirit of **God** directed Christ into testing (Mt.4:1), **God** in the O.T. directed Israel into it (Deut.8:2-3). Another parallel feature seems to be evident in the order

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.Pentecost, "The Words and Works", p.99.

of the temptations. Matthew's order seems to be significant as it follows the pattern of testing and failure by Israel in the wilderness.

> "First Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread; then he is tempted to (test His Father and) throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple; thirdly, He is tempted to receive all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for His worship of the Devil. The congregation of Israel in the wilderness first murmured because they wanted bread (Exodus 16); then they put the Lord to the proof (test) at Massah and Meribah (Exodus 17); thirdly, they worshipped the golden calf (Exodus 32)."

There is also contrast between the temptations of Christ and O.T. Israel. A main theme of the temptation narrative seems to be the obedience of Jesus seen in contrast with the disobedience and rebellion of Israel of the wilderness days. In accordance with Matthew's theme of presenting Christ as the King, Jesus then was tested for the purpose of proving His righteous character. He was tested in order that the Father's divine approval (given at His baptism - chapter 3) might be proven justified. The tests that Israel under Moses failed to pass, the Messiah successfully surmounted.

The believer today can rest assured that there is purpose for the trials God allows to enter his life as well. James reveals God's instructive purposes in testing, by exhorting us to "consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials [ ], knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2-3). God may choose to use Satanically inspired trials to accomplish His good purposes (cp.Job 1-2; II Cor.12:7-10). Therefore it must be remembered that time spent in battle is not wasted when God is **glorified**, the believer **edified**, and Satan **mortified**!

"Stegner, p.27.

.Thompson, p.7.

THE TIME OF TESTING (v.1,2)

It can be observed when verses 1 and 2 are compared with Luke 4:13 that the Tempter approached Christ at just the right time (at a suitable "season"). Satan tempted Him 1) after victory, and 2) at His weakest moment.

The word "then" [ ] connects the account of the temptation with the preceding account of the Baptism (cf. Mk.1:12 - "immediately"; Lk.4:1 - "and"). Immediately after Christ's baptism when He had been so gloriously anointed by the Father, and after He had been undeniably hailed as "The Beloved Son" with whom the Father was "well pleased", He was led into conflict with Satan. It is an interesting parallel that Israel also after the great victory of redemption from Egypt, faced immediate testing (Ex.15). It is sad to note, however, that Israel utterly failed her test at Marah. An important truth to remember is that after every victory comes temptation. God's Word warns the man who thinks he is experiencing success: "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (I Cor.10:12).

A second observation is that temptation came at Christ's weakest moment from a human standpoint. Of all circumstances, Jesus was tempted in the worst. The Bible describes the battle-ground as being "**the wilderness**". The wilderness of Judea (evidently the area implied) is a hot, barren, and desolate area that extends west from the Dead Sea almost to Jerusalem, and is some thirty-five miles long and fifteen miles wide.

It is an area of yellow sand and crumbling limestone. It is an area of contorted strata, where the ridges run in all directions as if they were warped and twisted. The hills are

like dust heaps, the limestone is blistered and peeling, the rocks are bare and jagged, and often the ground sounds hollow.

Nowhere in Palestine could Jesus have been more isolated or in less comfort. Deuteronomy 8:2 describes the wilderness as the testing ground for the nation of Israel.

> "The wilderness tested and disciplined the people in various ways. On the one hand, the desolation of the wilderness removed the natural props and supports which man by nature depends on; it cast the people back on God, who alone could provide the strength to survive the wilderness. On the other hand, the severity of the wilderness period undermined the shallow bases of confidence of those who were not truly rooted and grounded in God. **The wilderness makes or breaks a man**."

Another aspect that reveals Christ's temptation to have come as his weakest moment was the fact that when Satan came to Him, He was **hungry** because he had fasted (aorist participle) forty- days and forty nights prior to the testing (cp.Luke 4:2). The forty day period of fasting reveals the magnitude of Christ's absorption in thought and communion with His Father. [compare Moses' (Ex.34:28; Dt.9:9,18), and Elijah's (I Ki.19:8) forty day fasts].

> "Hunger not only makes us physically weak but also tends to weaken our moral and spiritual resistance as well. When we are tired, hungry, or sick we are usually less concerned about other needs and dangers and tend to be vulnerable to anything that might provide relief from our present distress."

.Barclay, p.63.

"Craigie, p.185.

"MacArthur, p.89.

In an interesting contrast, note that the "first Adam," though physically strong (with food plentiful), sinned; Christ, "the second Adam," though physically weak (having fasted 40 days), did not sin when he was tempted. So much for circumstances being blamed for wrong behavior.

THE CONFLICT OF TESTING (v.3-10)

THE FIRST TEMPTATION (v.3-4)

Satan's method of temptation (v.3)
(Satisfy yourself - independently)

The Bible says: "**And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**" This opening question of the tempter is related to the words that came from heaven at Christ's Baptism, when God the Father said: "This is My Beloved **Son**, in whom I am will pleased" (3:17). Satan now picks up on this declaration and basically says: "If, for the sake of argument, as the voice at your baptism intimated, you are the Son of God, then demonstrate your Messianic office by providing a kingdom of bread (v.3)." It may be observed by such statements that Satan tempts in the areas of one's relationship and ability. Since Christ had a unique relationship to the Father (and is called the [ ] -"one of a kind Son - Jn.3:16) certainly He would have the ability (power or strength) to turn stones into bread! This temptation sounds similar to the mocking crowd at the crucifixion who said: "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross (Mt. 27:40). Certainly Christ had the ability to do so.

Satan by saying "If you are the Son of God" is not questioning the person of Christ to satisfy any lack of knowledge on his part - for he knows perfectly well that Jesus is the Son of

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"Johnson, p.346.

God - but for the sake of argument - to tempt Him, he makes that statement. What Satan is demanding is some objective proof to justify the Father's Words. Many commentators (ex. Lenski[)] attempt to show that Satan cunningly modified the Father's word about "the Son" by an omission of the definite article in the temptation. They hold that the omission signifies that Christ was literally referred to as merely "a son of God" rather than "the Son of God". While it is true that the omission may have this significance in certain contexts, such is not the case here. Satan by omitting the article placed an emphasis on the quality of the character of the noun - "Son".[.] The Devil's emphasis on the word "Son" [ ] is further emphasized by the greek word order. The Greek text literally reads: "If (the) **Son** you are **of God**..." The placement of the verb in between the subject and the genitive qualifier throws emphasis on the word "Son." D. A. Carson correctly expresses the purpose for omitting the article and thus placing emphasis on the quality of the word "Son".

> Satan was not inviting Jesus to doubt his sonship but to reflect on its meaning. Sonship of the living God, he suggested, surely means Jesus has the power and the right to satisfy **His own** needs.[.]

Only "the" Son of God could perform such a miracle as Satan is requesting. Satan would not need to ask Jesus to prove Himself if He was thought to be merely "a" son.

The temptation clearly was offered in an appealing manner. After forty days and nights of fasting, certainly Christ ("**the**" Son) being hungry and thirsty, deserved the right to eat. It is interesting that the desert where our Lord was tempted "was littered with little round pieces of

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)Lenski, p.142.

.Summers, p.129.

.Carson, p.112.

limestone rock which were exactly like little loaves; even they would suggest this temptation to Jesus"

It is important to note that Satan does not begin his temptation with a point-blank denial of the truth that Jesus as "the Son of God" had power to perform this miracle. That would be too obvious. Satan's tactics are much more subtle and deceptive. Satan does, however, use the direct approach in his temptation when he boldly commands Jesus to "speak." Certainly Jesus could just say the words and the stones would immediately be transformed into bread. After all, Jesus, Who is called "The Word" (Jn.1:1), by merely speaking brought the world into existence (cp.Col.1:16; Heb.11:3; Jn.1:3,10). The Lord Jesus Christ - Who, by His mere words, could still the storm (Mt.8:26), raise the dead (Jn.11:43; Mk.5:41), heal the paralyzed (Mt.9:6), restore a withered hand (Lk.6:10), and cast out demons (Lk.8:32)-could without any problem create bread out of stones! Satan basically called upon Christ to exercise an area of His strength and to satisfy Himself independently as "the Son of God." He made an appeal aimed at the "lust of the flesh" and suggested that Christ put physical needs ahead of spiritual responsibility.

Christ's means of victory (v.4)
(Depend on God's Word - Continually)

The Lord's response to Satan is recorded in verse four. "But he answered and said, **It is written**, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Several observations can be made about Christ's answer. First, it is significant to note that Jesus did not ignore the temptation. He responded against it! He took positive action to overcome it. Secondly, He did not defend Himself. He could have said "Satan, this feat is no

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"Barclay, p.66-67.

problem for me, but I refuse to obey you!" Thirdly, Christ did not reason with Satan. He could have appealed to hundreds of facts concerning Himself - facts with which the enemy was well acquainted. Instead He met the temptation using the only weapon which we as believers have in our possession, namely - the simple, precious, Word of God. Christ countered the temptation by appealing to the written

[ ] Word of God. His referral to the sacred text is very significant because it reveals the Bible's authoritativeness.

By doing so, the Scripture is revealed to be the highest - indeed the only - court of appeal. The statement "It is written" also reveals the Scripture's continuing relevancy (pertinence). Jesus uses the perfect tense and thus signifies that the Bible has been once written, and now stands forever! Christ's quotation also reveals Scripture's varied applicability. The text quoted originally was given to Israel. Now Jesus uses it against Satan, and in doing so reveals Scripture's suitability to handle needs of all occasions. It is vital to note that Jesus in using the Bible refuted Satan's suggestion with a Scriptural principle that exegetically corresponded to His use. In other words he did not contradict the context He was quoting from. He rightly handled the passage He quoted, and did not twist it to fit the application at hand. By correctly handling the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17), Christ smote the devil. Christ - whose own words, while living on earth, had the same authority (ex."verily, verily, I say to you") as the written Word - appealed not to a new utterance of His own, but rather to the Written Word. If Christ relied on it, how much more should we?

In answering Satan, Jesus quoted a verse perfectly fit for the occasion - Deuteronomy 8:3. Moses originally stated this truth, when he reminded Israel of God's blessing and provision which He showered upon Israel in her own wilderness experience (Deut.8:1-18). The context of

Deuteronomy chapter eight reviews the guidance of God and Israel's humiliation in the desert, to serve as a warning against high-mindedness and forgetting God.

In verse two God revealed that the reason He humbled Israel was to prove the state of their heart and their obedience. Humiliation was the way to prove their attitude towards God. The word [ ] - "to humble" in context, refers to God's action of bringing Israel by means of distress and privations to feel their need of help and their dependance upon God. God not only brought Israel through the desert to humble her, but he goes on to say that it was to "test" or "try" her. God "tested" or in other words "proved" [ ] the Nation by placing them in such positions in life as would drive them to reveal what was in their heart - that is, whether they believed in the faithful trustworthiness, of God's Word, which would be evidenced by obedience. God already knows man's heart, therefore the benefit of this test is for the individual.

Throughout the Bible, God often sent suffering to humble and discipline His servant so that they might learn lessons they would otherwise miss (ex. Abraham, Job, Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul etc.). Humility learned through adversity is one method God used to teach this vital lesson. God not only humbled Israel by negatively causing (Hiphil stem) her to hunger [ ], but He also did so by causing her (positively) to eat [ ] something that was previously unheard of - "Manna". God's supernatural feeding of Israel, provides the occasion to teach the principle, that life is sustained not merely by physical means (Is.38:16; Gen.27:40), but by spiritual supernatural provision. God is driving home the point, in Deuteronomy 8:3, that the source and sustenance of life depends upon Him! By the power of His almighty Word He gives life - true life - in an extraordinary way! Not only Did God feed Israel supernaturally, but to emphasize His point He goes on to say in verse 4 that He clothed them supernaturally.

.Keil, p.330.

God over and over promises to meet the needs of His children (Phil.4:19; Mt.6:8:33). Therefore, man's life is to be ruled by his devotion to God's will as revealed in His Word, not by fear of death by starvation. Life is more than food! There are deeper dimensions to life! Abundant life consists in doing God's will, not in succumbing to immediate desires. In following Christ's example, there are times when the believer must refrain from grabbing immediate satisfaction for himself. True, one may think he has every right to it (whatever it is), and one may really think he needs it. But if it contradicts God's will for him , or God's means of getting it, it is wrong! The Disciples approached Jesus one day and said: "Master, eat" (Jn.4:31), to which suggestion He revealed higher priorities, by replying: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"(v.32,35).

As natural (physical) life is sustained by bread, so the supernatural (spiritual) life is sustained by God's Word. It is by God's Word that one receives real nutrients to give light, guidance, comfort, and strength and desperately - needed victory over temptation! Notice that Jesus in directly quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, specifies that man will live based upon **"every word"** which is coming out through the mouth of God. This shows that no one can afford to dispense a single word. **All** is needed. Scripture is an exhaustless treasury, in which God has made ample provision for every need. Hence we should study it all, ponder it all, dig deeply into it all, and have it all treasured up in our hearts, ready for use when the demand arises.

THE SECOND TEMPTATION (v.5-7)

.Mackintosh, p.44.

Satan's method of temptation (v.5,6)
(Surrender yourself - foolishly)

Verse five records Christ's bodily transport (cp.Acts 8:39) to the pinnacle of the temple, to provide occasion for the second temptation.

> **"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."**

Whereas in the first temptation a need (lack of food) already existed; in the second, Satan suggested that a need be created.

While the first temptation was aimed at independent satisfaction contrary to God's Word, this temptation was geared toward a defiant disregard for God's physical laws.

The Devil now appeals to the "pride of life." In this enticement Satan again uses the direct approach by commanding Christ: "Cast yourself down." This time, however, to be more persuasive, he uses scripture in his allurement to justify his command. He says "**for** [-giving reason] **it is written**..." Satan's comeback with an appeal to Scripture reveals his respect for it. It also exposes his extensive knowledge of the Bible. Without a doubt he knows more of the text than most (or possibly all) of the saints. His ministers also know it, and know how to twist it, as they deceitfully pose as "ministers of righteousness" (cf. II Cor.11:15). Satan quotes Psalm 91:11, and in doing so greatly errs. The Hebrew in Psalm 91:11 ends with the words "to guard you **in all your ways**." However, Satan in Matthew 4:6 omits this phrase and Luke 4:10 has only the words "to guard you." Hence, the phrase "**in all your ways**" is left out in both Gospel accounts. In omitting the phrase "in all your ways", Satan **"the liar"** (John 8:44), treacherously suggested a misinterpretation of the

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.MacArthur, p.93.

promise. The psalmist is teaching trust in the Lord in times of testing, not a rash disregard for God's natural laws. [Compare God's opposition to arrogant actions done in His name - Num.14:22-23; Ps.19:13; Dan.4:28-33; 5:22-23]. What Psalm 91:11 is teaching with the phrase included, is that God promises to protect the righteous man in " all his righteous ways". When these words are omitted God's promise is made to appear as if He would protect the righteous no matter what he does!

After Christ quoted Scripture to defeat The Devil in the first temptation, Satan (the counterfeiter) follows suit by quoting it and in doing so implies the following:

> "So you claim to be God's Son and you claim to trust His Word...If so, why don't you demonstrate your sonship and prove the truth of God's Word by putting Him to a test - a spiritual test? If you won't use your own divine power to help yourself let your Father use His divine power to help you. If you won't act independently of the Father, let the Father act. Give your Father a chance to fulfill the Scripture I just quoted to you."

Christ's means of victory (v.7)
(Deny the opportunity to test God - confidently)

In verse 7 Christ counters Satan's snare with the words "**again** it has been written". The Greek word translated "again"

[ ] in this context means "on the other hand" (cp.NASV). Satan on the one hand offered a proof text to support his allurement; Christ on the other hand reversed the Devil's tempting appeal to Scripture with Scripture. In verse 6, Satan made a hermeneutical mistake of opposing Scripture **to** Scripture. "Psalm 91:11-12, Satan's citation, probably is a Messianic passage and may refer properly to the Lord, But the text must not be used in such a way that it contradicts other valid passages. One must **compare** Scripture with

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.Robertson, p.30.

"MacArthur, p.93.

> Scripture, **not oppose** Scripture to Scripture. The latter is Satan's method here, for in our Lord's answer He cites Deuteronomy 6:16 and uses it to contradict Satan's use of the Psalms passage. Scripture is to be explained by Scripture, not beside Scripture. So does the Lord here - But against Satan's[!]

It is fascinating that Jesus does not correct the misquotation by mentioning the omitted line, nor did he point out Satan's hermeneutical fallacy in misapplying the text. Rather, He used a clear, undeniable passage to contradict Satan's error. Christ boldly asserts: "It is written again, **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God**" (v.7).

In Christ's citation of Deuteronomy 6:16, He quotes the LXX (the Septuagint) exactly. By such use of the Greek translation of the O.T. Hebrew, Christ implicitly shows His approval of translations, written in the language of the day so that people might understand the Sacred Text.

Deuteronomy 6:16 is in a context where Moses prohibits Israel from following after other gods (idols) that they would encounter in the new land (v.14). He then bases such a warning on the fact that "Yahweh your Elohim" (the covenant name for God) is a "jealous God" who would have no option but to exterminate Israel from the Land if such idolatry should occur (v.15). With this promise of discipline in mind, Moses then says: "Ye shall **not tempt** the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah." The negative imperative [ ] + the imperfect verb carries with it a strong durative command. The force of Moses' command gives the injunction that: "you shall **never** tempt the Lord your God."

The word [ ] translated "tempt" (KJV), in most contexts has the idea of testing or proving the quality of someone or something, often through adversity or hardship. The rendering "tempt" - used frequently by the AV and ASV - generally means prove, test, put to the test,

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!Johnson, p.348.

rather than the current English idea of "entice to do wrong"[1] The Greek term employed by Christ also in context has the idea of proving or testing. The word

[ ] literally means to "prove out" or "test out". The point being made is simply that God's trustworthiness is not to be **found out by testing** Him. He is trustworthy because His **Word** declares Him to be such! "To test God is to impose conditions on Him and to make His response to the people's demand in the hour of crisis the condition of their continuing to follow Him."[2]

Moses, in commanding Israel "not to test" God, then gives an illustration of what he means. He says: "you shall never test Yahweh your Elohim **as you tested Him at Massah**" (Deut.6:16).

At Massah (which means "the place of testing") the Israelites argued or chided (hence also the name "Meribah") with Moses over the absence of water in the desert of Rephidim. They behaved rebelliously against both the Lord and Moses in a situation that called for faith and trust. What they basically wanted was some more external proof that Yahweh was among them, as evident by their words "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Ex.17:7).

> "We would explain the text on the analogy of Exodus 17:2,7 as a warning to Israel. When Israel has received all the proofs of the Lord's favor and power described in verses 10 ff., they must not force the Lord, as it were, to provide still more miracles because of their attitude of unbelief!"[3]

Such testing as warned against in Deuteronomy 6:16 and as suggested by Satan in Matthew 4:6, is absolutely wicked! The reason being - it is contrary to faith. In fact it is a substitute for belief. Such a test is an insult to the very nature of God. If one says to God "prove

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[1] Harris, p.581.

[2] Thompson, p.125.

[3] Ridderbos, p.118.

it," he is really calling God a liar. The scientist who says, "I will believe what I can prove in my laboratory," is basically a skeptic. He puts himself in the place of a judge and demands that he be satisfied.

Man is never to put God to the test to see whether he will fulfill his promises of protection. What God promises "He is able to perform," but He is not to be forced to perform. The Lord Jesus Christ - in contrast to the Jews who loved signs (Mt.12:39, 16:4) - refused to force His Father to perform a trick, in proving His validity as "the Son." Rather, Christ proved His Sonship by His obedience. He refused to attempt to dazzle or excite the admiration of Satan by provoking His Father into submission by seeking some carnal sensationalism or spectacular magic. Christ does in the wilderness what Israel failed to do. He refused to test out God. Because He knew that His Father was in His midst, to yield to such beguilement would have been absolute mockery.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION (v.8-10)

Satan's method of temptation (v.8,9)
(Submit yourself - disobediently)

With two strikes against him, Satan in verses 8 and 9 makes one more desperate attempt to seduce the Son of God.

.Pentecost, p. 128.

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

In this temptation Satan appealed to the "lust of the eyes." The Bible declares that "the devil...**sheweth** Him." The author uses the historical present tense to express the vivid picturesqueness of all that was displayed. Luke 4:5 adds the words "in a moment of time" which indicates Satan's mysterious ability. He flashed before the eyes of Christ in an instant all of the world's kingdoms and the "appealing" glory they had. The "**if**" [ ] of verse nine introduces a third class conditional clause, the more probable future one. If we are to take this condition in the usual sense, then it indicates that the devil was quite optimistic, thinking success was likely in his effort to capture the Son of God."

In this allurement Satan tempted Christ with that which He (Christ) ultimately had every right to, but was not His to take yet. The Devil's proposal was basically this: "I can accomplish the will of God for You and You can have the kingdoms of this world right now!"

Satan in verses 8 & 9 makes the mistake of tempting Jesus to presumption, or the forcing of God's hand. It must always be remembered that the promises of Scripture are valid always, but they are valid for us only at God's time. It is always wrong to seek that which God has said "not now" to [ex. Israel's presumptive, premature seeking of a King - I Sam.8; while also rejecting God "from being King over them" (v.7)]. Satan, knowing perfectly well God's time table and Christ's future reign, offers Christ a Kingdom without a cross.

"Johnson, p. 349.

"Walvoord & Zuck, p. 26.

.Johnson, p. 347.

> Instead of a long, bitter road to the throne one short step is offered. Instead of the bitter cup only a single obeisance is commanded. However, it would only be by this one act of worship, that Jesus would also become a rebel against God and at the same time a tool and slave of Satan. And when it was all over, such a transfer would be nothing more than a illusion.

In the previous two temptations, Satan zeroed in on Christ's position (His relationship to the Father). Now, however, the suggestion shifts from "prove to me that your abilities match your position (authority as the Son)," to "take from me what I have authority to give to you." Luke's Gospel reveals Satan as claiming: "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Lk.4:6).

> "In the final temptation, Satan offered Christ His rightful heritage - the kingdoms of this world - for returned worship (Ps.72:8), but without the cross. God has allowed Satan some power in this world (Luke 4:6; Eph.2:2, 6:12; I Jn.5:19), but ultimate authority and ownership belongs to Him (Gen.3:15; Ps.2; Mt.11:27; 28:18)."

It must be pointed out that Satan does (in a sense) have control of the world's present system (II Cor.4:4; Jn.12:31; I Jn.5:19). It was a legitimate offer, because there would be no temptation in it if it was untrue. "The right apparently belonged to him by virtue of his victory over man, the rightful heir to creation, in Eden." On the other hand Satan is actually an illegitimate ruler who had usurped an authority that was not originally his. The Devil actually

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.Lenski, p.155,56.

"Robertson, p. 31.

"Johnson, p. 349.

offered stolen merchandise - a kingdom - that will one day return to the original owner. Satan's offer therefore, was only a temporary "gift", because he one day will meet his end! (Rev.20:10)

Satan, who has always desired the prerogatives that only belong to God (Is.14:13-15), made a vain attempt to gain Christ's **worship**. In doing so he not only desired worship, but he craved a specific manner of worship, signified by the circumstantial participle. What Satan is saying is "worship me by falling down." Such worship (if rendered) would signify that Satan was worthy of it, and thus imply that he was indeed God. Today, though he no doubt desires man's direct worship of himself, Satan basically does not care who man worships.
He is satisfied if he can just divert the worship that belongs exclusively to God Himself."

In the temptation of Christ, Satan's offer was on his own corrupt terms. The price was cheap. He was suggesting that the end justified the means. To such enticements today, the believer must keep in mind that spiritual ends must be attained by spiritual means. No matter how slow and uncertain the promised spiritual ends may seem, we must follow Christ's example.

> "Our Lord is not a Jesuit; the end does not justify the means. He did not use the world, nor its methods, to attain His destiny. He must not become the Messiah of the world, nor of Satan, but of God. As Horatious Banar wrote: "The kingdom that I seek is Thine; so let the way that leads to it be Thine."

Christ's means of victory (v.10)
(Devote yourself to God - exclusively)

To Satan's bid for worship, Christ sternly replies in verse 10: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The Lord

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"Johnson, p.349.

Jesus commands Satan to "**go away**" from Him, and in so doing implies that such a suggestion is utterly unthinkable! At a later time and in a less obvious manner, Satan through Peter tempted Christ to avoid the Cross. To which suggestion Christ similarly responded: "**Get thee behind me, Satan**: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mt. 16:23). In this present temptation, the sharpness of Christ's reply shows what was going on in the devil's mind. "Satan's proposition is this: God has turned all these kingdoms over to him, and he (Satan) is willing to turn them over to Jesus if, as Satan is under God, Jesus will place himself under Satan."

It is again noteworthy that Christ did not overcome Satan by displaying His divine power, nor did He confound him with any other weapon than the Word of God. Christ, as the humble, dependent, self-emptied, obedient Son of God became a model for every believer by His **total** reliance upon the written Word.

The Lord Jesus counters Satan's temptation this time by quoting one of the most powerful verses in the O.T. - Deuteronomy 6:13. In this context of Deuteronomy, after exhorting Israel to guard themselves against forgetting Yahweh (v.12), Moses in verse 13 places heavy emphasis upon the **exclusive** worship of Yahweh. The Hebrew word order reveals this emphasis as the direct objects are placed out of normal position and moved up front in each clause. The verse literally reads: "**Yahweh your Elohim** you shall fear, and **Him** you shall serve, and in **His name** you shall swear." The LXX brings this idea out by adding the word "alone." The point is that fear (reverential worship) and service belong to deity alone! If it is rendered to others, the first commandment is violated and the abomination of idolatry is committed!

"Lenski, p. 155.

Jesus, again responding to Satan's allurement, quotes the LXX, and cites Deuteronomy 6:13 exactly with the exception of one word. Jesus in answering Satan's appeal to worship him, substitutes the word "**worship**" [ ] in the place of "**fear**" [LXX - ; Heb.-]. Our Lord in doing so is not altering the meaning of the Hebrew word "fear" [ ] by translating it "worship", because this is the meaning of the word in the context of Deuteronomy 6:13. The central stress of the chapter is the unity and uniqueness of God coupled with Man's love and **worship** in response to those attributes. Another necessary fact to observe is that "fear" is related to "worship" in that both involve **reverence**. It may also be added that the word "fear" [ ] is used several times in the O.T. as a synonym for worship (cp.II Ki.17:32-34; Deut.14:22-23; Josh.22:25; Psalms 22:22,23).

Among the three imperatives in verse 13, "fear is placed first, as the fundamental characteristic of the Israelitish **worship** of God; it was no slavish fear, but simply the holy awe of a sinner before the holy God, which includes love rather than excludes it. "Fearing" is a matter of the heart; "serving", a matter of working and striving; and "swearing in His name," the practical manifestation of the worship of God in word and conversation."

Combined with the command to "worship/fear" Yahweh is the command to serve Him. The word "serve" [ ] is a contrasting play on words with the word "slaveries" [ ](v.12). God vividly contrasts the old master - Pharaoh - with the new Master -Yahweh. **He alone is worthy of worship and service**. Such was the reply of Christ in delivering to Satan his third strike.

"Keil, p. 325.

CONCLUSION

Matthew 4:11 gives the results of Christ's victory over Satan. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him." James assures us that if one will "resist the devil" then "he will flee from you" (Ja.4:7). But how did Christ resist the Devil? What means to victory over temptation did He reveal by His conquest? In summary it must be noted that in every temptation Jesus ignored the bait and responded with principle! In all three instances the Lord's unvarying reply is "It is written." He did not say "I know" or "I think" or "I feel" or even "I believe", but rather "It is written".

> "The threefold "it is written" highlights the victory, and points the way to victory for the saints. And, it must not be overlooked that His citations were from a book that is often overlooked in Bible Study, **Deuteronomy**. How many texts from this section of Scripture have been hidden in the hearts of the saints? If victory depended upon its use, would the prize be gained?"

The practical lesson and a main point of the passage that must not be missed is that God's Word is desperately needed to battle temptation. Bible memorization and practical application of its principles are indispensible! It is important to note that when the believer does oppose temptation with Scripture (in following Christ's example), the Scriptural principles that the

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"Johnson, p. 351.

Believer arms himself with, must exegetically correspond to the use at hand. In other words, they must be truths that fit the context. Otherwise the believer, rather than waving a sharp double edged sword, is merely taunting the forces of evil with a blunt, dull, ineffective piece of imitation plastic - if you will.

It is also critical to note that Christ in quoting Scripture did not quote it just to take the defensive. It is interesting that Christ did not quote a verse that described Satan's downfall or future doom. In other words He did not quote Scripture merely for the negative purpose of **silencing** the adversary, but did so positively as authority for His position and conduct.

> "Here is where we are so apt to fail; we do not sufficiently use the precious Word of God in this way; we quote it, at times, more for victory over the enemy than for power and authority for our own souls. Thus it loses its power in our hearts."

The story is told of a man who was trying to teach his dog obedience. He would take a large piece of meat and put it in the middle of the floor. Each time the dog saw the meat, it then attempted to take it. The Master in response would swat the dog and say, "No." Soon the dog began to associate the swatting with the word "no" and learned to stop simply when the word was said. What was significant at this time was that when the meat was placed on the floor the dog now would not even look at it but rather would focus its eyes on its master, waiting for his word of approval or denial. The principle to be learned and practiced in temptation is to keep

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"Mackintosh, p. 46.

your eyes focused on the Master. Don't look at the temptation but rather look at the Lord Jesus Christ when temptation comes your way. Cling to a Scripture verse or Bible principle that applies to the particular area of temptation and let that truth fill your mind. When temptation lurks at the door requesting that you doubt, distort, or deny God's Word (cp.Gen.3:1-5), **remain steadfastly looking unto Jesus**, who "spoiled principalities and powers...triumphing over them" (Col.2:15). Faithfully grip the unmovable declarations and promises of God - for this is the only way to gain victory over temptation.

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