CONQUERING TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:1-11

Throughout history (since Eden), men have battled with temptation.

THE PURPOSE OF TESTING (v. 1-2)
Jesus was "led up" by the Holy Spirit into this confrontation. Why the set up? From God's perspective it was a test to prove Christ's righteousness. From Satan's, it was a temptation to get Him to sin. NOTE: God allows Satan to tempt (ex. Job); but Satan is like a dog on a leash--he can only go so far.

Why does God test?

- TO TEACH
  God tested Israel to reveal her heart and teach her dependence (Dt. 8:2-3).
  God tested Christ to prove His sinlessness (to demonstrate Christ's righteous character after the Father's declaration in chapter 3).
- TO MATURE
  Time spent in battle with temptation is not a waste when God is glorified, the believer edified, and Satan mortified!

THE TIME OF TESTING (v. 1-2)
The Tempter came at just the right time (at a suitable "season" - Luke 4:13).

- SATAN TEMPTED AFTER VICTORY
  Mk. 1:12 - Immediately after Christ's baptism/anointing/hailing as "The Beloved Son" in whom the Father was "well-pleased."
- SATAN TEMPTED AT CHRIST'S WEAKEST MOMENT
  1. Jesus faced bad circumstances - wilderness ("the Judean desert"), hot barren, dry.
  2. Jesus was hungry because He had fasted forty days prior to testing.

  *Contrast Adam's fall in perfect circumstances with Christ's victory (the second Adam) in the worst.
  We can't blame circumstances!

* YOU CAN CONQUER TEMPTATION . . .
by responding to the Enemy's attacks like Jesus did!

THE CONFLICT OF TESTING (v. 3-10)
Satan tempts in the areas of: lust of the flesh; lust of the eyes; pride of life (I John 2:16)

I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION (v. 3-4)

A. Satan's Suggestion - "Satisfy yourself - independantly" (v.3)
This test is aimed at "the lust of the flesh."
Satan picks up on the Father's declaration and says, "If you are the son . . ." as the Father said you were.
NOTE: Satan tempts in the areas of:
1) Relationship - "Son"

2) Ability - As the Son, He certainly had the ability - Jesus could just say the words and the stones would immediately become bread. Jesus is called the "word" (Jn. 1:1).

Col. 1:16, Heb. 11:3, Jn. 1:3, 10 - creation
Mt. 8:26 - storm
Jn. 11:43, Mk. 5:41 - raise dead
Mt. 9:6 - heal
Lk. 6:10 - restore a withered hand
Lk. 8:32 - cast out demons

3) Rights - Jesus being Creator of all deserved the right to eat.
Satan is suggesting that Christ go ahead and satisfy himself independently of God's Will.

2. Christ's Defense - "Depend on God's Word - continually" (v.4; Dt.8:3)

Note Christ's response:
1) He did not ignore the temptation
2) He did not defend Himself.
3) He did not reason with Satan.

The verse Christ used was Deut. 8:3.
God is teaching that the source and sustenance of life depends on Him!
God promises over and over to meet our needs (Phil. 4:19; Mt. 6:8, 33).
Life is more than food; there are deeper dimensions to life.
There are times when we must refrain from grabbing immediate satisfaction - if it contradicts God's will, or God's means of getting it (See Jn. 4:31-35).

II. THE SECOND TEMPTATION (v.5-7)

1. Satan's Suggestion - "Surrender yourself - foolishly" (v.5,6)

v.5) Christ's bodily transport to Jerusalem (cp.Acts 8:39 - Phillips transport)
Whereas in the first temptation a need (lack of food) already existed, in the second, Satan suggested that a need be created.
Satan now appeals to the "pride of life"
To be more persuasive, Satan now uses Scripture to justify his suggestion.
Satan's use of Scripture shows:
1) His respect for it (at least when he is dealing with others who respect it)
2) His extensive knowledge of it (cp. His messengers II Cor.11:15).
3) His misuse of it. Satan misquotes Ps.91:11. The liar (Jn.8:44) leaves out the phrase "in all your ways" "all your (righteous) ways"

v.6) In this temptation Satan is implying:
If you won't use your own divine power to help yourself let your father use His divine power to help you.

2. Christ's Defense - "Don't test God - unBiblically" (v.7; Dt.6:16)
Jesus Quotes Deut. 6:16 from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) exactly,

which shows His approval of translations)
The point is: God's trustworthiness is not to be found out by testing Him.
Such testing is absolutely wicked! Why? It is contrary to faith. It insults God.
When you have to say to God: "prove it" you are calling Him a liar.

Examples of testing God:

1) Gideon's fleece.
2) Jews seeking a sign (Mt.12:39; 16:4)

Application: Men test God today by:
1) Saying "I won't believe without proof"
2) Seeking signs
3) Thinking (in pride) that God will make a special allowance for you to do something against His word and get away with it.
4) People who arrogantly sin and dare God to do something about it.

III. THE THIRD TEMPTATION (v. 8-10)

1. Satan's Suggestion - Submit yourself-disobediently" (v.8-9)

Satan appeals to the "the lust of the eyes."
Luke 4:5 says that Satan showed Christ all the kingdoms "in a moment of time" (this shows the mysterious ability of Satan)
In this temptation, what Satan offered could be received by Christ in 3 ways:

a. Satan offers the quick way (wrong time)
b. Satan offers the easy way (cheap price)
Satan offers Christ a kingdom without a cross.
c. Satan offers the wrong way
Satan has always desired the prerogatives that only belong to God (Is. 14:13-15).

2. Christ's Defense - "Devote yourself to God - exclusively" (v.10)

Jesus again places total authority on the Word of God. He quotes Deut. 6:13 (Turn to it and explain)
All other worship (other than to God) is idolatry! (Ex. 20:1ff)
NOTE: Christ is proven to be God because He received worship. (Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9, 17; Jn. 9:35 & 38, 20:28-29).

CONCLU: Mt. 4:11 - Results of victory = "Then the devil leaveth him . . ." (cp. Ja. 4:7).
In every temptation Jesus ignored the bait (NOTE: not the temptation situation) and responded with principle! He did not say: "I think, I know, I feel, I believe" but rather "It is written."

(NOTE: Jesus quoted an often over-looked O.T. book - Deut.)

Note Christ's Weapon: The Word of God

1) This shows the Bible's authority.
2) This shows the Bible's continuing relevancy.
The verse was originally stated some 1,400 years ago, yet still was useful.
3) This shows the Bible`s varied applicability.

Was originally given to Israel, and now is used against Satan.

4) This shows the Bible's suitability - to handle needs of all occasions.

5) This shows the Bible's inspiration - "God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16); "every word" (v. 4)

NOTE: Though Christ's words while on earth had equal authority with the written Word-- He appealed to the written Word! How much more should we?

APPLI: This lesson shows the need for Bible memorization.

NOTE: 1) All quoted verses must correspond to context; otherwise when you think you are waving a sharp double-edged sword, you are only waving imitation plastic.

2) Christ's quotation were not just to take the defensive (to silence Satan) but the offensive (to give Himself authority for His position and conduct).

Cling to the Word of God! Know it; Read it; Hear it; Meditate on it; Memorize it; USE it!