

The test

Matt 4:1-11

The Temptation of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

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." 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.

Note the "Then" that Matt 4:1 begins with - it connects the baptism of Jesus to what follows - how important is that connection? Compare the word "immediately drove" and "led" in the Mark and Luke accounts.

Keeping the connection in mind - what "echos" [or links/cross references] do you hear in the accounts? Where have you heard stories like:

a dove/Spirit over waters,

wilderness,

40,

bread,

"if..."

"I give it to whom I will"

etc before?

How important are those echos? Read the account through just allowing the echos to speak to you. I believe they are purposefully there to help us understand the significance of Jesus.

Some commentators think these experiences of Jesus are better understood as the "Tests of Jesus" rather than the "Temptations of Jesus" - what do you think? Which would you argue and why?

How do you imagine the satan approached Jesus [Matt 4:3 / Lk 4:3] - a horned being with pitch fork, an angel of light, an epiphany?

Mk 1:12-13

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Morna Hooker p49

The verb translated drove out [ἐκβάλλει] is a forceful one...: it is, for example, used repeatedly by Mark for the expulsion of demons; neither Matthew nor Luke uses it here. Mark differs from the other accounts in that he says that he was with the wild animals. Why might Mark have put that detail in?

Lk 4:1-13

It is not clear to me why Matthew's and Luke's order of the tests differ, nor are told why. Have you come across any good explanations?

Satan quotes Psalm 91:11 & 12 in Matt 4:6 and Luke 4:10 & 11. How would you counter the argument made here?

How are the temptations/tests of Jesus also in your life?

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NOTES

From Matt 4:7 - Test - is same root as why the Spirit is leading Jesus into the wilderness - to be tested. Jesus is saying - I am here to be tested in my trust toward God, not God be tested in His care of me. Essentially to fail here is to deny his identity as the beloved son of God, in whom God is well pleased.

From Matt 2:15

The Rabbis had four modes of scriptural interpretation. These are:

1. **P'shat** ["simple"] the plain literal sense of the text. Grammatical-historical exegesis.
2. **Remez** ["hint"] wherein a word, phrase or other element in the text hints at a truth not conveyed by the P'shat.
3. **Drash** or midrash ["search"] an allegorical or homiletical application of a text. The implied presupposition is that the words of scripture can legitimately become grist for the mill of human intellect, which God can guide to truths not directly related to the text at all.
4. **Sod** ["secret"] A mystical or hidden meaning arrived at by operating on the numerical values of the Hebrew letters, noting unusual spellings, transposing letters, and the like.

David Stern [Jewish NT Commentary p12] argues that Matthew is giving us a Remez - a hint of a very deep truth. Israel is called God's son as far back as Ex 4:22. The Messiah is referred to as God's son earlier in Matt 1:18-25 reflecting OT passages such as Isa 9:5-6, Ps

2:7, & Prov 30:4. Thus the Son equals the son: The Messiah is equated with, is one with, the nation of Israel. This is the deep truth Matthew is 'hinting' at.