

The Temptation

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 January 2017

Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read. And I'd like to concentrate on Matthew 4 at verse 3.

But maybe we'll just bow our heads in prayer first. Our Father in heaven, we come now to your word. And we ask that we would hear you speaking to us.

That we would not grieve your spirit. That we would not quench your spirit. That we would not resist your spirit. We pray, Heavenly Father, for your blessing upon us now.

As we seek to study your word. And we ask this for your own glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Gospel of Matthew chapter 4. And we read again verses 3 and 4. And the tempter came and said to him, that is to Christ.

[1 : 18] If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he, that is Christ, answered, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Man shall not live by bread alone.

Very few intelligent people argue with the first part of this verse.

Man shall not live by bread alone. Man shall not live by bread alone.

Man shall not live by bread alone. Man shall not live by bread alone. As we said, it is the second part. Man needs every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

[2 : 56] That is what causes the trouble. Now, as we look at these three temptations of Christ, I want first, or basically, to note some things about the temptations themselves.

There was far more than three temptations to begin with. Our Savior was tempted 40 days and 40 nights. But only these three are recorded for our benefit.

And in many ways, you know, what we have here could be said to be a rerun. A rerun of what took place in the Garden of Eden.

When mankind fell in Adam. Note first of all, the timing of these temptations.

Isn't that very significant? That's why we read the last part of chapter 3. You note the timing.

[4 : 08] No sooner does God make a categoric statement than Satan comes along and contradicts it.

What has God the Father just said? What has he just said about Christ?

You are. Behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son.

Do you notice the preamble to the temptations? If you are the Son of God. My friend, it's no different today.

Satan has not changed his tactics. He's the same evil devil contradicting what God states categorically and clearly.

[5 : 14] Isn't that what happened in the Garden of Eden? Could God be any clearer to Adam in Genesis 2.17, I think it is?

In the day you take that forbidden fruit, you will surely die. That's pretty clear.

That's pretty distinct. You will surely die. Satan comes along.

And what did he say in the garden? You will not die. No, no, no. Now, tracing back what is said in the original, we are told that the words to be fully interpreted would mean, the day you take that forbidden fruit, you will begin, the processes of death will begin to operate in your body.

indeed, throughout the whole universe. A disjunction commenced in the whole universe the day Adam took the forbidden fruit.

[6 : 31] By the way, I think this portion at the end of chapter 3 in Matthew is the only place in Scripture, if I'm not mistaken, where you have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit being observable to the senses together.

I don't think you'll find that anywhere else in Scripture. On the banks of the Jordan there, God's voice was heard with the ear.

The Holy Spirit was seen with the eye as a dove. And the Savior himself could be touched there in person.

If you were there, you could shake his hand, as it were. Observable to all the senses, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So that's the timing. But you know, there's something else even more significant to naught about the whole existence, about the temptations.

And that is verse 1 of chapter 4. Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

[7 : 57] What is going on? The Holy Spirit leading someone into temptation.

What in this world is happening? very important. Very important. This is why I said it's basically a rerun of what took place in the Garden of Eden.

It's Christ that's been tempted. Is he not? Well, we call him the second Adam.

The first Adam fell, our catechism tells us, through what? Through the temptation of Satan. He was representing the whole human race as we all know too well if we study it.

He was representing the human race. Oh, how he let us down. There was Adam with the opportunity to take you, to take me, to paradise forever.

[9 : 10] and he blew it. He blew it. Not just for himself and Eve but for you and for me.

He was the first representative of the human race. Christ is the second representative for the human race.

But you see, the question arises, does it not? Is he going to be any better than the first? The first fell through the temptation of Satan?

Can the second representative resist temptation? That's the test. That's what's going on.

That's why the spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted, to demonstrate and to prove Christ is far better than Adam.

[10 : 12] Christ won't let you down like Adam let you down. What an important thing it is to be in Christ. What an important thing it is.

How safe you are in Christ. Can the second Adam, as it were, save, be a stronger representative than the first?

Can he resist temptation and save his people from their sins? That's what's going on.

That's why the spirit led him to be tempted. The spirit now will never lead you and me into temptation.

There's a third thing to note just about the whole fact itself. Jesus, as our second representative, had to face temptation as a human being, not as a divine person.

[11 : 29] He had to resist temptation temptation in his human nature, as it were. He was forbidden, as it were, to switch over to divine power and say, well, I can do anything and everything.

If he is to be our second representative, he has to resist temptation with exactly the same instruments and agents and tools as you and I have to resist temptation.

Namely, namely, the guidance of the word of God and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Christ cannot or could not hear resist temptation by, as it were, switching over to divine power. God is a representative of human beings.

You see, you and I have fallen into the trap nowadays, and how often have you heard it when somebody is found out, when some politician is found out, what is often said, oh, well, he's only human.

[12 : 49] Humans can't resist sin. That's not technically true. temptation. Here's Christ, a perfect human being resisting temptation.

It's fallen human beings that cannot resist temptation. You and I are fallen, but it's not tied to humanity itself that we cannot resist temptation.

But in Adam, we all fell, and we are all sinful. But then there's Christ, a second representative for us.

Isn't it instructive how Christ sent Satan away with the word of God alone?

God and in these days there were no copies of the scriptures. There's no pocket Bibles you could carry, not to speak of smartphones.

[14 : 09] With knowledge of the book of Deuteronomy itself, the Savior drove Satan away. Could you do that?

Could I do that? What does that say about our knowledge of the word? The Savior, by his knowledge of Deuteronomy alone, can send Satan packing, as we say. just something else we really ought to note. Verse 11, then the devil left them. After him saying three times, it is written, the devil left them and behold angels came and were ministering to him. Now this whole account is also recorded by Luke and in chapter 4 verse 13, Luke tells us that Satan is very interesting the way he put it, Satan departed until an opportune time. Take note, Satan left tempting Christ not for good, not for good, but until another suitable opportunity for temptation arose.

[15:48] Satan watches for opportunities to tempt. And if he never stopped coming back to tempt Christ, tempt you, do you think you're going to succeed?

He never stopped coming back to tempt Christ. So my friend, don't you ever be disturbed. If you're a Christian and you wonder, why, why, why am I so frequently tempted by Satan? There must be something wrong. No, no, no, no. Satan cannot change his nature. blessed be God, human beings, nature can be transformed by Christ, but not Satan. He can't change his nature. He hates the children of God. He hates someone that reminds them of Christ, so he'll not stop coming back to tempt you.

[17:17] Don't fall into the trap of thinking we Christians can become immune to temptation. You can't become immune to it, but you can learn how to resist it.

we can't stop being tempted, but we can learn how to resist temptation. Well, just a very brief look at the temptations themselves.

Just look at them from the perspective, the first being regarding the provision of God, the second regarding the protection of God, and the third regarding the promise of God.

The first temptation, hunger. That's natural. That is a human need. Can God provide?

You often think if you're going to obey God, if you're going to obey Christ, well, you see, I won't have this, I won't have that, and I need this, and I need that.

[18:48] You need never worry about needs if you're serving Christ. The word of God promises to supply all our need in Christ Jesus.

Jesus. The problem is you and I sometimes get confused between what we need on the one hand and what we want on the other hand.

We needn't lose a moment's sleep over not getting what we need. My God, we're told, will supply all your need in Christ Jesus.

In Christ Jesus. The second temptation is regarding the protection of God.

Throw yourself down from here, God will protect you, because there's a verse in the Bible that says, notice, you see, Satan was driven away from the first temptation by the quotation of scripture.

[20:03] So, wily, crafty, evil, subtle person that he is, he says, oh, I can do that too.

I can quote scripture too. But do you notice how he quotes it? He quotes from Psalm 91 verses 12 and 13.

maybe I should read it. On their hands, well, verse 11 perhaps, he will command his angels concerning you, you see, Satan knew Psalm 91 was about Christ.

Satan knew that. Satan knows the scriptures very, very well. He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against the stone.

You will tread on the lion and the adder, and the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. Now listen, Satan will quote scripture to you.

[21:15] But note how he does it. He actually misquotes scripture so often. first mistake or first error in quoting scripture was he stopped.

He stopped at verse 12. Why didn't you read verse 13? Well, you know why. Well, I read it again. You will tread on the lion and the adder.

The young lion and the serpent. you will trample under foot. Isn't that interesting? He doesn't like hearing that.

There's a prediction that Christ is to stamp again. You see, that would have reminded him of what God said to him in the first promise in Genesis 3 15.

he will crush your head. You will bruise his heel, but he will bruise your hand down.

[22:30] Satan is predicted as two animals you can see in the Bible, a lion for strength and a serpent for subtlety.

If he can't, if he doesn't deceive you, he'll get you by sheer power. If he doesn't get you by sheer power, he can get you through subtlety and deception.

But there's a promise that Christ will bruise his head and trample on him. He'll not quote that. He'll not quote that.

He stops there. It's very, very important when we quote scripture to quote it in context. But do you also note, he doesn't just miss bits, well, he stops reading it, but he also misses bits out.

He does not quote the bit about he will guard you in all your ways. You see, God does guard his people if they're in his ways.

[23 : 41] If they follow his ways. If they keep his commandments. If they trust in him. He misses that bit out.

God's means of protection have to be employed. They have to be used. Now, here's a very important lesson.

Satan will quote scripture, but never to make you obey it. It's always to make you misunderstand it and to disobey it. How many students I can speak from experience have gone to preach their first sermon and say, oh, well, Satan will quote them.

You don't need, you don't need to worry beforehand what you'll speak. The Savior said that in Mark 13, 11, don't premeditate it beforehand, the Spirit will give you what to say.

And off the young student goes, I don't need to prepare, I don't need to worry, and he falls flat on his face. Because the relevant, take that in scripture, that quotation, you do not need to premeditate what you'll say beforehand, has to do with persecution.

[25 : 03] It has to do with the specific situation of being called before tribunals to give an account of why you believe in Christ.

The context is persecution and being arrested before authorities. Whereas the scriptures concerning about speaking in Christ's name, well, that should be from 2 Timothy 2.15, study to make yourself approved that you may rightly, correctly explain the word of truth.

You see, it's got to be quoted in context. The, oh, the third protection, the third temptation is regarding the promise of God.

All the kingdoms, again the devil took them into a high mountain and showed them all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said, if you fall down and wash at me, I'll give you all these.

Well, you see, the father promised Christ, the son, all the kingdoms of the world if he would go to the cross.

[26 : 26] If he'd go to the cross. see what Satan's doing? I'll give you all that without any suffering.

Just bow down to me. It's all yours. Just bow down to me. You see, he offers shortcuts almost all the time.

Instead of the sufferings of the cross, cross, just bow down to me. You know, your salvation and my salvation was on a knife edge then.

Just think of it. one little genuflection, as it were, from Christ. And it's all gone. It's all lost.

He's worshipped the devil. He's lost the temptation. What a saviour we have in Christ. And I'll tell you, another occasion when your salvation and my salvation was on a knife edge.

[27 : 36] When he was on the cross and they said to him, come down and we'll believe you then. Come down.

Just come down from the cross. Your salvation, my salvation, on a knife edge then. What a great saviour we have in Christ.

What a great saviour. Well, Satan, will offer us shortcuts.

And he will offer us no suffering. No suffering. You follow me, you can no suffering. Satan will quote scripture, but it's never ever to get you to obey God.

God. It's always a little twist in it, a misquote, taken out of context to get you to disobey what God has said.

[28 : 48] That's why it's so important to know our scriptures well. Satan tried it on Christ. He's going to try it on you and me.

We've got to know our scripture well. well, our time is up. What a wonderful thing it is to be a Christian.

What a wonderful thing it is to be in Christ. Is he your representative? Are you in Christ?

Listen, see when Christ, see Christ's victory over Satan here. If you're a Christian, that victory is yours because you're in Christ.

If you believe in Christ, you're in him and you are in him when he resisted the temptation. He's your representative.

[29 : 57] He succeeded. So that means you succeed. If you're a Christian, you've succeeded. You're on your way to glory.

You're on your way to heaven. There's no ifs, there's no buts. You're on your way to heaven because you're in Christ. That's a message.

Are you in Christ? Are you in Christ? Christ's victory over Satan is your victory. Christ's victory over the grave is your victory.

Christ's victory over sin is your victory over sin if you're in Christ. So whatever you do, whatever you think, be in Christ.

One last thing. I said, I'm sure I said, that Christ was the second Adam.

[31 : 05] Actually, you don't find that statement in the Bible. I was looking for the text in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 15:45, which says, and so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the second Adam was made a quickening spirit.

By computer coming back and saying, there's no such verse in the Bible. There isn't. I misquoted it. What 1 Corinthians 15:45 says, and so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam, was made a quickening spirit.

The last Adam. Have you got the message? There will be no third Adam. Oh, bless God, there's a second chance in Christ, but there will be no third chance.

Christ is your last chance. Christ is your only hope. Are you in Christ? What a glorious future you have.

It's all been one. It's been one in the wilderness, and it's been one on the cross. Are you in Christ? It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

[32 : 49] May God, the Holy Spirit, make his word effectual to every one of us. Let's