

Bible Readings

Genesis 2:15-17

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

Genesis 3:1-8

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so, they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden

Matthew 4:1-17

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Jesus Begins to Preach

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people living in darkness

have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of the shadow of death

a light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Sermon

7-Feb-21

The Testing of Jesus (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-8 and Matthew 4:1-17)**Intro**

- We're looking at those Bible passages in Genesis but our main focus will be on Mathew 4.
- It would be good to have your Bibles turned to Genesis 2 initially.
- Let me pray first...

We can all face different types of temptations

[PowerPoint 1 -Temptation]



Here's a few different types of temptations:

1. 1st - Natural temptations - things to do with our nature and desires. A desire to be accepted might make us super selfish. And there's desires such as sexual desires and lust, a desire for too much alcohol and food - or a desire for more and more stuff - or more and more money. If we follow these natural desires - they will become our focus - and God will be left out of the picture.

2. 2nd - **Influential** temptations - where we are influenced by other people - to do the wrong thing. As we'll see shortly with Adam and Eve.
3. 3rd - **Ego** temptation - because of the position we are in at work or school or home or church - it can go to our head - and ego gets the better of us - and we can lose our integrity and give in to sins like: pride, greed, lust, compromise, and arrogance.
4. 4th - **Persistent** temptation - this is where we are tempted with the same thing day after day and eventually cave in. For example - we spend more and more time on our devices or watching TV or sport - and as a result - we neglect our loved ones - and neglect God.
5. 5th - **Circumstantial** temptation - this is where we find ourselves in a certain set of circumstances which leads us to sin - we might be alone and tempted to steal - or might be on our own with a beautiful woman or handsome man - or alone on a computer and looking at pornography or chatting to women or men on-line - whilst our spouse is asleep...

All these temptations can lead to sin - if we give in to them....

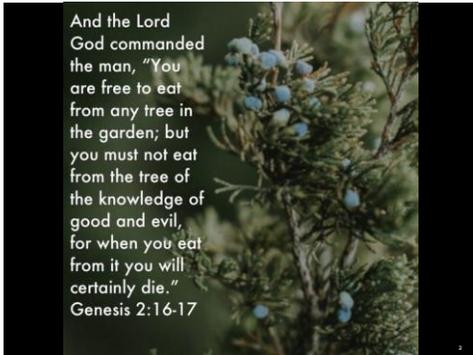
Which brings us to our OT passage this morning from **Genesis 2** and **Genesis 3**

[Please turn to [Genesis 2:14-17](#)]

How The Devil Tempts Adam and Eve (Gen 2:15-17; 3:1-8)

Here we find the first man Adam is given one rule

[PowerPoint 2 - Rule]

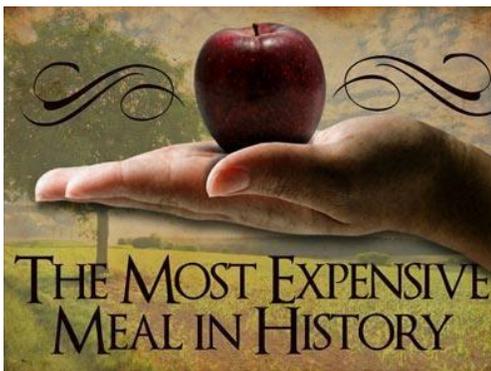


The rule was they were free to eat from any tree in the garden, but must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when they eat from it, they will certainly die.

[Now if you turn to Genesis chapter 3]

We see how Adam and his wife Eve were tempted

[PowerPoint 3 - Fall]



The crafty serpent (which is the devil) sows a seed of doubt - see v1: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

See how the **devil twists what God says to make out God is mean** saying they **can't eat from any tree, when in fact, it's only one tree.**

Also, **Eve, is slightly confused on two points:** a) she refers to the tree of knowledge of good and evil as the **tree in the middle of the garden; perhaps Adam didn't communicate this rule properly to her;** and b) **she says they can't "touch" that tree; which is not what God said.**

The **serpent increases the doubt and temptation, by contradicting what God said.** The serpent says v4 - **they won't die - rather they will be like God, knowing good and evil.** This **not only makes God out to be mean again by not wanting them to be like God;** and it is **also attractive** to them to **be like God and to have wisdom.** It's **just too tempting to resist.**

Why did they give in to the temptation?

They were **convinced that God was holding back on them and that God didn't want them to be like Him.**

Also, they wanted to please themselves - not God.

And the idea of being like God and having more wisdom was irresistible!

Also, Adam, didn't stop Eve, when she was about to disobey the rule.

And, the devil, is a convincing con-man. Con-men are charming, believable, and give enough truth, to make it tempting!

[PowerPoint 4-Sin and death]



Because Adam and Eve gave in to Satan's tempting.

Two things have come into the world.

Sin and Death.

And with it - a **broken world** - full of **broken relationships**

And most significantly - a **broken relationship** between God and human beings.

God desires a relationship with humans - because He loves them - and because

God is love (1 John 4:7-12)

So, His plan all along was to **send Jesus** - His Beloved **Son** - on a **rescue mission**

- to fix the broken relationship between God and humans - **AND** - to fix sin.

[PowerPoint 5-Baptism]



Last week - we saw that **Jesus began His ministry** - by being **baptized by John** the Baptist

Present at that **baptism** - was God the **Father**, God the **Holy Spirit** (in the form of a dove) and God, the **Son**, Jesus. The **Trinity**.

The **Father** and the **Spirit** endorse the **Son's ministry**.

Now before Jesus goes any further in His ministry.

Is He able to fix sin?

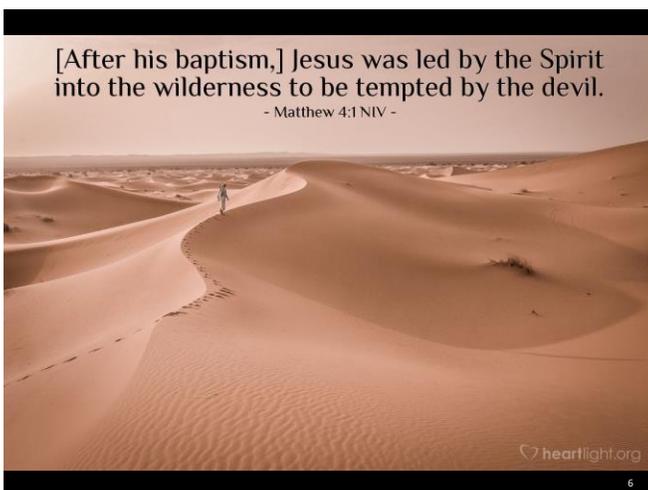
To do so, He must not give into temptation.

How The Devil Tests Jesus (Matt 4:1-11)

So, if you turn to **Matthew 4 - verse 1** - we see

Then **Jesus was led by** the **Spirit** into the **wilderness** to be tempted [or **tested**] by the **devil**.

[PowerPoint 6-widlerness]



God the **Father** allows **Jesus**, the **Son**, to be **tested** by the Devil.

To make this testing more difficult to endure.

We see in v2 - **Jesus has fasted for 40 days and 40 nights.**

He's very hungry! And very vulnerable.

Before we look at how the **Devil tests Jesus.**

It's worth remembering too - that in the **Old Testament** - God's people - **Israel** - are referred to as God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22)

And it's worth remembering that when **God brought the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt** - and **brought them** out into the **wilderness** - they **wandered in the wilderness for 40 years** (not 40 days) - and when they **first went into the wilderness** - they were **hungry and thirsty** and **complained to God** (have you brought us out here to die) - yet **God provided food and drink for them.**

And **God gave them rules** (just like He gave Adam and Eve a rule) - and **the people of Israel couldn't and wouldn't keep those rules** - they **sinned and sinned** - they **gave into temptation after temptation**

So along comes Jesus

He's **representing the first humans Adam and Eve** - in fact Jesus is referred to as the **2nd Adam** - And **Jesus represents Israel (God's firstborn Son)**

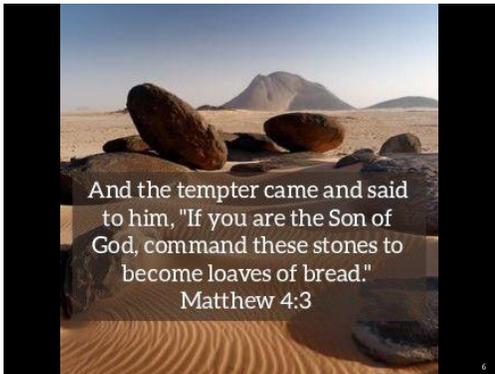
Will Jesus be able to succeed where Adam and Eve failed and where Israel failed?

Now **let's look at the three tests that the Devil tries on Jesus**

First Test (vv3-4)

1st test is testing whether Jesus really is God's Son.

[PowerPoint 7-stones/bread]



See verse 3 - **If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread**
It's like **the Devil is saying** - *if you're really God's son, why has the Father put you here in the wilderness - AND - if you're really God's Son - why don't you make food out of these stones -after all you've got God's powers.*

Yes, **Jesus could have easily done what the Devil said** - but that wasn't God's will for His Son - His Son had to follow what the Father wanted (John 5:30; 6:38) not what the Devil wanted.

[PowerPoint 8-not bread alone]



Jesus answered the Devil's test with a quote from scripture - from Deut 8:3 - 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God

What Jesus is saying is - we don't just need physical food - like bread and cereal and meat - we need spiritual food - we need to feed off God's Word and be **spiritually fed.**

It's when we don't feed off God's Word - our closeness to God is reduced - and we leave ourselves open to giving into temptation.

When was the last time we read a whole book of the Bible?

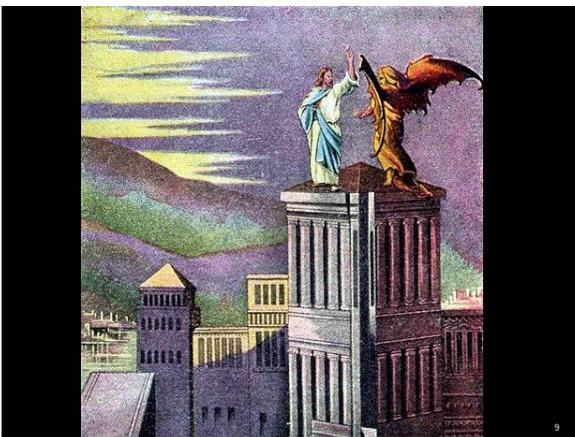
Second Test (vv5-7)

The devil continues his attack with the 2nd test.

It's like the devil says to himself - 'okay, Jesus just quoted from scripture I'll use scripture to test Jesus now'

See verses 5 to 7

[PowerPoint 9-highest point]

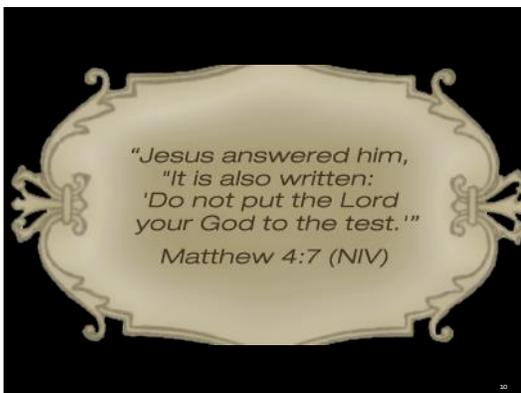


The **devil takes Jesus** to the **highest point** of the **temple** in **Jerusalem** - and says **throw yourself off here** because scripture says in **Psalm 91:11-12** - that **God will command His angels to save you.**

Again, of course, if Jesus did throw Himself off - God would command His angels to save Jesus. In fact, Jesus could save Himself - and just glide down to the ground if He wanted.

But again, that's not God's will for His Son. His **Son had to follow what the Father wanted** (John 5:30; 6:38) not what the Devil wanted.

[PowerPoint 10-don't test God]



So, **Jesus answered the devil** with another verse from scripture from Deut 6:6 - **Do not put your God to the test.**

In other words, no one has the right to challenge God's plan - He is the creator and **ruler** of the **Heavens and the Earth.**

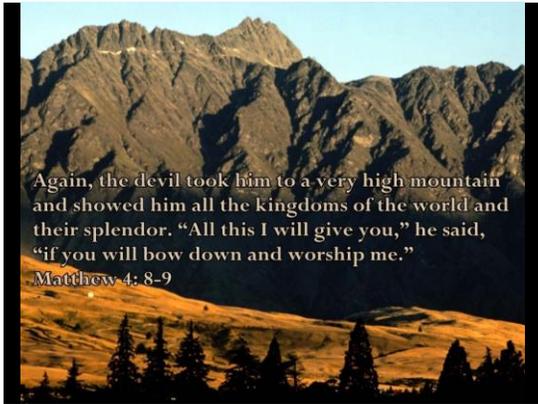
None of us can second-guess God? None of us for one moment **know enough** to **call God into question?**

Third Test (vv8-11)

So, the **devil moves on** to his **3rd test** - **verses 8 to 11**

The devil took Jesus to a high mountain where He had a view of all the Kingdoms in the world.

[PowerPoint 11-Mountain]



Now remember, the devil, is the prince of this dark sinful world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2) - and the devil wants nothing more than to be worshipped like God.

In fact, that's why the devil was cast out of Heaven in the first place - because he wanted to be God and to be worshipped (see Isaiah 14:12-13 & Luke 10:18)

So here the Devil offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus will just bow down and worship him.

The devil is offering Jesus a short cut.

But the Father has already promised the Son all nations as His inheritance (Psalm 2:8; 22:22-32)

And besides the Father's will is for the Son to come to Earth and go to the Cross - so that people can be forgiven of their sins.

If Jesus goes against the Father's will - He will be sinning - and then no longer sinless - and His mission to the cross will be not be possible. [A sinful man could not save others from sin!]

[PowerPoint 12-Away Satan]

MATTHEW 4:10

JESUS SAID TO HIM, "AWAY FROM ME, SATAN! FOR IT IS WRITTEN: WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY."

Jesus' answer to the devil - verse 10 - is to say -

"Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

That's certainly something we can say to the devil - when we face temptation.

So v11 - the devil left Jesus - Luke's gospel of this same event says - the devil left him until an opportune time.

So, the devil has not finished testing Jesus - and don't believe for a moment he's done testing and tempting us.

Once Jesus has been tested and passed - He is able to continue His ministry...

Jesus couldn't expect people to obey God - if He can't do it Himself.

Successful Ministry (Matt 4:12-17)

In the **remaining verses - 12 to 17**

Jesus' **ministry is described**

[PowerPoint 13-Ministry]

It's very simple

Jesus is the Light of the World - and He's come to shine His light on this dark sinful world - and expose the darkness of sin - and call people to leave the devil's dark sinful world and come into His glorious light - where he can take away people's sin - and swap it for forgiveness

But it requires a response from people

There in v17 - people must repent - that is - turn away from their sinful ways - turn back to God - and say sorry for their sins - and believe Jesus is the only one who can take away their sin - and then commit to following God's way, not the devil's way

Strangely enough the devil is another witness of Jesus' credentials. The devil knows Jesus is God's Son!

Application

[PowerPoint 14-Heading]

Some take home applications this morning then - from all of this:

[PowerPoint 14a]

1. #1 - Jesus passed the tests/temptations from the devil - if He didn't - He would not have been able to save us from sin and death - because He would have taken the short cut instead of the Cross - and that would not have been the Father's Will. He would have disobeyed God and sinned. And therefore, our sins wouldn't be forgiven and we would still be in our sin - and we would go to Hell - rather than Heaven.

[PowerPoint 14b]

2. #2 - Because Jesus passed these tests - and He is sinless - He not only fixes our sins - but He also makes it possible for us not to fear death- as 1 Corinthians 15:54 says - because of Jesus' resurrection:
 "Death has been swallowed up in victory"
 As believers - because of Jesus' obedience to the Father's will - we no longer need to fear dying.

[PowerPoint 14c]

3. #3 - We give into temptation because our physical needs and wants become more important than obeying God's Word.
 When we allow our circumstances to dictate our actions, instead of following God's will, we sin. [Example of Missionary Doctor] **The answer is to feed more off God's Word - and answer temptation from God's Word.**
Remember God's Word is a lamp to our feet (Psalm 119:105).

Remember God's Word helps us to know how we are saved through Jesus - and God's Word teaches us, rebukes us, corrects us and trains us to be servants of God - not self-serving!

How much time are we spending in God's Word?

[PowerPoint 14d]

4. #4 - Don't think if we manage to have a victory over temptation - that it guarantees freedom from further temptations. If anything, each victory we experience only makes the devil try even harder.

The devil used Peter, to tempt Jesus to abandon the cross (Matt 16:21-23)

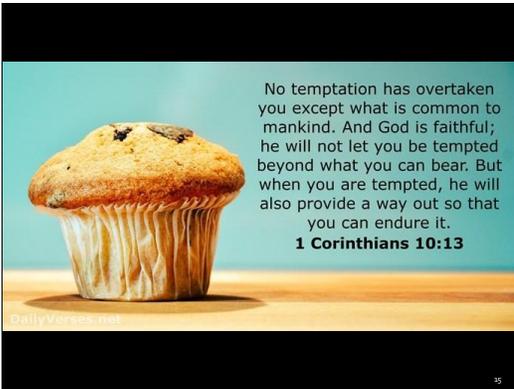
When Jesus fed the 5000, the devil used the people, to tempt Jesus to an "easy kingdom" - by making Him King by force (John 6:15)

Each temptation we encounter - means we need to resist the devil (James 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8-9) - and flee from our evil desires (2 Tim 2:22). Get away from what's tempting us - quick!

When we flee temptation - make sure we don't leave a forwarding address (anonymous)

Conclusion

[PowerPoint 15-1 Cor 10:12-13]



One final word on temptation... and it's a **great promise from God** - from 1 Cor 10:12-13

¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

God will provide a way out for us - but we must take it!

Let's pray...