

ChristReformationChurch

Tillamook, Oregon

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com

www.lightfordarktimes.com

The Gospel According to Matthew

Israel Gets it Right this Time – Through Christ

February 18, 2018

Sermon Text: Matthew 4:1-11

Scripture Reading: Deut 6

Mat 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

(3) And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." (4) But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

(5) Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the

temple (6) 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.'" (7) Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall 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 glory. (9) And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." (10) 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.'"

(11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Once again we see obvious parallels here with the history of the Jews at the time of the exodus. Called out of slavery, redeemed by blood, led by Moses through the Red Sea, they came

into the wilderness and were tested. They failed the test quickly and miserably. They grumbled. They disobeyed God's Law. They worshipped idols. They intermarried with pagans and embraced their false gods. Of that entire first generation only two were found faithful and saw the promised land – Joshua and Caleb – and Moses eventually.

God's purpose for which He called them out of Egypt was this:

Exo 19:4-6 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. (5) Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; (6) and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

In other words, it was through Israel that God's promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled and all the nations blessed by that promise. But it never happened, all because of Israel's sin. The Old Covenant was weak, not because God's Law was deficient, but because of sin:

Rom 7:7-13 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not

have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." (8) But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. (9) I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. (10) The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. (11) For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (12) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (13) Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

So how is this ever going to happen? Somehow, Israel is going to have to be victorious, obey God's Law perfectly, conquer Satan when he comes as tempter, AND atone for the first Adam's sin. Where is this Israel going to come from? How is there ever going to be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, so that all the creation will become Eden once more?

And Matthew is giving us the answer right here. God effected all of this and more through His Son, the true Israel. That is what this wilderness temptation

business is all about. Jesus is God's Son, the true Israel, the real Seed of Abraham, come to lead a new people out of slavery. But if this is going to happen, He has to get it right. Satan comes, as he always does, to do his best to thwart God's plan.

Let's look then at the first of these 3 temptations brought against Christ:

Mat 4:1-3 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (3) And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

You remember the first Israel's failure in regard to hunger-

Exo 16:1-4 They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. (2) And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, (3) and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole

assembly with hunger." (4) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.

The Lord brought them manna and quail, yet they still grumbled. Hebrews describes their character-

Heb 3:7-12 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, (8) do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, (9) where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. (10) Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' (11) As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" (12) Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

Evil, unbelieving hearts. There was the problem.

So God's purpose never changed. He would establish that holy nation. Not by compromising His holy Law, somehow lowering the standard (*which is what many professing Christians seem to believe*), but by sending a second Adam to fulfill it perfectly. The Law is NOT

evil. It is holy and righteous and good. Again, many professing Christians believe that the Law is a bad thing. That grace and mercy and love and forgiveness are the thing and that somehow these supplant the Law. Not so. The Law is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and unless *by works of the Law* Christ met every one of God's demands, there would be no grace or mercy.

Rom 3:31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Alright then, just as Israel went from Egypt into the wilderness to be tested, so the Spirit now leads Christ into the wilderness *for the same reason*. He fasted 40 days and 40 nights. The appearance of 40 here is no accident. Israel was 40 years in the wilderness. Listen to G.K. Beale once again: [New Testament Biblical Theology] -

“Jesus’ baptism signifies not only the beginning of a new exodus but also a new creation, since he has come to reverse the curses of the fall...the first act of which is to defeat the devil during the wilderness temptations, to which both Adam and Israel had succumbed. After his baptism, Jesus steps directly into the land of promise to begin his new creation/exodus mission which, as we will see later, is but a foreshadowing of the ultimate promised land of the new creation. Thus, Christ begins to

rule over the powers of evil in beginning fulfillment of the Adamic commission to rule and subdue and in contrast to the first Adam, who was ruled over and subdued by the serpent.”

See it? We should not be surprised at the appearance of the devil, the serpent, right at the beginning of this Adam's ministry. It is the tree in Eden all over again. Any mere human being would have succumbed and fallen. Our Perfect Moses however has appeared and the outcome will be very different.

Listen again to Beale as he explains further:

“Jesus ‘fasted forty days and forty nights’ in the wilderness during his temptation by Satan. This episode echoes Israel's 40 years in the wilderness. If so, the 40 years figuratively are reduced to days. However, a perhaps better and more specific background is Exodus 24:18; 34:28 (also Deut 9:9-11) where Moses was on Mount Sinai (located in the wilderness) for “forty days and forty nights” and “did not eat bread or drink water.” He repeated this again when he received the Ten Commandments on Sinai a second time (Deut 10:9-10). Moses was a representative of Israel at Sinai when he received the Law. As true Israel and a latter-day Moses, Jesus is the micro-Israel who has replaced the

macronational Israel. Each response by Jesus to Satan is taken from a response by Moses to Israel's failure in the wilderness (Deut 8:3 in Matt 4:4; Deut 6:16 in Matt 4:7; Deut 6:13 in Matt 4:10). Jesus resists the same temptations to which Israel succumbed."

The other Gospel writers, Luke and Mark, add their nuances of Jesus' ministry as well. This shows how they carefully selected and arranged their account so that we might have even more insight into God's purpose in Christ. For example:

- Luke's genealogy of Christ ends with "Adam, the son of God." It is then immediately followed by the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. This is meant clearly to tell us that Jesus is the end-time true Adam come to successfully do what the first Adam failed at. (See also Romans chapter 5 for more on this very point)
- Mark, in his gospel, tells us this:

Mar 1:12-13 Immediately the Spirit *impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. (13) And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and **He was with the wild beasts**, and the angels were ministering to Him.

Why does Mark mention the wild beasts? Nothing is in the Bible happenstance. As always, the key is to put the statement into biblical context. What do we know about "wild beasts"? Well, we know this:

Lev 26:21-22 "Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins. (22) And I will let loose the wild beasts against you, which shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock and make you few in number, so that your roads shall be deserted.

The animals were to be subject to man, and before the Fall they were. Part of the curse for sin was the savage nature of the animals. And yet here in the wilderness following Jesus' victory over Satan, Mark tells us that he was with the wild beasts. (I suppose there may also be an allusion here to Daniel (the Son of Man) in the lions' den where the Lord sent an angel to close the lions' mouths).

In the new creation, the hostility of the beasts will be no more:

Isa 11:6-9 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) The

cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. (9) They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Isa 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

Jesus is leading US into the new and eternal Promised Land, the New Creation. We are elect exiles here in this world, but Christ has effected a new Exodus and we are headed out of here. If we fail to remind ourselves of this regularly, if we fall into the trap of believing the lie that "this is all there is to my life," then we are going to be in trouble.

Just consider the state of affairs in this present world. There is beauty and good, but it is also filled with incredible evil and ugliness. Biological life of all forms, plants, animals, insects, bacteria and viruses are for the most part, hostile to man. Deadly. Something is terribly wrong here. Domestication of an animal is not the natural norm. And

what is wrong is sin. The curse.

Christ is repairing and restoring Eden for us and the Christian is trekking through this fallen wilderness (where life can be pretty hard) to the New Promised Land. Do you remind yourself of this frequently? You need to.

And there is even more here that we should take time to look at before considering the specific temptations and Christ's response to them. Consider this for instance:

Exo 23:22-24 "But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. (23) "When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, (24) you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces.

Are there still Canaanites in the land today? Enemies of the Lord and of His people? Yes. In the New Creation there will be none of them. And here in Jesus' victory over the devil in the Wilderness we see the beginning of Jesus' complete destruction of His enemies, as He promised the earthly Israel if they

would obey Him:

Deu 6:18-19 And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers (19) by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has promised.

As Beale says:

“Consequently, Jesus’ victory over temptation appears to have prepared him to conquer the one who was the ultimate satanic prince of the Canaanites and of all wicked nations and to conquer the land in a way that Israel had not been able to do. His very resistance to these satanic allurements was the very beginning of his defeat of the devil. Jesus’ ministry of casting out demons continues his holy warfare as the true Israel. His exorcisms were an expression of his incipient, though decisive, defeat of Satan, who had brought creation into captivity through his deception of Adam and Eve. This is perhaps part of the significance of the parable of the binding of the strong man (Matt 12:29/Mark 3:27). By casting out the devil and his forces, Jesus was accomplishing the latter-day defeat of Satan that Adam should have accomplished in the first garden.”

Let’s conclude this morning then by looking at just the first temptation. Listen again:

Mat 4:1-3 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (3) And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

The devil is of course trying to get Jesus to sin, just as Adam and Israel had done. In this case, he calls for Jesus to use His divine power to create bread from stones (Jesus of course as Creator could have made bread from nothing!). We see Israel yielding to the very same kind of temptation as recorded by the Psalmist:

Psa 78:13-20 He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. (14) In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light. (15) He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. (16) He made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers. (17) Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert. (18) They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved. (19) They spoke

against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness? (20) He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?"

The devil's scheme is to get Jesus to depart from His Father's will and plan. To grumble in his hunger like the Israelites did and take matters into his own hands. Thus, to sin. But Jesus responds to the devil with this truth:

Mat 4:4 But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

This is of course what Israel SHOULD have said to the temptation of hunger, but they did not. The truth is that our lives do not originate from bread alone. In fact, a person who has an abundance of bread and all the "things" in life to enjoy is really dead if they are not living by faith in God's Word. Listen to it in its context:

Deu 8:1-7 "The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. (2) And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your

heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. (3) And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. (4) Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. (5) Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. (6) So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. (7) For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills,

See it? FIRST, we obey the Lord and walk by faith in His Word. This is the fundamental way of real living. THEN we see the Lord provide all we need. An untested faith is always a doubtful faith. You have the same principle here in Jesus' words. They are appropriate words to challenge us as we close:

Mat 6:31-34 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God

and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (34)
"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Most people have these words turned entirely around. They seek first what they are going to eat and drink and wear and give little thought to the Word of God that gives real life.

Don't you make that mistake.