

**(Matt. 4:1)** - God deals with people through two representatives - Adam and Jesus our Lord (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:22). In the garden, the first man, Adam, represented the whole human race. He was tempted to rebel against God and, though he was not deceived (1 Tim. 2:14), he failed when tested (Gen. 3:1-6). Consequently, the whole human race was plunged into a state of sin, spiritual death, and depravity (Rom. 5:12). The last Adam, Christ Jesus, represents those given to Him by the Father in the election of grace. He came to live a perfect life and die on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of His people. Believers are comforted in knowing that when He was tested, He did not fail (Isa. 42:4; 53:10). He was victorious, and His righteousness has been imputed to His people (Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34).

Christ's public ministry began at His baptism. He was then "*led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.*" Mark used stronger words - "*the Spirit DRIVETH Him (cast Him forth) into the wilderness*" (Mark 1:12-13). The Lord's earthly life, as to His humanity, was guided by the Spirit, as is ours (Psa. 37:23). His temptation shows, at least, three things: (1) It shows that He was (and is) truly human as He "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:15). Some use this to try to say that Christ was capable of sinning, but this is not true. Our Lord was impeccable as He is both God AND man in one person. His temptation involved the sinless infirmities of the flesh. He was "*tempted AS WE ARE*" in that He was as hungry as we would be after fasting for forty days. But, unlike us, there was no sinful desire to fill that hunger in ways that would dishonor His Father - "*yet without sin.*"

(2) It shows His people the proper way to deal with temptation by using the Word of God. (3) By His resistance to the temptation, His perfection was established proving Him to be the qualified Savior of sinners. He was the "*Lamb without blemish and without spot*" (1 Pet. 1:19; cp. Exod. 12:3-5). Though He was "*made sin*" by the imputation of the sins of God's elect to Him (2 Cor. 5:21), He was never made to be a sinner or a sinful person. This was the beginning of His sufferings - "*He Himself hath suffered being tempted*" (Heb. 2:18). Here, He is assailed and tempted by the enemy, "*the devil.*" "*Tempted*" means examined, tested, proven. Both the devil and the Lord test people (cf. Gen. 22:1). The Lord tests people to prove the presence or absence of faith, whereas the devil's purpose is to cause one to fall, sin, and disobey the Lord. "*Devil*" is "*diabolos,*" meaning the slanderer, false accuser, and adversary.

**(Matt. 4:2)** - Both Mark and Luke also record that the temptation lasted forty days (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2). Luke seems to indicate that Christ was tempted by the devil throughout the forty days (Luke 4:2). The three temptations recorded here took place on the fortieth day.

**(Matt. 4:3)** - Satan's goal is to cause people either to deny or call into question the very being of God, or to murmur at God's providence and not believe God's promises. He began here by saying, "*If (since) thou be the Son of God,*" (referring back to the Father's recent declaration in Matthew 3:17). God's Word tells us that the devils know the true identity of Jesus (Luke 4:41). The tempter said, "*command that these stones be made bread.*" His goal here was to destroy the Son's confidence in the Father's provision and bring Him to distrust the Father by exerting independence from the One Who sent Him into the world. In His humanity and for the salvation of His people, the Lord continually spoke of His dependence upon His Father to complete His work (John 5:19,30; 8:28,42; 14:10). Our salvation involves the combined work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the greater glory of the Godhead as accomplished by and revealed in the glorious Person and finished work of Christ (Col. 1:19-20; 2:9-10).

**(Matt. 4:4)** - The Lord shows us the way we are to answer the devil's temptations by using the Word of God. No other weapon can prevail against him (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:11-18). Christ quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3 which pictured Moses reminding Israel of God's care and provision for them during their wilderness journey. Our Lord here demonstrated His perfect faithfulness in doing the work He was sent to do. Our salvation was (and is) conditioned, not on our faithfulness, but on Christ's faithfulness to fulfill all righteousness (Rom. 3:21-22). In all this, He never distrusted His Father (Luke 23:46; John 17:1-5; 1 Pet. 2:23). Christ's faithfulness to do the Father's will, even unto the death of the cross, is the very righteousness by which sinners are justified before God, the imputed righteousness of Christ (Php. 3:9).

**(Matt. 4:5-6)** - In the second temptation, the devil was given the power to transport the Savior's body from the wilderness into the city of Jerusalem and set His body on a pinnacle of the temple. The devil's goal here was to cause the Lord to presume upon God's providence. The Lord God is in complete control of all things, and we have no right or reason to test Him by doing things that are against His Word and against natural human reason. Here, the devil quotes from God's Word (Psa. 91:11-12). This shows how Satan's deceptions are often disguised under a semblance of truth (2 Cor. 11:13-15). It is true that God has promised His protection and provision for His people, but other Scriptures must not be ignored which teach that God does not condone, but rather condemns, rash behavior, presumptuous actions trifling with His providence (Psa. 19:13; 2 Pet. 2:10).

**(Matt. 4:7)** - Again, the Lord answered using the Word of God (Deut. 6:16). He showed that even though the devil used the Scripture, he misapplied it. Presumption is, in reality, an improper testing of the power and patience of God to see whether or not He can or will fulfill His promises. It is challenging His wisdom, goodness, and His care.

**(Matt. 4:8-9)** - In this third temptation the devil shows that he is a proud liar (John 8:44). Read Luke's account where he enlarges on the devil's words (Luke 4:6-7). The kingdoms of the world do not belong to the devil. They all belong to God, the sovereign Creator and Governor of the universe (2 Kings 19:15). The devil wanted Jesus to bow down before him under the guise of being rewarded with the kingdoms of this world. Satan sought to keep the Savior from the cross where the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 would be fulfilled in crushing his (the serpent's) head by establishing a righteousness upon which Christ would be given "*all power over all flesh*" (John 17:1-3). The devil wanted to provoke Jesus to obtain the crown without enduring the cross, but the crown is the reward of His sufferings unto death for the sins of His people (Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36). By His death, Christ defeated the devil (John 12:31-33).

**(Matt. 4:10)** - Again, the Lord proves that He is the perfect Representative and Surety of His people, and He showed His perfect faithfulness to do for us what the Father sent Him to do. He again quoted God's Word (Deut. 6:13), and He proved that He sought to glorify and do the will of His Father for the salvation of His people who were given to Him before the foundation of the world.

**(Matt. 4:11)** - Here we see the power of Christ's Word and how the devil has no power to resist His Word. When the devil left, the Father sent angels to meet the needs of the human body of the Savior. They "*ministered unto Him,*" by bringing Him the provision and comfort that He needed after going through this time of temptation. He had won the victory, and this foreshadowed the greater victory He would win in His death, burial, and resurrection, fulfilling all righteousness for His people.