

Matthew 4 Commentary

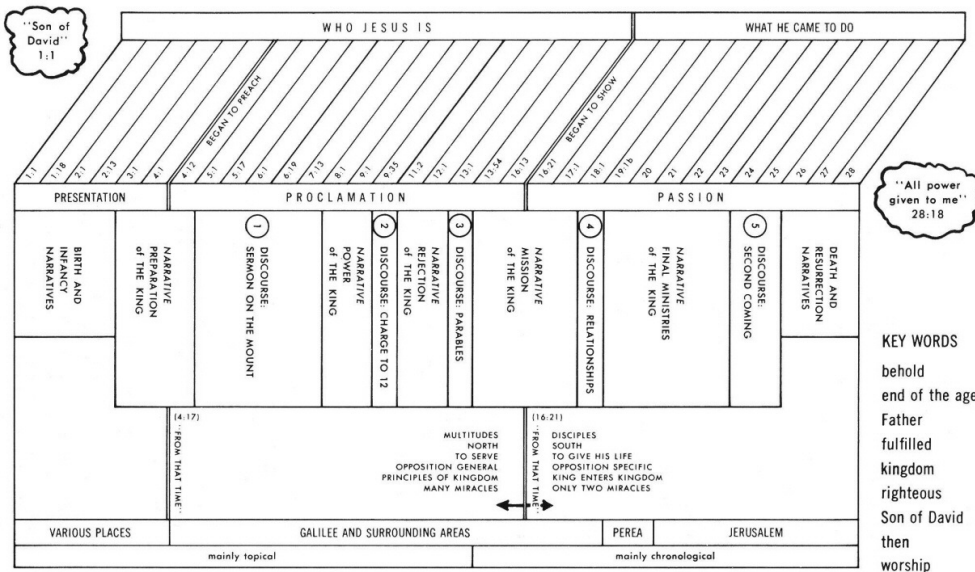
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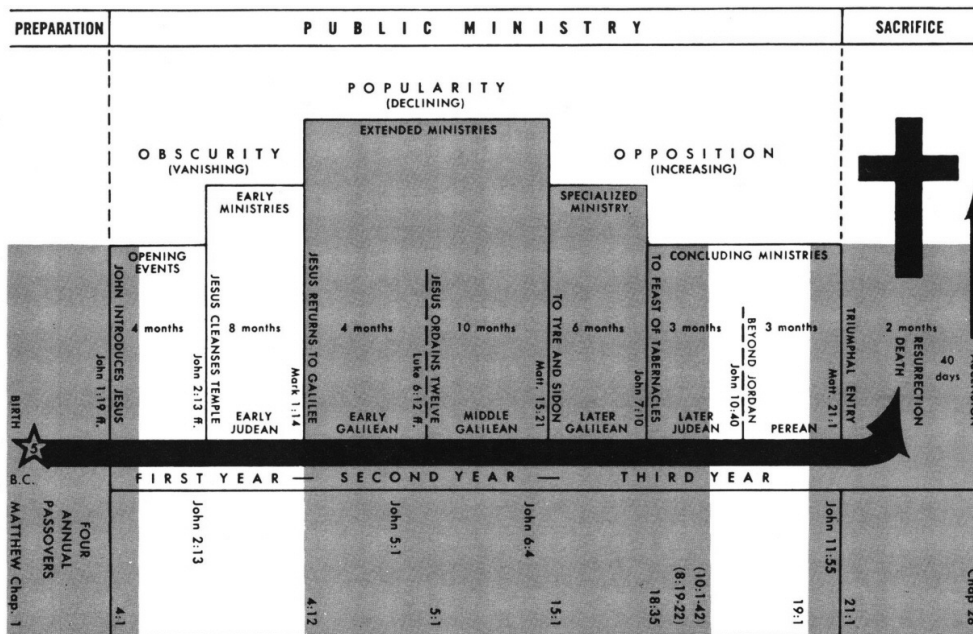
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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."
20 MIRACLES 2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."



Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another [Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

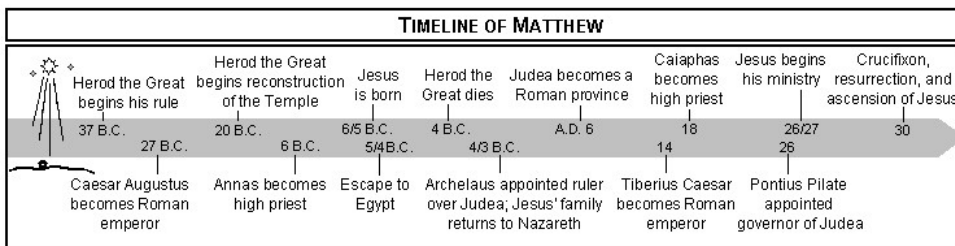
THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

- **was led:** Mk 1:12,13-15 Lu 4:1-13 Ro 8:14, Gal 5:18
- **of the spirit:** 1Ki 18:12 2Ki 2:16 Eze 3:12,14 8:3 11:1,24 40:2 43:5 Ac 8:39
- **to be tempted:** Ge 3:15 Joh 14:30 Heb 2:18 4:15,16
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Matthew 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Parallel Passages:

Mark 1:12-15+ Immediately the Spirit **impelled** ([ekballō](#)) 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. 14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Luke 4:1-13+ Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was **led around by the Spirit** in the wilderness (SO NOT ONLY WAS JESUS INITIALLY LED BY THE SPIRIT BUT THEN DAILY HE WAS LED AROUND BY THE SAME SPIRIT - JESUS DAILY DEPENDED ON THE SPIRIT JUST AS BELIEVERS MUST DO TODAY!) 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" 5And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." 8Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 9And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' 11and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE

YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.” 12And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’” 13When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

THE SPIRIT LED JESUS

Beloved, this title should also be true of us, for as Paul says "all who are (present tense - continually) being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Ro 8:14+) and " if you are (present tense - continually) led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.." (Gal 5:18+).

Guzik makes an excellent point that "After identifying with sinners in His baptism, Jesus then identified with them again in severe temptation. This was a necessary part of His ministry. Jesus did not need to be tempted to help Him grow. Instead, He endured temptation both so that He could identify with us (Hebrews 2:18 and Heb 4:15), and to demonstrate His own holy, sinless character. (Enduring Word Commentary)

Hendriksen gives the context - It was the kingship of Christ that was emphasized in Mt 1:1–3:12. At Mt 3:13, however, there is a shift: the **king** becomes the sin-bearer. By means of his baptism he reaffirms his resolution to offer himself as a ransom for many. Accordingly, this king is also a **priest**. He is "**priest** forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 6:20). Offering himself implies suffering. He suffers vicariously. One of the forms assumed by this suffering is temptation (Mt 4:1–11): "He suffered being tempted" (Heb. 2:18)...Even the **prophetic** office is not ignored; for, by his entire reaction and specifically by thrice quoting Scripture, Jesus also functions in this respect....It has already been pointed out that Matthew's Gospel, more than any other, places stress on Christ as **prophet** (Baker NTC)

Warren Wiersbe - Jesus was not tempted so that the Father could learn anything about His Son, for the Father had already given Jesus His divine approval. Jesus was tempted so that every creature in heaven, on earth, or under the earth might know that Jesus Christ is the Conqueror. He exposed Satan and his tactics, and He defeated Satan. Because of His victory, we can have victory over the tempter. Just as the first Adam met Satan, so the Last Adam met the enemy (1 Cor. 15:45). Adam met Satan in a beautiful Garden, but Jesus met him in a terrible wilderness. Adam had everything he needed, but Jesus was hungry after forty days of fasting. Adam lost the battle and plunged humanity into sin and death. But Jesus won the battle and went on to defeat Satan in more battles, culminating in His final victory on the cross (John 12:31; Col. 2:15). Our Lord's experience of temptation prepared Him to be our sympathetic High Priest (see Scriptures below). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Hebrews 2:16-18+ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren **in all things** (INCLUDING TEMPTATION), so that He might become a **merciful and faithful High Priest** in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 **For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered** He is able ([dunamai](#) in [present tense](#) - Jesus continually has the power and ability - [See God is Able](#)) to come to the aid ([boetheo](#) = to run on hearing cry for help - lesson? Cry out!) of those who are ([peirazo](#) in [present tense](#)) tempted.

Hebrews 4:15-16+ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin**. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (WHICH IS ALL THE TIME!!!).

Then ([see note on tote below](#)) - This is a time sensitive word and begs the question "When is then?" It marks succession or sequence and in this case it marks the temptation as immediately after His baptism, specifically "the Spirit of God descending as a dove lighting on Him" (Mt 3:16+) and the voice of the Father out of the heavens declaring "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Mt 3:17+) From this "mountain top" experience **THEN** takes us into the "valley" experience in the wilderness. The baptism marked the beginning of Jesus' Messianic ministry and now temptation by the devil marks His learning "obedience from the things which He suffered." (Heb 5:8+). The attack by the devil comes on the heels of entering into the work of the Lord. Is this not the common experience of those who come down from the mountain (so to speak) to begin a fruitful ministry for the Lord?

THOUGHT - Jesus was tempted immediately following His baptism, when the Father affirmed Him from heaven and the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove. Jerome said, "Baptism does not drown the devil." If Jesus' baptism did not prevent His being tempted, neither will ours. We must walk with God every day and be especially on guard after a time of spiritual victory. (Steven Cole - [The Temptation of Jesus](#))

Comment - Tote is a favorite word of Matthew and he uses it 90x (out of a total 154 NT uses) Matt. 2:7; Matt.

2:16; Matt. 2:17; Matt. 3:5; Matt. 3:13; Matt. 3:15; Matt. 4:1; Matt. 4:5; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:24; Matt. 7:5; Matt. 7:23; Matt. 8:26; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 9:14; Matt. 9:15; Matt. 9:29; Matt. 9:37; Matt. 11:20; Matt. 12:13; Matt. 12:22; Matt. 12:29; Matt. 12:38; Matt. 12:44; Matt. 12:45; Matt. 13:26; Matt. 13:36; Matt. 13:43; Matt. 15:1; Matt. 15:12; Matt. 15:28; Matt. 16:12; Matt. 16:20; Matt. 16:21; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 17:13; Matt. 17:19; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 18:32; Matt. 19:13; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 20:20; Matt. 21:1; Matt. 22:8; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 22:15; Matt. 22:21; Matt. 23:1; Matt. 24:9; Matt. 24:10; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 24:16; Matt. 24:21; Matt. 24:23; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:40; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:7; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 25:34; Matt. 25:37; Matt. 25:41; Matt. 25:44; Matt. 25:45; Matt. 26:3; Matt. 26:14; Matt. 26:16; Matt. 26:31; Matt. 26:36; Matt. 26:38; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:50; Matt. 26:52; Matt. 26:56; Matt. 26:65; Matt. 26:67; Matt. 26:74; Matt. 27:3; Matt. 27:9; Matt. 27:13; Matt. 27:16; Matt. 27:26; Matt. 27:27; Matt. 27:38; Matt. 27:58; Matt. 28:10;

As **Hendriksen** says "It was by the guidance of the Spirit that he was led up, that very Spirit Who not only knew that this temptation experience was necessary but whose plenary and active presence also qualified Jesus to triumph over it." (Ibid)

Jesus was led up by the Spirit(See [McGee's note on led by the Spirit](#)) - To be led by God's Spirit has as its result perfect subjection to and performance of God's will. "The same Spirit who brought Jesus into the world (Mt 1:20+) and demonstrated God's approval of Him (Mt 3:16+) now led Him into the wilderness for tempting by Satan." (Constable) This is a mind boggling statement and is clear evidence of the great truth of Jesus' "**emptying**" Himself and yielding to the will of His Father in Heaven (Jn 4:34, Jn 5:30, Jn 6:38, Jn 8:29). In Philippians 2, Paul records that Jesus...

Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Php 2:6-8₊)

THOUGHT - Ponder ([meditate on](#)) Jesus' willing submission to the Spirit and Paul's command which precedes the [kenosis of Jesus](#). In light of this incredible truth what is the believer's continual attitude now to be? Paul gives us the answer = "**Have this attitude** ([present imperative](#) = continually, but see our [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to even obey this command](#)) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," (Php 2:5₊)

This begs the question -- Are you (Am I) daily willing to **be being filled with/controlled by the Holy Spirit** (Eph 5:18₊)? Are you (Am I) willing to die to self (Lk 9:23₊, Mk 8:34₊) and be **led by the Spirit** even as Jesus was willing? Paul says "all who are being ([present tense](#) - as our lifestyle, our general "direction") led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Ro 8:14₊) So willingness **to walk like Jesus walked**, in submission to the will of His Father and to the control of the Spirit and His leading, is evidence that one is a true son/daughter of God. Paul reminds us of the other advantage of being led by the Spirit writing that "if you are led ([present tense](#)) by the Spirit, you are not under the Law (NOT IN BONDAGE TO LEGALISM - TO A LIST OF "DO'S" AND "DON'T'S" cf Gal 3:2-3₊)." (Gal 5:18₊). One other point that should be made is that our willingness to be led by the Spirit is linked with our willingness to kill (MORTIFY) sin (SEE PAUL'S COMMAND IN Col 3:5KJV₊). Why do I say that? Because in the context of speaking of being led by the Spirit (Ro 8:14₊), in the preceding passage Paul says "if you are living ([present tense](#) = as your lifestyle, your habitual practice) according to the (fallen, sinful, godless, God-hating) **flesh**, you must (OR "WILL") die; but if by the Spirit (WHO PROVIDES THE "WANT TO" [OUR **FLESH** DOES NOT "WANT TO!"] AND THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OR THE "DESIRE AND THE POWER" AS DESCRIBED IN Php 2:13NLT₊) you are putting to death ([present tense](#) = continually, daily, the rest of our lives in these mortal bodies!) the deeds of the body, you will live." Romans 8:13₊

The venerable British preacher **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones** said the following regarding the crucial importance of Romans 8:13₊ - "These are the crucial verses with regard to this old problem around which there is and has been for a number of years a good deal of controversy." (Listen to his sermon [A Call for Action - Romans 8:12-13](#)) (**Memorize** Romans 8:12-13 so that enable by the Spirit you can [meditate](#) on it and [pray](#) it to the Father! Your walk of holiness will never be the same! I say that based on the authority of God's Holy Word and the power available to you by His Holy Spirit for the glory of His Holy Son. Amen).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones adds this on Romans 8:13₊ , "It is here for the first time, in this chapter, that we come to the realm of practical application. All we have had up to this point has been a general description of the Christian—his character, his position. But now the Apostle has really come explicitly to the doctrine of sanctification. Here we are told exactly how, in practice, the Christian becomes sanctified. Or, to state it differently, here we are told in detail and in practice how the Christian is to wage the battle against sin."

[\(Listen to Lloyd-Jones' sermons on Romans 8\)](#)

THOUGHT - Beloved, it is so important for followers of Christ to fully comprehend the incredible truth that Jesus lived as a perfect man in perfect obedience to the Father because He depended totally upon the Holy Spirit. In so doing Jesus gave us a perfect example to follow "**in His Steps**." (1 Peter 2:21+, cf 1Cor 11:1+, 1 John 2:6+ - see [Walk Like Jesus Walked](#)). One more point - Jesus was physically empty (food), but was full of the Spirit. How sad that we far too often are physically full, but spiritually not full of the Spirit! Lord forgive! Lord fill! Lord glorify Jesus in our lives by His Spirit in us enabling a supernatural life that points others to Your Son. Amen.

Luke's version says "Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness." (Lk 4:1+)

THOUGHT - Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, and led by the Spirit when He was tempted (Lk 4:1+). The filling of the Spirit will not insulate you from temptation, but if you walk in the Spirit, you will not carry out the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16+). It does not say that you will not have such desires, but rather that you will not fulfill them. Each day we should yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, and walk in conscious dependence on Him.

Again, if Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit, how much more must we!

Into the wilderness - Refers to the wastelands on either side of the Jordan. Only Mark 1:13+ adds that Jesus **was with the wild beasts**. Jesus was not forced against His will to go out **into the wilderness**, but He was willing to be **led by the Spirit** to go out into the **wilderness**. Clearly the **wilderness** was not a mistake but was an integral part of the sovereign plan of the Father. Jesus Himself clearly stated "I do not seek My own will but the will of Him Who sent Me." (Jn 5:30, cf Jn 5:19, Jn 8:28) The will of the Father was that the Son be **tempted by the devil in the wilderness**.

"The *devil tempts* that he may *ruin* us, but *God tests* that He may *crown* us!"

-- based on original by Ambrose

THOUGHT - What is the point of application to believers today? The Holy Spirit does lead us into trials (or allows us to enter trials) so that we can learn to stand up to temptation and so that we will mature in our faith (cf James 1:2-4+). When (NOT IF) trials come into the believer's life, they call for a decision. It is like that line in Robert Frost's famous poem [The Road Not Taken](#), specifically the line "I took the one less traveled by." Will I trust God and rely on His Spirit to navigate this trial and take the road less traveled, the road of submission to God's will and the leading of God's Spirit. Or will I take the road traveled by most, a road marked by grumbling (cf Php 2:14+), complaining (cf Nu 11:1, 14:27), even blaming God (contrast Job's attitude - Job 1:22) for the trial, to the point that the trial becomes a temptation to do evil? Of course we need to emphasize that although the Spirit of God may direct us into trials, He does not lead us into temptation to do evil, for James 1:13+ says "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone." God's goal when putting us into trials is that as we go through the fire of the trial, the dross of sin might be gradually removed (THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF [PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION](#), GROWTH IN CHRIST-LIKENESS AND HOLINESS) and that we might be strengthened more and more in our faith along our spiritual journey. Beloved, enabled by the Spirit, may we be willing to take the road less traveled, in Jesus' mighty Name. Amen

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

**I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.**

Wilderness (secluded, desolate, desert) (2048)(**eremos**) when used as an adjective, normally describes places which are abandoned, desolate, or unpopulated.. Matthew's uses of **eremos** - Matt. 3:1; Matt. 3:3; Matt. 4:1; Matt. 11:7; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 23:38; Matt. 24:26. See [What does it mean to have a wilderness experience?](#) It is interesting that the wilderness was a place of testing, but also a place of communing for Luke 5:16 records that " Jesus Himself would often slip away **to the wilderness** and pray." Perhaps if we imitated Jesus in this way more often, we might be less likely to have a so-called "[wilderness experience](#)," or at least more spiritually prepared to pass through it!

"Luther's remark stands true, that prayer, meditation, and **temptation**,
are the three best instructors of the gospel minister."

C H Spurgeon

To be tempted by the devil- Tempted is [aorist tense](#) in this passage which speaks of a point in time. In this case it speaks of the entire 40 days. How do we know? One writer says after 40 days "the tests began" but is that completely accurate? When we compare both Luke and Mark's Gospel accounts (Lk 4:2) we see that **tempted** is in the [present tense](#) ("continually tested" "continually tempted") which indicates Jesus' test was ongoing (all 40 days). So clearly Jesus was tempter continually but the last 3 assaults by the devil may have been the worst. **To be tempted** is in the [passive voice](#) indicating that the test was from an outside source, of course the **Tempter** himself (Mt 4:3+), the [devil](#). Here is where Jesus' temptation is different than ours. Our temptation comes primarily from an internal source, our godless, unredeemed and unredeemable [flesh](#) (old man, flesh, sinful flesh, old Adam, Adamic nature). Obviously Satan can send flaming missiles (Eph 6:16+) to spur on our fallen flesh to produce temptations, but that is not mandatory. [Flesh](#) is fully capable of tempting us on its own power, and make no mistake, it does have power and continually seeks for an opportunity to reign as a "master" or "king" in our mortal bodies (read Ro 6:12-13+). And so we cannot always (in fact usually cannot) say "**The devil made me do it!**" ([Made famous by Flip Wilson](#), to get a laugh but this is not a laughing matter but deadly serious!)

THOUGHT - I don't know what temptations you may be dealing with, but I do know that if you are **breathing**, you are **battling!** Our greatest resource in the face of temptation is a close relationship with Jesus Christ (see "**Put on** the Lord Jesus Christ..." Ro 13:14+) and imitating His perfect pattern of being filled with the Spirit and filled with the Word (see 1 Pe 2:21+, 1 Jn 2:6+, 1 Cor 11:1+; [Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)). Remember that the strongest weapon in Satan's arsenal is no match for the **sword of the Spirit, the Word of God**. (Eph 6:17+) Here is a thought that will help in the moment of temptation. Hebrews 12:2+ tells us to "**fix our eyes on Jesus.**" Take a long look at the Son of God who struggled 40 days being tempted in the wilderness and won the victory over the devil. If He won the battle depending on the Spirit and the Word (which He did), then so can we, because both of these supernatural resources are available to us today (see [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#)). **This truth in turn makes it imperative that we venture forth each more filled with the Spirit** (Eph 5:18+) **and filled with the Word** (Col 3:16+). Not to do so will leave us vulnerable to spiritual attacks (temptations) from the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). We can hardly be expected to fulfill Paul's command to **walk** by the Spirit (Gal 5:16+), so that we will not carry out the desires of the flesh, **UNLESS** we are filled or controlled by the same Spirit. How are we filled? Let me give you a simple analogy. Let's say you want a drink of water. You reach for a glass and notice it is filthy inside and out. Are you going to pour water into that glass? Of course not. Now consider your own body which Paul says is to be a vessel of honor. And the Spirit is pictured by Jesus as "**living water**" (Jn 7:38-39+). Is God going to "pour water" into a dirty vessel (cf 1 Th 5:19+, Eph 4:30+)? That's a rhetorical question, because of course He won't. The analogy breaks down a bit because we still have the Spirit even when our vessel is "dirty" but we can hardly expect Him to "fill" us and control us. What is the solution? Cleanse the vessel. (2 Ti 2:21+) Confess all known sins (1 Jn 1:9+). Seek repentance (cf "forsakes" in Pr 28:13+). Then walk in the light of His Word (1 Jn 1:6-7+).

He breaks the power of cancelled sin
And sets the captive free.
His blood can make the foulest clean
His blood availed for me.

Be tempted (3985) (**peirazo** from the noun **peira** = test from **peíro** = perforate, pierce through to test durability of things) is a morally neutral word simply meaning to test. **Peirazo** can mean "test" or "tempt." Sometimes both senses apply simultaneously. (This is an example where Greek is less precise than English.) Only the context determines when a **positive** ("to test") or **negative** ("to tempt") sense is meant. Whether the **test** is for a good (as it proved to be in Heb 11:17⁺) or evil as here in Mt 4:1 (cf Lk 4:2⁺) depends on the intent of the one giving the test and also on the response of the one tested. (cf **peirasmos**). **Wuest** says **peirazo** means "to try or test intentionally, with the purpose of discovering what good or evil, what power or weakness, was in a person or thing." "Satan **tempts** to bring out the bad; God **tests** to bring out the good." In sum, **peirazō** means "tempt" ("negative sense") in some passages like Mt 16:1, 19:3, 22:18,35; Mk 8:11, 10:2, 12:15; Lk 11:16, 20:33; Jn 8:6; Jas 1:13,14+. **Peirazō** in other passages is used of positive tests as in Lk 22:28; 1 Cor 10:13⁺; Jas 1:12. In James 1:2+ and James 1:12-14+ the Greek root (*peir-*) is used seven times counting its noun form **Peirasmos**, and the verb form **peirazō**. The sense can be "tempt" or "test" – depending on whether it is a positive ("test") or negative ("tempt") sense. As noted above James 1:13,14+ refers primarily to the negative ("tempt") aspect of **peirázō**.

THOUGHT - While Scripture is clear that God Himself does not tempt us, He does sovereignly allow temptation (from the **world**, the **flesh** or the **devil**, cf Job 1:7-17). And so it follows that every temptation is also a test. God knows our hearts, but He want to reveal to us what is in our deceitful hearts - "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test (Lxx = **dokimazo**) the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds. (Jer 17:9-10, cf Pr 17:3). Moses records "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, (PURPOSE) that He might humble you, **testing** (Lxx = **ekpeirazo**) you, **to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD....In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He **might test** (Lxx = **ekpeirazo**) you, to do good for you in the end." (Dt. 8:2-3, 16 cf Abraham's test in Ge 22:1 where "test" = **peirazo** in the Lxx) Again we read "Even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, **God left him** (King Hezekiah) **alone only to test** (Lxx = **peirazo**) **him, that He might know all that was in his heart**" (2 Chr 32:31; How did Hezekiah do? Read 2 Ki 20:12-). So next time you are TEMPTED, remember that it is also a TEST, a "heart check up" from the Great Physician so to speak!

Some of the wise words of Spurgeon on the value of testing- None of us can come to the highest maturity without enduring the summer heat of trials. On some few occasions I have had troubles which I could not tell to any but my God, and I thank God I have, for I learned more of my Lord then that at any other time. Our troubles have always brought us blessings, and they always will. They are the dark chariots of bright grace. Stars may be seen from the bottom of a deep well, when they cannot be discerned from the top of a mountain. So are many things learned in adversity which the prosperous man dreams not of. The anvil, the fire and the hammer are the making of us. The Christian gains by his losses. He acquires health by his sickness. He wins friends through his bereavements, and he becomes a conqueror through his defeats. The tears of affliction are often needed to keep the eye of faith bright. There are some of your graces which would never be discovered if it were not for your trials. There is nothing that makes a man have a big heart like a great trial. We find no sword-blades so true in metal as those which have been forged in the furnace of soul-trouble.

THOUGHT - It is not surprising that Jesus was tempted by the devil immediately after his baptism which signified the formal entrance upon the Messianic work. That is a common experience with ministers who step out into the open for Christ. (A T Robertson)

The corollary is be very wary and on high alert after experiencing spiritual victory. Sadly too often spiritual success brings its own temptation, the illusion of self-sufficiency. The result is that victory without vigilance often leads to defeat. So be especially wary after victory because the enemy often attacks when your guard is down, when you presume the battle is over (and in this life, IT IS NEVER OVER!)

Joshua 7+ — After the victory at Jericho came the defeat at Ai. Israel's great triumph was followed by complacency and sin (Achan's covetousness). Lesson: Beware of pride, self-reliance, or moral

relaxation after success.

1 Kings 19+ — After Carmel came the cave. Elijah's greatest victory over the prophets of Baal was followed by despair and flight. Victory can exhaust the soul and expose vulnerability.

2 Chronicles 26+ — Uzziah's downfall. "When he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly" (v. 16). Strength breeds pride; pride precedes collapse.

We are never so much in danger of being proud as when we think we are humble. **"Therefore** let him who thinks he stands **take heed** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) that he does not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12+)

Devil (1228)([diabolos](#) from [diá](#) = through, between + [ballo](#) = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser, slanderer** (one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one not present), one given to malicious gossip or a **calumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions) Thus **diabolos** is applied to men ("malicious gossips" = 2 Ti 3:3, Titus 2:3, 1 Ti 3:11) all of whom do the work of the chief slanderer Satan! See also study on Satan ([4567](#)) [satanas](#). This same term **diabolos** is aptly applied to Judas the betrayer of Jesus (Jn 6:70) as he enters into the devil's work. The Septuagint uses diabolos of Satan as a slanderer in Job 1:9, Zech 3:1-2. John describes his slanderous activity in Rev 12:9-10. "**Judas** has this term applied to him (John 6:70) as it is to men (2 Ti 3:3; Titus 2:3) and women (she devils, 1 Tim. 3:11) who do the work of the arch slanderer." (Robertson)

All of the uses of **diabolos** - Matt. 4:1; Matt. 4:5; Matt. 4:8; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 13:39; Matt. 25:41; Lk. 4:2; Lk. 4:3; Lk. 4:6; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:12; Jn. 6:70; Jn. 8:44; Jn. 13:2; Acts 10:38; Acts 13:10; Eph. 4:27; Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6; 1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Tim. 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 2:3; Heb. 2:14; Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:10; Jude 1:9; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 12:12; Rev. 20:2; Rev. 20:10

ILLUSTRATION [John Knox](#) (c. 1510–1572) was a Scottish clergyman, a leader of the Protestant Reformation, and a man who is considered to be the founder of the Presbyterian denomination in Scotland. Knox has been admired by contemporary theologians as someone who personified a zeal for God and a commitment to the truth of Scripture and holy living. Yet, as he grew close to death, this saint of God admitted his own personal battle with the sin nature he inherited from Adam (Romans 5:12+). Knox said, "I know how hard the battle is between the flesh and the spirit under the heavy cross of affliction, when no worldly defense but present death doth appear. I know the grudging and murmuring complaints of the flesh..." (See [What is the flesh?](#); See [related illustration](#))

Steven Cole reminds us "It is clear that Jesus believed in and the Bible teaches the reality of a personal evil spirit called Satan ("adversary") or the devil ("slanderer" or "accuser"). Evil is not just an impersonal force. The devil and the demons are angelic beings who rebelled against God and now are behind the evil in this world. While the devil is a powerful and intelligent being, he is not omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent. While his final doom is secure, for the present he is a powerful and cunning adversary of the saints. We must not be ignorant of his schemes (2 Cor. 2:11). ([The Temptation of Jesus](#))

Kevin Zuber summarizes Jesus' temptations as "(1) Serve Yourself (Lk 4:3-4+); (2) Honor Yourself (Lk 4:5-8+); (3) Be spectacular (be presumptuous and prove Your self-importance; Lk 4:9-12+). Jesus countered each temptation with an appeal to Scripture (cf. Dt 8:3; 6:13; 6:16). These events proved Jesus was the right man, with the appropriate background, with the proper credentials, and with the desirable experience for the ministry He was about to begin." (The Moody Bible Commentary)

As **Brian Bell** says "God permits such situations to **prove** and **improve** our faith. The evil is not in the situations God permits, but in responding sinfully to them. God even provides a back door to every temptation so we might overcome it! 1 Cor 10:13+ "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." Why did temptations/testing's come Jesus' way? Not to determine His character or ability. Not to give Satan a chance to defeat Him. But so He could personally experience what we go through and so be prepared to assist us (cf Heb 2:18, Heb 4:15). So we could know how to overcome the evil one by means of the Spirit of God and the Word of God (**Ed**: And ultimately at the Cross - Heb 2:14-15, cp Gal 6:14, Jn 16:33, 1 Jn 5:4-5). The first Adam was tested in a beautiful garden and failed, but the last Adam was victorious in a terrible wilderness/desert (cp 1 Cor 15:22, 45). Before offering a new life to others, He proved in a personal demonstration that a new life was possible! He showed His own freedom from the inadequacies and the sin which trap you and me. Jesus shows freedom is possible and gives each of us hope!" ([Luke:4:1 -13 Triple Assault](#))

John MacArthur introduces the **Temptation of Jesus** writing "Since the Fall in the Garden of Eden, temptation has been a

constant, unrelenting part of human life. Men have tried to avoid and resist it with self-inflicted pain to make themselves uncomfortable and presumably humble, or by isolating themselves from other people and from physical comforts. But no person has ever found a place or a circumstance that can make him safe from temptation. Throughout the history of the church much has been written and spoken about overcoming temptation. A fifth-century Christian wrote, ***Fly from all occasions of temptation, and if still tempted, fly further still. If there is no escape possible, then have done with running away and show a bold face and take the two-edged sword of the Spirit. Some temptations must be taken by the throat as David killed the lion; others must be stifled as David hugged the bear to death. Some you had better keep to yourselves and not give air. Shut them up as a scorpion in a bottle. Scorpions in such confinement die soon, but if allowed out for a crawl and then put back into the bottle and corked down, they will live a long while and give you trouble. Keep the cork on your temptations, and they will die of themselves.*** Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–543) sought an increase of grace and exemption from temptation by wearing a rough hair shirt and living for three years in a desolate cave, where his scant food was lowered to him on a cord. Once he threw himself into a clump of thorns and briars until his body was covered with bleeding wounds. But he found no escape from temptation. It followed him wherever he went and in whatever he did. Others have tried to overcome temptation by, in effect, denying it. Jovinian, a heretical fifth-century monk, taught that after a person was baptized he was forever free of the devil's power and from temptation (Ed: cf 1 Jn 1:8). Jerome, his most outstanding opponent, wisely commented that **baptism does not drown the devil"** ([Matthew Commentary](#))

Matthew and Luke record the same temptations but in different order - both of them put the first temptation (turning stones into bread) first, but Matthew has the devil leading Jesus' to the pinnacle of the Temple second and to a high mountain third, while Luke reverses the order. Reasons are proposed as to why the difference but they are at best conjecture. Both records are the inspired word of God and that is what matters. All three versions of the temptation of Jesus (including Mk 1:12-13+) are strategically placed **after** His baptism by John and **before** He began His 3 year mission culminating in to the Cross. Luke of course does insert His genealogy on Mary's side (Lk. 3:23–38+) before the temptation narrative. But even this genealogy appears strategically placed because it follows His lineage back to the first Adam ("the son of Adam, the son of God" Lk 3:38+), who failed when tempted by the serpent! And so it is fitting that then God gives us the perfect pattern of Jesus showing us how we can respond victoriously to temptation.

THOUGHT - In Luke 4:1-13+, Matthew 4:1-11 and the summary in Mark 1:12-13+, the Holy Spirit gives us the pattern for victory over temptation. So as we ponder these passages, may God's Spirit enable us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. Amen (Heb 12:2+). Given the fact that Jesus was alone in the wilderness with His adversary the Devil, it is clear that this revelation to the Gospel writers is in a sense Jesus' personal testimony in which He reveals the "**secret**" of how saints can experience victory over temptation whether it comes at us from the [world](#), the [flesh](#) (the usual source according to James 1:14+) or the [devil](#). While Jesus was alone in the temptation (of course He had the Spirit's presence and power), believers should seek out another believer with whom they can be accountable, sharing their ongoing fight against temptation (and occasionally giving in to the temptation and committing sin) and with whom they can confess their sin (cf James 5:16+). **Do you have an accountability partner (of the same gender!)?**

One could outline Jesus' wilderness experience into the **preparation** (Lk 4:1-2), the **temptation** (Lk 4:3-12) and the **triumph** (Lk 4:13).

THOUGHT - This outline naturally leads to three points of application: Am I prepared? I will be tempted! Will I emerge triumphant? The truths in Jesus' temptation clearly provide the template for victory in our times of temptation/testing! The short answer to the keys for victory is by daily intake of the Word (Col 3:16ff+) and by daily dependence on the Spirit (Eph 5:18+). It behooves all God's children to [meditate often](#) (and [memorizing](#)) Jesus' response to temptation, so that we might be equipped and enabled by the Spirit Who will use the sword, the Word of God which we have [memorized](#) and meditated upon (Eph 6:17+) to experience victory WHEN (NOT IF) we are tempted in the "**wilderness**" of this world!

Guzik points out that "It was a remarkable contrast between the glory following Jesus' baptism and the challenge to be tempted by the devil."

JESUS' BAPTISM	JESUS' TEMPTATION
cool waters of the Jordan	barren wilderness
huge crowds	solitude and silence.
Spirit rests like a dove	Spirit drives Him into the wilderness.
voice of the Father calling Him "Beloved Son"	hiss of Satan the tempter.

anointed	attacked
water of baptism	the fire of temptation
heavens opened	hell closed in

Matthew

1. Stones to Bread - Mt 4:1, 2, 3, 4
2. Test God's Protection - Mt 4:5, 6, 7
3. Kingdoms of the World - Mt 4:8, 9, 10, 11

Luke - see commentary

1. Stone to Bread - Lk 4:1, 2, 3, 4
2. Kingdoms of the World - Lk 4:5, 6, 7, 8
3. Test God's Protection - Lk 4:9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Related Resources:

- [What was the meaning and purpose of Jesus' temptations](#)
- [Why did Jesus fast?](#)
- [How to fast—what does the Bible say?](#)
- [What are the different types of fasting?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is prince of the power of the air](#)
- [What does it mean to have a wilderness experience](#)
- [Why did Satan think he could defeat God?](#)
- [Is there activity of demonic spirits in the world today](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [Is temptation a sin? Is it a sin to be tempted?](#)
- [What are some of the symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Bible](#)
- [What is the power of the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [In what ways was Moses like Jesus?](#)
- [What are the keys to resisting temptation?](#)
- [Introduction to John Owen's Overcoming Sin and Temptation](#)
- [Mortification of Sin - John Owen](#)
- [Of Temptation - John Owen](#)
- [Indwelling Sin - John Owen](#)
- [Triumphing Over Temptation - John MacArthur](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary - [Temptation of Jesus](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - [Christ, Temptation of](#) , [Temptation of Christ](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia - [Temptation of our lord](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia - [Temptation of Christ.](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary - [Temptation of Christ](#)
- [The Impeccability of Christ](#) - John Walvoord (Impeccability deals with question Could Jesus have sinned?)
- [Could Jesus Have Sinned?](#) - Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology - scroll down to page 464
- [The Impeccability of Christ](#) - A W Pink
- [Could Jesus have sinned \(peccability or impeccability\)?](#) - Gotquestions

Related Resources - Devil, Satan, Demons

- Holman Bible Dictionary - [Satan](#)
- American Tract Society [Satan](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Satan](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Satan](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Satan](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Satan](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Satan](#)

- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Satan \(2\) Satan](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Satan](#)
- [Was Satan an angel?](#)
- [How, why, and when did Satan fall from heaven?](#)
- [Does Satan exist?](#)
- [Who is Satan? Who is the devil?](#)
- [How much power does Satan possess?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is the accuser?](#)
- [Why did Satan think he could defeat God?](#)
- [Is Lucifer Satan? Does the fall of Lucifer describe Satan?](#)
- [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)
- [God vs. Satan - if God is all-powerful, why does He not just kill Satan?](#)
- [Does Satan have to get God's permission before he can attack us?](#)
- [What does Satan look like? What do demons look like?](#)
- [Did God create Satan?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"?](#)
- [Why are both Jesus and Satan referred to as the morning star?](#)
- [Does Satan still have access to Heaven? Why does God allow Satan to enter Heaven, as recorded in the Bible?](#)
- [Is Satan in hell? Where is Satan?](#)
- [Are Jesus and Satan brothers?](#)
- [Does a believer have authority over Satan?](#)
- [Why does God allow Satan to attack us?](#)
- [Is the devil / Satan a person or a force / personification of evil?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is prince of the power of the air \(Ephesians 2:2\)?](#)
- [How is Satan god of this world \(2 Corinthians 4:4\)?](#)
- [Does Satan have the power to control the weather?](#)
- [Can Satan read our minds or know our thoughts?](#)
- [If God knew that Satan would rebel, why did He create him?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan is the father of lies \(John 8:44\)?](#)
- [Why did God allow Satan and the demons to sin?](#)
- [Was Satan in charge of music in Heaven?](#)
- [Why is God going to release Satan after the 1000 years?](#)
- [Why were Michael and Satan disputing over the body of Moses \(Jude 9\)?](#)
- [Is the king of Tyre prophecy in Ezekiel 28 referring to Satan?](#)
- [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)
- [Was Satan the serpent in Genesis chapter 3?](#)
- [Why did Jesus say to Peter, "Get behind me Satan"?](#)
- [What does it mean that Satan masquerades as an angel of light?](#)
- [Did Jesus fight Satan for the keys to the kingdom?](#)
- [Is it possible to make a deal with the devil?](#)
- [What is the unholy trinity in the end times?](#)
- [What is Satanism?](#)
- [What are the various theories on the atonement?](#)
- [Did one third of the angels fall with Lucifer?](#)
- [What is Luciferianism?](#)
- [Is the war in heaven in Revelation 12 describing Satan's original fall or an end times angelic battle?](#)
- [Are demons fallen angels?](#)

Brian Bell says "God permits such situations to **prove** and **improve** our faith. The evil is not in the situations God permits, but in responding sinfully to them. God even provides a back door to every temptation so we might overcome it! 1 Cor 10:13+ "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

Wiersbe writes that "Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us, but God can use these difficult experiences to put the best into us. Temptation is Satan's weapon to defeat us, but it can become God's tool to build us (see James 1:1-8+, James 1:13-17+)." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

J Vernon McGee - Led of the Spirit

The Son of God needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to meet this temptation. If He needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be able to meet the temptation, I might as well face up to the fact—and you might as well join with me—that you and I **CANNOT FACE** the temptations of this world today **IN OUR OWN STRENGTH. You and I are joined in a battle in which we are hopelessly outnumbered, and we will be miserably defeated if we go forth in our own strength and with our own ability.**

Paul could say, even as a believer after his conversion: "I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good." (Romans 7:21⁺) In other words, Paul was saying, "After I became a child of God through faith in Christ, with a new nature that wanted to serve God, even at the very moment when I wanted to do good, evil was present with me. When I want to do good, evil is right there." I wonder if that has been your experience. Again Paul could say: "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (Romans 8:3, 4⁺)

Paul found out that in and of himself he could not live the Christian life at all. He could not meet and grapple with the issues of life, for in his flesh there was nothing good. And even though Paul approved of the Law, he was unable to keep it because of the weakness of the flesh. But he found out that by walking in the Spirit of God he was enabled to live for God. That's the reason he could write to the Galatians: I say then: **"Walk (ED: NOT A "GOOD SUGGESTION" BUT A COMMAND IN THE [present imperative](#))** in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust [the desire] of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16⁺) Walk by means of the Holy Spirit (ED: CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT - Eph 5:18⁺!) You and I, as we walk out of our homes (ED: WHERE WE OFTEN EXPERIENCE THE MOST FIERCE ATTACKS!) and even out of a house of worship (ON SUNDAY) into the world, we will not live for God unless we **walk in the Spirit**, my beloved. If it's going to depend upon your feeble ability and my feeble ability, we'll fail before the sun goes down today. **We cannot make it—we are unable to do it. Our Lord was filled with the Holy Spirit before He entered the wilderness (ED: AND SO WE TOO MUST TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT [Eph 5:18⁺] BEFORE WE EVEN AS OUR FEET FIRST HIT THE FLOOR OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING AND CERTAINLY BEFORE WE WALK OUT THE DOOR TO WORK, SCHOOL, ETC "INTO THE WILDERNESS"!)** Then we are told something else, that He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (ED: cf PAUL'S WORDS ON BELIEVERS BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT IN Gal 5:18⁺ AND Ro 8:14⁺). It's interesting to note that Mark, in his very brief and blunt record, says that "immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12⁺). The word in the Greek is [ekballō](#), which means "to throw out." The Holy Spirit threw Jesus out into the wilderness. It all implies simply this: He did not seek the temptation. His attitude at the time of the temptation was the same as it was yonder in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed, "Let this cup pass from Me."

Any person in the (mortal, physical) flesh today, in the battles of life, is foolish to say that he can meet temptation and come off the victor. Even our Lord prayed, "Let this cup pass from Me." But He also hastened to add, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). May I say to you, that's His attitude here when He's driven, thrown out, into the wilderness by the Spirit of God. That's the first thing for us to note. (Jesus: Centerpiece of Scripture)

DEVOTIONAL BY F B MEYER - Matthew 4:1 Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Yesterday, the opened heavens; today, the burning cinders of the wilderness of temptation. Then the voice of the Father owning Him as the Well-beloved; now the hiss of the tempter. Then the teeming crowds; now the desert solitude and silence, broken only by the cry of the wild beast. Then the Spirit as a nesting dove, but now as a compelling force. Wherever there is the Christ-life, it passes through these same experiences. The Holy Spirit often anticipates coming trial by granting some great revelation of God; but He who gives the one leads into the other, that the precious bestowments of God's grace may be rendered permanent.

Would you give the bread of life to thousands? You must refuse to use your opportunity to make bread for your own gratification. You cannot use your power for others and for yourself. If you elect to use it for them, you must be content to wait till the Father sends his angels to minister to you. In the meanwhile live by faith on his words.

Would you teach the magnificence of a faith that can trust God to preserve it, though it steps from the mountain brow on to thin air? You must refuse to use it for purposes of ostentation; and wait till God, not Satan, calls.

Would you win the kingdoms of the world? You must obtain them, not by methods which commend themselves to human prudence, but through the death of the cross and the falling into the ground to die. There are two mountains in the Gospel: this, as it opens; that of the Ascension at its close. The valley of death lies between. But the traversing of this valley was necessary, ere Christ could say, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."



Thomas Adams said "Satan, like a fisher, baits his hook according to the appetite of the fish!"

Cole - The fish sees the bait and it lures him toward it, thinking that he will get a meal. Instead, he gets hooked and carried away, where he becomes the meal. The temptation to sin is like that. We think that **sin** will satisfy us and get us something good that we're missing. But instead, it hooks us and drags us to **destruction**. There is always that **deceptive element to temptation**. It is strengthened by the powerful emotions involved. As believers, we are not to live by our feelings, but by faith and obedience (**Ed**: see the good old hymn [-Trust & Obey](#)), based on the knowledge of God's word of truth. We need to follow it, no matter how strongly our feelings pull us in a different direction. One time Marla and I were hiking off trail up on Mount Agassiz. It's an area where we've hiked often, but we've often gotten turned around. On this occasion, we came out under some power lines, and I sensed that we needed to go uphill to get back to where we started. But when we had crossed the lines the first time, I had looked at my altimeter. When we crossed the lines again, my altimeter said that we were 500 feet higher. So, I trusted the altimeter, not my feelings, and we went downhill. Sure enough, we came to where we needed to be. God's Word is like that altimeter. **Temptation** makes us **feel** like heading toward **sin**, but we need to follow God's Word, no matter what we feel....James pictures lust and sin as having the ability to conceive and give birth. While the Bible is strongly against aborting babies, when lust conceives, we need to abort as soon as we can! We've all seen a tree growing out of a concrete sidewalk, where it has split the concrete. It began as a tiny seed, falling into a crack. But that seed had life in it, and the power of that life produced a tree that broke up the sidewalk. Temptation has that kind of destructive life in it. Don't let it take root in your life!...At the outset, temptation always promises excitement and fulfillment. It never comes along with the pitch, "Would you like to destroy yourself and your family? Would you like to disgrace the name of your God?" Rather, it comes on with the enticement, "This will be fun! This will meet your needs. This will get you what you have been looking for. What can it hurt to try it?" If you take that bait, you're on the course that leads to death. If you do not repent and get back on the path of righteousness, it may indicate that you never were truly saved (as with the seed on the rocky or thorny ground). Someone has said, "Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny." ([James 1:13-15 The Source, Force, and Course of Temptation](#))

Kent Hughes - One summer recently my wife, Barbara, and I and our boys spent a week fishing in northern Maine. In the final hour of the final day my boys caught the biggest smallmouth bass I have ever seen—five pounds, one ounce! Those are cosmic dimensions for a smallmouth bass! That old bass, the best I can tell, was over ten years old. For 3,650 days he had resisted every ploy known to man around Grand Lake Stream, Maine—until August 1989. On that fateful afternoon my boys were slowly trolling a salmon-colored, soft plastic, spinner-bladed jig, innocuously named "Little Fishy," when it passed by the lair of the monster bass. The combination of the speed of the lure, its depth, the slant of the sun, and the refraction of the light ineluctably dragged the old bronze-backed bass away from his lair, just as the Greek words "**dragged away**" (**Ed**: "carried away" in NAS) in our text describe. Then he began to follow the lure, "enticed," as our text has it, by its peculiar wiggle and the delicate fibrillations, so that he opened his mouth wide and in a sudden burst engulfed the jig. My boys' shouts echoed across the lake, and today that fish's grand, painted, mummified form graces my sons' wall. It was a remarkable experience, but not unique, for it is universal among fishermen. The ancient Greek Oppian used these same words to describe drawing a fish from its original retreat under a rock, so that it succumbs to the bait. James, in using these words, has graphically painted a picture of how we are tempted by our own illicit desires (lusts). (See [James: Faith That Works - Page 14](#))

Genesis 39:1-12 The Tempted Brothers

■ How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? —Genesis 39:9

Two brothers—both far from home —faced similar temptations. One, working away from the family, fell to the schemes of a younger woman. His sin led to embarrassment and family turmoil. The other, separated from loved ones because of family turmoil, resisted the advances of an older woman. His faithfulness led to rescue and renewal for the family.

Who are these brothers? Judah, who fell to the desperate scheme of his neglected daughter-in-law Tamar (Gen. 38). And Joseph, who ran from the arms of Potiphar's wife (Ge 39). One chapter, an ugly story of irresponsibility and deception; the other, a beautiful chapter of faithfulness.

The stories of Judah and Joseph, presented back-to-back in the midst of "the history of Jacob" (Ge 37:2), show us that temptation itself is not the problem. Everybody faces temptation, even Jesus did (Matt. 4:1-11). But how do we face temptation? Do we demonstrate that faith in God can shield us from giving in to sin?

Joseph gave us one way of escape: Recognize sin as an affront to God and run from it. Jesus gave another: Answer temptation with truth from God's Word.

Facing temptation? See it as an opportunity to make God and His Word real in your life. Then run (1 Cor 6:18)! by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We fall into temptation when we don't stand against it

INSIGHT - Temptation rarely conquers suddenly; it conquers when we cease resisting. James wrote, "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7+). Standing firm is not passive (Let go, let God)—it is active resistance grounded in God's Word, prayer, and dependence on the Spirit. (Let God, let's go). When we fail to take that stand, we inevitably fall, not because temptation was too strong, but because faith was too still.

Temptation always knocks softly before it breaks down the door.

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." — Matt 26:41

Satan aims first at your attention, then at your affection (your lust).

"Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust." — James 1:14

Small compromises open wide doors to great sins. Woe!

"A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough." — Gal 5:9

We drift into sin when we stop steering toward holiness. (See Expulsive Power of a New Affection)

"We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." — Heb 2:1

No one stands long who doesn't kneel often.

"Pray without ceasing." — 1 Thess 5:17

Temptation weakens only when prayer strengthens.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." — Matt 6:13

The heart that hides God's Word will not hide sin!

"Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You." — Ps 119:11

Victory begins in vigilance.

"Be on the alert; your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion." — 1 Pet 5:8

Spiritual armor unused becomes spiritual defeat assured.

"Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm." — Eph 6:11

A moment of pleasure can cost a lifetime of peace.

"The wages of sin is death." — Rom 6:23

Temptation loses power when the Spirit of Christ fills the heart.

"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." — Gal 5:16

Sin never shows its price tag up front!

"The end of those things is death." — Rom 6:21

When faith grows faint, temptation often grows fierce.

"I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail." — Luke 22:32

It's easier to resist temptation at the door than to escape it once it is inside!

"Make no provision for the flesh." — Rom 13:14

Compromise begins when conviction goes quiet.

"Hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering." — Heb 10:23

Temptation is never stronger than the grace that opposes it.

"God is faithful... with the temptation will provide the way of escape." — 1 Cor 10:13

We can't fight sin's fire with a lukewarm heart.

"Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." — Ro 12:11

Holiness is not achieved by avoidance alone, but by affection for Christ. (See [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#))

"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." — Col 3:2

A FEW MORE PROVERBIAL THOUGHTS ON TEMPTATION - He who toys with sin will soon be tangled by it. (Are you Entangled?) The surest way to fall is to think we cannot. Faith stands where the flesh would stumble. Those who kneel before God stand firm against sin. Victory begins when resistance begins. Temptation knocks where watchfulness sleeps. Sin enters softly when faith stands idly.

We are in most danger from that temptation which we think ourselves most secure against. (1Co 10:12+) When we grow careless, Satan grows bold. He watches for drowsy sentinels (1Pe 5:8-9).

The man who thinks he cannot fall is already fallen in spirit (1Co 10:12+). Watchfulness is the armor of faith; when prayer faints, sin conquers. (Mt 26:41+)

Confidence in one's own strength is presumption, not faith. To think we stand is to forget that our standing is wholly in grace.

Overconfidence in one's own spiritual strength is a sure precursor to a fall. True confidence rests in the Spirit's sufficiency, not in self-sufficiency.

The believer in most danger of succumbing to sin is the overconfident one; the safest believer is the dependent one. Dependence is not weakness—it is wisdom. The believer safest from falling is the one leaning hardest on the Rock of our salvation. (cf Ps 18:2, Ps 19:14) The dependent soul runs to the Refuge (Pr 18:10), while the self-confident soul stands exposed. The believer safest from the fall is the one leaning hardest on the Rock, leaning on the everlasting arms (Dt 33:27+).

He that carries gunpowder about him must not stand near the fire. If we dally with temptation, we shall fall by it. (Pr 6:27-28, 2Ti 2:22, Ro 13:14, Eph 5:11) The believer must keep far from the sparks of sin, flee what inflames the flesh, and guard the heart with holy vigilance (Pr 4:23).

We never stand stronger than when we are upon our knees.

He that would be little in temptation must be much in prayer. He that dares to dally with temptation will dare to sin. Temptation is not conquered by argument but by fleeing (1Co 6:18+, Ge 39:12)

Peter's failure came not because the temptation was greater than grace, but because his confidence was greater than his dependence.

A powerful way to resist temptation is to replace it—with a greater affection ([Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)).

Temptation is not primarily an external event but an internal response. It reveals whether our trust is anchored in God's promises or in our own desires.

Sin is a gradual thing: first the thought, then the liking, then the consent. Those who would be safe must resist sin at the beginning. (Beloved brother if you have glanced accidentally at a virgin, take that thought captive immediately because you have only a millisecond to resist and run!)

The world says safety is found in self-reliance; Scripture says it's found in surrender of self. When Paul confessed, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10+), he was not promoting helplessness but holiness, a life leaning entirely upon the sufficiency of Christ (Php 4:13). The believer safest from a fall is not the strongest, but the one most aware of his weakness, most reliant on the Spirit's strength. "My grace is

sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9+)

Every temptation carries with it a door marked ‘Escape.’ Faith finds that door and walks through it in the strength of the Spirit.

We fall not because temptation is strong, but because our trust grows weak. The moment we stand in our own strength, we have already begun to fall.

Jesus said, “Apart from Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). The branch that clings to the Vine lives securely; the one that tries to grow apart from it withers. To lean is not laziness — it is loyalty to the One who alone sustains life. The dependent believer is not passive but prayerful, not careless but clinging. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.” (Pr 3:5) Every moment of self-assurance loosens our grip on grace; every moment of Spirit-reliance tightens it.

‘Irresistible’ Temptations

Read: Luke 4:1-13

- Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. —Matthew 4:1

Before I was old enough to get a driver’s license, I often thought about what it would be like to drive on the open road. I was afraid I would be tempted to go as fast as the car would go. I didn’t know if I would have the self-control to drive according to the speed limit and driving conditions. When I turned 16, though, I realized it was possible to control an accelerator instead of being controlled by it.

Have you ever heard about someone who justified his sin, claiming that the temptation was so irresistible that he had no other choice? Or have you ever wondered whether a certain questionable activity might actually be all right for you? After all, you reasoned, didn’t this unique opportunity come along at just the right time and provide just what you thought you needed?

We learn from the temptation of Jesus Christ that when we have an occasion to sin, God will always provide a way for us to escape or He will give us the strength to resist it (Lk. 4:1-13; 1 Cor. 10:13[±]). By relying on the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as Jesus did, we can resist temptation rather than be ruined by it.

For the Christian, there is no such thing as an irresistible temptation. By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin;
Each victory will help you some other to win,
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus—He’ll carry you through.
—Palmer

Every temptation is an opportunity to trust God.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS - Every trial is a test of trust. Each temptation invites either self-reliance or Spirit-dependence. Temptation tests whether we believe God is enough. Every temptation is a call to cling, not cave. Temptation reveals the depth of our trust, not the strength of our will. When temptation knocks, let faith answer. Begin to see that temptation is not just a threat to resist but a chance to rely.

Temptation is the battlefield. Trust is the weapon. Victory comes not by willpower (cf Mt 26:41+), but by dependence on God’s Spirit (Ro 8:13+)

Jesus met temptation not with argument but with trust in the Word of God. Each “It is written” (Matthew 4:1–11) was an act of faith — choosing to believe the Father’s sufficiency over the devil’s suggestion. So yes, Jesus depended on the Word, but remember He had also been “led by the Spirit” Mt 4:1 and in the parallel passage in Luke 4:1+ He was filled with the Spirit! Our victories follow the same pattern: not in trying harder, but in trusting deeper in His Word and His Spirit’s power!

And here is one Word we do well to memorize - 1Co 10:13+ “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” His word assures that no temptation we experience is unique or unconquerable. Why? Because God always provides:

1. A limit (He will not allow it beyond what we can bear),
2. A way (the path of escape)
3. A purpose (to prove His faithfulness).

So each temptation becomes a trust test—an opportunity to turn dependence into devotion. Temptation is not sin, but is the trial of faith. If faith holds its ground, the temptation becomes a blessing (Jas 1:2-8+, Jas 1:12+, 1Pe 1:6-7+). Temptation is designed by God to strengthen us while Satan schemes (Eph 6:11+) to use temptation to destroy us. Paul is saying in 1Co 10:13+ that God will make the temptation to be a trial of your faith, not a snare to your ruin. You can mark it down as a spiritual principle that every temptation hides a **twofold door**, one to sin, the other to trust. Faith chooses the latter door and finds the way of escape promised by our trustworthy God.

The next time the enemy (internal or external - the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)) whispers, “*You can’t resist,*” cry out in faith “*God is faithful.*” When the flesh cries out, “*You need this,*” cry out that “*Christ is enough for me.*” Are you being tempted as you read these words? Take a moment to pray and play (worship) [Christ is Enough!](#) Remember that you can do all things (including silencing that whispering voice that seeks to draw you away from Christ). Philippians 4:13+ says you “can do (OUR RESPONSIBILITY) all things through Him Who strengthens (GOD’S PROVISION)” you! (See [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent/100% Responsible](#)). Believe it and act on it because it is true!

The Twofold Door

Each trial hides a double door:

One leads to sin, one to the Lord.

Faith chooses the path where grace abides,

And finds escape where Christ resides.

So when the whispers press within,

“*Give up—resist is vain—just sin,*”

Lift up your heart, cry “God is true!

Christ is enough—He’ll carry you.”

ILLUSTRATION - A German picture called “**Cloud-land**” hangs at the end of a long gallery; and at first sight looks like a huge, repulsive daub of confused colour. As you walk towards it, it begins to take shape, and proves to be a mass of little cherub faces, like those in Raphael’s “Madonna san Sisto.” Close to the picture, you see only an innumerable company of little angels and cherubim. How often, frightened by temptation, we see nothing but a confused and repulsive mass of broken expectations and crushed hopes. But if, instead of fleeing away into unbelief and despair, we would only draw near to God in His Word, we should soon discover that the cloud was full of angels of mercy.’

This illustration recalls the story from 2 Kings 6:15-18 when the encircling chariots brought great fear to the heart of Elisha’s servant...

Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” 16 So he answered, “**Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.**” (**ED: BELOVED THIS SHOULD BE OUR "WATCHWORD!"**) 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” And the LORD opened the servant’s eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, “Strike this people with blindness, I pray.” So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

Illustration of the Plimsoll Mark (God will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able to endure - 1 Cor 10:13+) - It was due to the efforts of Samuel Plimsoll (1824-98), British reformer, that the Merchant Shipping Act of 1876 was passed, requiring all ships to bear a mark known as the Plimsoll mark and indicating the maximum load line. By this act the Board of Trade of England was empowered to detain any vessel deemed unsafe, and the amount of cargo was restricted, thus making the long and perilous ocean voyage of those days much safer. Because of his work, Plimsoll became known as the sailor’s friend. The Plimsoll mark, with its gradations and figures, may be seen on the bow of ships near the water line as they lie at anchor in a harbor. In God’s sight, each of us has a similar mark, though we may not be able to see it The burdens and responsibilities He gives us may seem unbearable, but He knows our limit, His everlasting arms are underneath, and by His grace we can bear them without sinking. “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1Cor 10:13b+).—Sunday School Times

Illustration of Temptation - short and pithy and funny - A man was on a diet and struggling. He had to go downtown and as he started out, he remembered that his route would take him by the doughnut shop. As he got closer, he thought that a cup of coffee would hit the spot. Then he remembered his diet. That's when he prayed, "Lord, if You want me to stop for a doughnut and coffee, let there be a parking place in front of the shop." He said, "Sure enough, I found a parking place right in front—on my seventh time around the block!"

Steven Cole - To live in this world means that you will encounter temptation. Some, like playwright Oscar Wilde, don't even try to fight it. He said, "I can resist anything except temptation." Others want to be delivered from temptation, but they would like it to keep in touch from time to time. But if we want to be godly people, we must learn to resist the temptations that come at us from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Jesus Christ is our great example and teacher when it comes to resisting temptation. He was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" ([Heb 4:15](#)). If we want to be like Jesus, we will be eager to learn from Him how He resisted the devil. This account of Jesus' temptation must have come down to the disciples and to us from Jesus Himself, since it was a private encounter.

Steven Cole on our **FALLEN FLESH** - This is not an outside enemy, but one that lives within us. Indwelling sin lurks there until the day we die and go to be with Jesus. I read of a pastor who was chatting with a godly, 78-year-old friend. The older gentleman recounted a recent trip to the city, where he realized that he was going to have to park and walk through a red-light district. So he pulled the car to a stop and prayed that God would protect him from temptation as he walked past all of the pornography stores and massage parlors.

The pastor interrupted, "Wait a minute! I don't mean to offend you, but you're 78 years old. Are you telling me that you're worried about sexual temptation at your age and after all these years of walking with the Lord?"

The older man replied, "Son, just because I'm old doesn't mean the blood doesn't flow through my veins. The difference between we old men and you young men is this: we know we're sinners. We've had plenty of experience. You kids haven't figured that out yet" He knew that this powerful enemy still lived within, even after years of fighting against it. ([Sermon](#))

ILLUSTRATION OF TEMPTATION - Do you know how an Eskimo kills a wolf? He repeatedly coats the blade of knife with blood, allowing it to freeze, until the blade is completely covered. Then he places the knife in the snow and as the wolf licks the blood, his tongue is numbed, and his hunger is fueled. The wolf will lick the knife, cut his own tongue and eventually bleed to death attempting to fulfill of his own desires. Satan uses the same tactic to defeat God's children. He knows that he can never have your soul, but he also knows if he can cause us to succumb to temptation, then we will become powerless and useless as Christians.

Ice-Cream Man - Little Jeff was trying his best to save money to buy his mother a present. It was a terrible struggle because he gave in so easily to the temptation to buy goodies from the ice-cream man whenever the brightly colored van came through the neighborhood.

One night after his mother had tucked him in bed, she overheard him pray, "Please, God, help me run away when the ice-cream man comes tomorrow." Even at his young age he had learned that one of the best ways to overcome temptation is to avoid what appeals to our weaknesses.

All believers are tempted to sin. Yet they need not give in. The Lord provides the way to be victorious over evil enticements (1 Cor 10:13+). But we must do our part. Sometimes that involves avoiding situations that would contribute to our spiritual defeat.

The apostle Paul admonished Timothy to run away from the evil desires of youth (2Ti 2:22+). He was to keep his distance from the temptations that might cause him to yield because of their strong appeal. That's good advice.

If possible, we should never let ourselves be in the wrong places or with people who will tempt us to do the things we should be avoiding.

Be sure to run from the "ice-cream man"!— Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It's wise to flee when tempted—
A fool is one who'd stay;
For those who toy with evil
Soon learn it doesn't pay.

—D. De Haan

We fall into temptation when we don't flee from it.

Yield Not- Imagine a song with a message so powerful it could stop a prison riot. According to one account, the song "Yield Not To Temptation" served that purpose. As the story goes, a group of women prisoners had been allowed out of their cells to listen to a visiting speaker. During the meeting, the supervisor gave an order that some of the prisoners didn't like, so they began to scream and hurl threats at her. The confrontation was escalating.

The supervisor sent for help, and it came in an unusual way. A voice was heard singing over the tumult of the upset prisoners: "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; each victory will help you some other to win." Amazingly, the rebellion quieted, and the women joined in singing as they filed back to their cells.

We save ourselves a lot of trouble by not yielding to the temptation to let anger control us. Likewise, we protect ourselves when we "yield not." Yielding not to the temptation to lie protects us from a loss of respect and further misrepresentations. Yielding not to the temptation of greed helps us avoid a gnawing dissatisfaction. But most important, when we "yield not" to temptation, we please God.

With each temptation God provides an "escape" (1Corinthians 10:13⁺). You'll find it as you yield to Him. — Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you—
He will carry you through.
—Palmer

To escape temptation, flee to God.

Tested And True - A young nurse was assisting a surgeon for the first time. As he was completing the operation, she told him he had used 12 sponges, but she could account for only 11. The doctor curtly replied that he had removed them all from inside the patient. The nurse insisted that one was missing, but the doctor declared he would proceed with sewing up the incision.

The nurse, her eyes blazing, said, "You can't do that! Think of the patient!" The doctor smiled and, lifting his foot, showed the nurse the twelfth sponge, which he had deliberately dropped on the floor. "You'll do fine!" he said. He had been testing her.

Daniel's three friends faced a different kind of test (Daniel 3:15-30⁺), but they too would not budge. They knew their refusal to worship the image might result in their death, yet they never wavered. They proved they were true to God by standing firm.

The Lord still permits trials and temptations to enter the lives of His children. The challenge may come as an opportunity to gratify the lusts of the flesh, or as a series of disheartening circumstances. Whatever form it takes, we must not yield. Rather, we must stand for what is right and trust God to supply the grace we need (1 Corinthians 10:13⁺).

Are you "tested and true"? — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A gem cannot be polished without friction,
nor can we be perfected without trial.

God is faithful, who ... with the temptation will also make the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13⁺).

In 1346, during the Hundred Years' War, the English army of King Edward III met a French battalion at Crecy, France. The King's son, Prince Edward, led one vital division of the British force while Edward III stood nearby with a strong band of soldiers, ready to send relief if needed. Soon after the battle started, the prince thought he was in danger, so he sent for help. But the king didn't come. Young Edward sent another message, pleading for immediate assistance. His father responded by telling the courier, "Go tell my son that I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when help is needed, nor so careless a father as not to send it."

This story illustrates the heavenly Father's relationship with believers as we battle temptation and sin. Often we cry out for help, but it seems that God sends no relief. Yet at no time does He withdraw His eye from our precarious position. He never allows us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, and when He sees that we are about to be overcome He rushes to our aid or provides a way to escape. So we need not get frantic—our Father is aware of our situation. In 1 Corinthians 1:9 the apostle Paul said, "God is faithful." Commenting on this, Ambrose Serle noted, "He is wise to foresee and provide for all my dangers. He is faithful to perfect and perform all His promises."

No matter how hot the conflict, the Lord is ready to intervene at the right moment. He is always standing by. —P. R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When God sends us,
He also goes with us.

Concerned about his personal life, Ed went to his pastor for help. After listening to the young man's mild list of supposed sins, the wise preacher felt that he had not been completely honest. "Are you sure that's all?" the preacher asked. "Yes, pastor," Ed said. "Are you positive you haven't been entertaining any impure thoughts lately?" the pastor continued. "Oh, no," Ed replied, "but they've sure been entertaining me."

Temptation may be defined as a desire for sinful pleasure. If it didn't offer pleasure, it would be easy to resist. Perhaps that's why we understand the truth behind the cartoon in which a man says, "I don't mind fleeing temptation—as long as I can leave a forwarding address." And, if we're honest, we admit that sin often takes place first in our mind. For many people, illicit sexual thoughts provide pleasure.

Temptation is not sin. For it to develop into sin, we have to welcome it, dwell on it, and enjoy it. For example, the temptation to get back at someone who has hurt us is wrong only when we begin to think about ways to harm that person and get revenge. Paul said that every thought must be brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2Co 10:5).

When we allow wrong thoughts into our minds, we must confess them as sin, ask God to help us, and then fill our minds with good and pure thoughts. When we submit to God and resist the devil, we can say no to tempting thoughts. —D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Character is shaped by what the mind takes in.

Be Careful! - Several years ago my wife Carolyn and I were hiking on Mount Rainier in Washington when we came to a swollen, glacial stream. Someone had flattened one side of a log and dropped it across the river to form a crude bridge, but there was no handrail and the log was slippery.

The prospect of walking on the wet log was frightening, and Carolyn didn't want to cross. But she found the courage, and slowly, carefully she inched her way to the other side.

On the way back we had to walk on the same log, and she did so with the same care. "Are you afraid?" I asked. "Of course," she replied, "that's what keeps me safe." Again, fully aware of the danger, she made her way to safety.

Much of life poses moral danger for us. We should never assume in any situation that we're incapable of falling. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1Corinthians 10:12). Given the opportunity and circumstances, any of us are capable of falling into any sin. To believe otherwise is sheer folly.

We must watch and pray and arm ourselves for every occasion by putting our total trust in God (Ephesians 6:13[±]). "God is faithful" (1Corinthians 10:13[±]), and He will give us the strength to keep from falling. — David H. Roper [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The hand of God protects our way
When we would do His will;
And if through danger we must go,
We know He's with us still.
—D. De Haan

God provides the armor, but we must put it on

ILLUSTRATION - Load Limits - Joe Stowell

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it” 1 Corinthians 10:13⁺

Daddy, can I help you?” It was my four-year-old son, Matt, who was watching me carry cartons of empty pop bottles to the car. Back then you could return them for a dime apiece, so after months of stacking them up in the garage, I was off to collect the cash bonanza.

I said, “Sure, Matt,” and he picked up a carton of bottles and put them in the car. When we got to the store, he grabbed his carton of bottles and shuffled along next to me across the big parking lot. About half way to the store, obviously exhausted, he looked up and said, “Dad, I can’t carry this anymore.”

Count on it, I didn’t say, “Listen, Kid, you started this, so pick up that carton right now and finish what you started!” Of course not!

I took the carton out of his hands, because I knew it was too heavy for him to handle. As his earthly father, I understood what his limits were and helped him carry the load.

Thankfully, our heavenly Father understands our **load limit** and comes alongside to help. It’s hard to stick it out during difficult times when the trouble in our lives seems far **too heavy** and there is **no end in sight**. **It’s in times like these that we feel like giving up—like we can’t go on**. But God’s Word reminds us that

“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 stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13⁺).

It’s important to note that this verse is talking about more than just bearing up under **temptation**. In the original Greek, the word temptation actually means **“all kinds of trials.”**

Ever feel like you’re in the middle of all kinds of trials? The problem with problems is that they have a tendency to drain us of our strength—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And that’s when our adversary likes to launch his attack. When we’re weak, he haunts us with thoughts like:

- How could a loving God allow this to happen?
- God has brought you to this place and has just left you here.
- Or, You’re beyond help—God can’t help you now.

But when you start thinking these **thoughts** (**ED: AND REMEMBER THE BATTLE IS NOT A "POWER STRUGGLE" WITH THE ENEMY [YOUR FLESH OR THE DEVIL] BUT IS IN OUR MIND [WE BEGIN "THINKING THESE THOUGHTS"] AND THE STRUGGLE IS OVER TRUTH AND WHAT GOD SAYS IS TRUE ABOUT US!**), you need to know that they are flat out lies from the pit. You can be sure that they don’t reflect God’s heart for you during difficult times.

In the Old Testament, one of God’s names is **Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide**—our Provider—and He always lives up to His name. He stands ready to provide abundant grace so that we can bear up until He has finished His work in the trial (2 Corinthians 12:7-10⁺). He gives us a peace that passes understanding as we trust and rely on Him with a grateful heart (Philippians 4:6-7⁺). He gives wisdom to see our tough times from His point of view (James 1:5⁺). He gives us the assurance that He will stick it out with us and not leave or forsake us, so that we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What man can do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6⁺).

So, chin up! Our troubles and trials have not escaped the notice of the One who comes alongside to help when it seems like the load is too much to bear. The One who knows your load limit promises to limit your load!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- **Think back to a time when God helped you “bear up” under the pressure of difficult circumstances** Write a paragraph in your journal about how God’s power helped you through.
- **What promises of God can you claim to find strength in your time of trouble?** Pray them back to God with a thankful heart until you sense His peace and presence in the midst of your pain.
- **Write a prayer of thanksgiving for a specific event that God helped you through.**
- **Read the following Scriptures for examples of Moses and Hannah who did this:** Exodus 15:1-18; 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

- **Find someone who needs help “bearing up.”** Use Scripture to encourage that person through a written note or a phone call.
- ([Strength for the Journey](#))

See [related illustration of Plimsoll marks](#)

Load Limit - We've all seen load-limit signs on highways, bridges, and elevators. Knowing that too much strain can cause severe damage or complete collapse, engineers determine the exact amount of stress that various materials can safely endure. Posted warnings tell us not to exceed the maximum load.

Human beings also have their load limits, which vary from person to person. Some people, for example, can bear the pressure of trial and temptation better than others; yet everyone has a breaking point and can take only so much.

At times, circumstances and people seem to be pushing us beyond what we can bear. But the Lord knows our limitations and never allows any difficulties to enter our lives that exceed our strength and ability to endure. This is especially true when we're enticed by sin. According to 1Corinthians 10:13+, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able."

So when trials and temptations press down on you, take courage. Remember, your heavenly Father knows the limits of your ability to stand up under life's pressures. Draw on His strength; no temptation will ever be greater than that! — Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When sorrows assail us or terrors draw nigh,
His love will not fail us, He'll guide with His eye;
And when we are fainting and ready to fail,
He'll give what is lacking and make us prevail.
—Anon.

**If you yield to God,
you won't give in to sin**

EDITORIAL NOTE: The preceding summary statement is the same principle taught in one of the most important passages in Scripture regarding how to fight temptation, Galatians 5:16+

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and
you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Notice the order which is absolutely critical - (1) yield, surrender, submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit and (2) He will enable you to resist the and thus to effectively "neutralize" the temptation's power over your fallen flesh. Paul does not say the desire will be gone, but that the Spirit will enable a God directed desire in your heart and will give you the divine power to not act on the temptation and commit sin. Romans 8:13+ amplifies this truth for there Paul says "if by the Spirit (HIS SUPERNATURAL POWER) you are putting to death (THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY) the deeds of the body, you will live (THIS IS THE WONDERFUL "FRUIT")."

See related discussion [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)

Matthew 4:1-11

On the day before my mother died in 1976, my brother and I were called to her bedside. Though too weak for extended conversation, she quoted two verses—Isaiah 41:10 and John 10:29—not simply to con-sole us, but to reinforce her own faith. She held fast to what God had said; and what God said held her fast.

The Word of God has tremendous holding power. When tempted in the wilderness, our Lord overcame the enemy's suggestions by quoting Scripture. He did this to strengthen Himself, not to intimidate Satan. Though sinless, Jesus was truly human, and the temptation was real. Sometimes we allow His deity to overshadow this event and assume that the Savior casually brushed Satan aside with a few Scripture verses. But the Bible leaves no doubt that He was "tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Therefore, the Word held Him steady. Jesus did not quote verses to Satan because they contained some magical power. Rather, He called them to mind to guide and reinforce Himself so that He would remain true to God's will. Because He kept His life under the control of the Word, Satan could not deter Him from doing His Father's will.

Whenever we are tested—whether it's a severe temptation, an overwhelming fear, or the specter of death itself—we can rest with

confidence on God's sure and abiding Word. Down through the centuries countless saints have been held by its power, and it is as strong as ever. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The strongest weapon in Satan's arsenal is no match for the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. (Eph 6:17[±])

TEMPTATION QUOTES

Every **temptation** is an opportunity of our getting nearer to God. - John Quincy Adams

Temptations discover what we are. - Thomas à Kempis

Temptations are a file which rub off much of the rust of our self-confidence. - François Fenelon

My **temptations** have been my masters in divinity. - Martin Luther

Playwright Oscar Wilde once jokingly remarked, "I can resist everything except temptation." We smile when we read those words because they speak an important truth about the human condition. Temptation pays a visit to each of us every day and most of us struggle to say no. - [Ray Pritchard - From Temptation to Triumph \(EXCELLENT\)](#)

The main reason God allows trials in the lives of Christians is to test the strength of their faith. - John MacArthur

Perhaps you've heard about the little boy who was lying under an apple tree. The farmer asked, "What are you trying to do? Steal an apple?" "No, sir, I'm trying not to," he replied. Many of us are trying not to, but we fail because we lie down under the apple tree. - Ray Pritchard

We are reminded that **to be tempted is not sin**; but to **entertain** temptation, or **surrender** to temptation is sin. - [David Guzik](#)

Learn to say **no**; it will be of more use to you than being able to read **Latin!** - C H Spurgeon (One of my mentors Dr Wayne Barber turned it around encouraging us first to say "Yes" to Jesus and then we will be able (enabled) to say "No" to the temptation. The principle is akin to the Expulsive Power of a New Affection).

Most people want to be delivered from temptation but would like it to keep in touch. - Robert Orben

Does God lead into temptation? God tempts no man to sin. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any man." James 1:13. He *permits* sin—but does not *promote* it. He who is an encourager of holiness cannot be a pattern of sin. God does not tempt to that to which he has an antipathy. What king will tempt his subjects to break laws which he himself has established? - Thomas Watson ([The Lord's Prayer](#))

Here are a few "proverbial like" thoughts on **temptation** all from **anonymous** sources...

- The worst thing about resisting temptation is that we may not get another chance to do it!
- Following the lines of least resistance makes men and rivers crooked.
- He who avoids the temptation avoids the sin.
- It takes two to make a successful temptation, and you are one of the two.
- Most people who fly from temptation usually leave a forwarding address.
- Never invite temptation—it always accepts.
- No one can be caught in a place he does not visit.
- There is no merit in abstaining from what one is not tempted to do.
- We are never strong enough to risk walking into temptation.
- Temptations, like foul weather, come before we send for them.
- Temptations are everywhere, but so is the grace of God.
- If you would master temptation, you must first let Christ master you.
- Every temptation is an opportunity to get nearer to God.

Matthew 4:2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry."

- **fasted:** Ex 24:18 34:28 De 9:9,18,25 18:18 1Ki 19:8 Lu 4:2
- **He then became hungry:** Mt 21:18 Mk 11:12 Joh 4:6 Heb 2:14-17
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages:

Mark 1:13+ 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.

Luke 4:2+ for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

And after He had fasted ([nesteuo](#)) forty days and forty nights - Only Matthew says he **fasted**. In regard what Jesus fasted from, Luke says **He ate ([esthio](#)) nothing during those days**. (Lk 4:2+), where ate nothing is a double negative which suggests that Jesus ate **ABSOLUTELY** nothing during those forty days! Notice that none of the synoptic accounts say anything about Jesus not drinking water or that He was thirsty. And given that [esthio](#) which means to eat is often used in parallel with the verb [pino](#) which means to drink (Mt 6:25,31; Mt 11:18,19, Lk 5:30,33 Lk 7:33,34), the fact that Luke makes no mention of Jesus not drinking would strongly support that Jesus did in fact drink water during the 40 days. Human beings are not camels and can go without water for only about 3 days, and certainly not 40 days! In Ex 34:28 which is often compared to Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness Moses "he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water." For Moses to go without water for this long had to be only by divine intervention. The synoptic accounts do not state Jesus went without water. Notice also that Satan does not tempt Jesus with water but with food, which also supports the premise that Jesus drank water during those 40 days. **Chamblin** adds "For Moses' absolute fasts, see Dt 9:9, 18; Ex 34:28; cf. Esther 4:16; Jonah 3:7. The verb [peinao](#) ('hunger')—sometimes joined to [dipsao](#) ('thirst'), as, e.g., in Matthew 5:6 and Mt 25:35—stands alone in Mt 4:2. (Matthew: A Mentor Commentary)

The [NET Note](#) says "The reference to Jesus eating **nothing** could well be an idiom meaning that he ate only what the desert provided. A desert fast simply meant eating only what one could obtain in the desert." **Lenski** on the other hand writes "An idea of partial fasting, living without ordinary food due to wandering in the desert, is wholly shut out by Luke 4:2: "he did eat nothing in those days."

In Scripture fasting is normally forgoing a physical need to give attention to a spiritual need. The question arises as to whether the fasting of Jesus was for spiritual preparation.

Hendriksen thinks it was asking "Is it not reasonable to believe that the Lord used these forty days to prepare himself, by means of prayer and meditation, for the work which the Father had given him to do, and which he, Jesus himself, had voluntarily taken upon himself? Says Calvin, commenting on Mt 4:1, 2, "There were two reasons why Christ withdrew into the wilderness. First, that, after a fast of forty days he might come forth as a new man, or rather a heavenly man, to the discharge of his office. Secondly, that he might be tried by temptation and undergo an apprenticeship before he undertook an office so arduous and so exalted." (Ibid)

Lenski differs commenting that "This long fast should not be regarded as a preparation for the coming temptation. We nowhere read that Jesus fasted and prayed. This is not a retirement of Jesus such as he at other times sought for communion with God. Jesus did not spend these forty days in the happy enjoyment of the good pleasure of his Father and thus forgot all about food. He was led up into the mountainous wilderness for quite a different purpose, namely, "to be tempted by the devil." Mark uses *κβάλλει*, "he is thrown out into the desert," and then adds that he was there *πειραζόμενος π το Σαταν*, "being tempted by Satan," namely during the entire time which he spent in the desert. This durative participle after *v* does not indicate purpose: "in order to be tempted," and thus the temptation should not be restricted to the three attacks at the end of the forty days. Luke also has this present participle: *πειραζόμενος π το διαβόλου*. Since Luke has it after *γετο*, if he had purpose in mind and thus only the three fully recorded temptations, he would have employed the infinitive or a purpose clause...It is not necessary to assume that Jesus did not sleep during these forty nights; that would surely have been mentioned if it had been a fact. We have no revelation regarding the continuous temptation." (The Interpretation of St Matthew's Gospel)

Forty days and forty nights - The testing lasted **forty days**, but some commentators like **William Barclay** say this is not to be taken literally which is absurd! Of course it is to be taken literally. The number **forty** in the Bible is used for times of testing, times of probation, and times of preparation. Israel spent **forty** years in the wilderness. Moses spent **forty** years on the backside of the desert in training. The spies spent **forty** days spying out Canaan. The rains were upon the earth **forty** days and nights during the flood. So, the number **forty** is a number associated with testing. **Forty** days also reminds us of Moses who spent **40** days without food or water on Mount Sinai with the Lord before he received the Law (Ex 24:18; Ex 34:28). Elijah also went **40** days on the

strength of the food given to him at Horeb, the mountain of God (1 Ki 19:8). **Constable** adds that "The number **40** frequently has connections with sin in the Old Testament (cf. Ge 7:4, 12; Nu 14:33; 32:13; Dt 9:25; 25:3; Ps 95:10; Jon 3:4)." (Ibid)

Lenski on forty - The fact that the hunger was not felt for just forty days, no more and no less, cannot be considered accidental. We read about other periods of precisely forty days in the Scriptures, so that it seems as though some mysterious law underlies this number. (Ibid)

He then became hungry - **Then** literally = later became, afterward became. Luke 4:2 says **He became hungry**. Was he not hungry any time during the 40 days? Henry Alford makes a statement that is interesting but difficult to defend from the Scripture writing that "The period of the fast, as in the case of Moses was spent in a spiritual ecstasy, during which the wants of the natural body were suspended." In any event here was Jesus in a time of surely intense hunger, and the Devil sets the bait with bread. As **Thomas Adams** said "Satan, like a fisher, baits his hook according to the appetite of the fish!"

John Phillips writes "It is said that during a prolonged fast, the feeling of hunger goes away after three or four days, only to return with renewed force at the end of thirty or forty days. This sudden onslaught of recurring hunger became the basis for the first temptation." ([exploring the Gospel of Matthew: An Expository Commentary - Page 61](#))

J Knox Chamblin comments on **became hungry** noting that "it is not in the least surprising that Jesus was hungry after a forty-day fast: this is about as long as the human organism can last without food. 'Anywhere between 21 and 40 days or longer, depending on the individual, hunger pains will return. This is the first stage of starvation and the pains signal that the body has used up its reserves and is beginning to draw on the living tissue. The fast should be broken at this time' (Foster 1988: 59). 'Since the human body cannot go without water much more than three days,' Moses must have been miraculously sustained during his 'absolute fasts' (ibid., 49). The same would hold true for Jesus, if he abstained from water as well as food (but Foster, ibid., thinks he fasted from food alone)." (Ibid)

MacArthur applies this (Jesus' temptation when he became hungry) to believers - "Hunger (**Ed**: And, from personal experience, I would also add lack of adequate sleep) not only makes us physically weak but also tends to weaken our moral and spiritual resistance as well. When we are tired, hungry, or sick we are usually less concerned about other needs and dangers and tend to be vulnerable to anything that might provide relief from our present distress. Satan therefore usually attacks most fiercely in such times of weakness and unpreparedness. Temptations that have been anticipated, guarded against, and prayed about have little power to harm us (**Ed**: Jesus recommendation - Mt 6:13⁺). Jesus tells us to "**keep watching and praying** (**Ed**: both verbs are [present imperative](#) = calls us to do this continually, ONLY possible as [we continually rely on the filling/controlling of the Holy Spirit!](#)) that you may not come into temptation" (Mark 14:38, cp Mt 26:41⁺). **Victory over temptation comes from being constantly prepared for it, which, in turn, comes from constantly relying on the Lord** (**Ed**: I.e, the enabling power of the Spirit = "God is working in" us - see Php 2:13NLT⁺). (**ILLUSTRATION**) It is said that a person traveling in tiger country will not be attacked if he sees the tiger before the tiger sees him. Tigers attack from behind in order to surprise their victims, and therefore one of the best defenses against that vicious animal is to face it. (**Ed**: Reminds me of the command to **resist** him in Jas 4:6,7⁺ and 1 Pe 5:8-9⁺) Jesus, though having fasted for over a month, was no less alert to spiritual danger. Because He had spent the time in communion with His Father, even in His weakest physical moments He did not allow Satan to gain any foothold. " (Matthew Commentary) (Bolding added)

After ([5305](#), [5306](#))(**husteros**) has the basic meaning what is behind or after in space or time; is the end result of a succession or process. **Friberg** - (1) as an adjective; (a) used as a comparative - the last named, the latter, the second one (Mt 21.32); (b) used as a superlative as the final in a series of times last; possibly later, future times (1Ti 4.1); (2) neuter as an adverb; (a) in a comparative sense in the second place, later, afterward (Mt 4.2); (b) in a superlative sense finally, lastly (Mt 21.37); last of all (Mt 22.27). **BDAG summary** - (1) pert. to being subsequent in a series, the second one, adj. comp. (1 Chr 29:29) (of two, as Aristot., Pol. 1312a, 4; Aristophon Com. [IV BC] 5), the latter Mt 21:31. (2) pert. to a point of time that is subsequent to another point of time (a). comp.: neut. **husteron** as adv. (Hom. et al.) in the second place, later, then, thereafter (Mt 4:2; 21:29, 32, 25:11; Mk 16:14; Lk 4:2; Jn 13:36; Heb 12:11 (b) superlative - last (1 Ti 4:1), finally (Mt 21:37; 26:60; Lk 20:32. last of all Mt 22:27; Lk 20:32)

NT - Matt. 4:2; Matt. 21:29 = but **afterward** he regretted it and went.; Matt. 21:32 = not even feel remorse **afterward** so as to believe him.; Matt. 21:37 = But **afterward** he sent his son to them; Matt. 22:27 = **Last** of all, the woman died.; Matt. 25:11 = **Later** the other virgins also came; Matt. 26:60 - **later on** two came forward; Mk. 16:14 - afterward; Lk. 20:32 = finally; Jn. 13:36 = you will follow **later**; 1 Tim. 4:1 = in later times some **will fall away**; Heb. 12:11 = **afterwards** it yields

Septuagint - 1 Chr. 29:29; Prov. 5:4; Prov. 23:31; Prov. 24:32; Jer. 29:2; Jer. 31:19; Jer. 40:1; Jer. 50:17;

He became hungry (also used by Lk 4:2+) (3983)(**peinao** from **pein** = hunger) means to feel the pangs of lack of food. The majority of the NT uses speak of literal hunger. Jesus elevated feeding the hungry to high level in His teaching in Mt 25:35, 37, 42, 44. Jesus used **peinao** figuratively in the beatitude in Mt 5:6+ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." All uses of **peinao** - Matt. 4:2; Matt. 5:6; Matt. 12:1; Matt. 12:3; Matt. 21:18; Matt. 25:35; Matt. 25:37; Matt. 25:42; Matt. 25:44; Mk. 2:25; Mk. 11:12; Lk. 1:53 - "He has filled the hungry with good things"; Lk. 4:2; Lk. 6:3; Lk. 6:21; Lk. 6:25; Jn. 6:35; Ro 12:20 - "if your enemy is hungry"; 1 Co. 4:11; 1 Co. 11:21; 1 Co. 11:34; Phil. 4:12; Rev. 7:16 - "They will hunger no longer".

Matthew 4:3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, **command** that these stones become bread."

- **the tempter**: Job 1:9-12 2:4-7 Lu 22:31,32 1Th 3:5 Rev 2:10 12:9-11
- **if**: Mt 3:17 Lu 4:3,9
- **command**: Ge 3:1-5 25:29-34 Ex 16:3 Nu 11:4-6 Ps 78:17-20 Heb 12:16
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages:

Mark 1:13+ 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.

Luke 4:3+ And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

THE ARROGANCE OF SATAN TO COMMAND GOD

And - Don't miss the "and" (kai) as it closely links Jesus' intense hunger with the devil's intense temptation! As Steven Cole reminds us "Satan hit Jesus with this temptation at the precise moment that Jesus was hungry. He always works like that—he hits you when you're down. He bides his time until you are vulnerable, and then he moves in with his subtle suggestion of evil. I once heard a godly man tell of how he had been ministering in India for a month. On his return flight over the Atlantic, an attractive stewardess was especially kind to him, giving him a lot of attention. Being weary from traveling, he appreciated it. He had to spend the night in Washington, D.C. before catching his final flight home the next morning. As he went to get off the plane, he thanked the stewardess for her service. She responded by inviting him to come to her apartment for the night rather than going to his hotel. He was tired, he had been away from his wife for a month, and here was a very attractive young woman offering herself to him in a situation where no one would know. This was the opportune moment for Satan to hit! By God's grace, the man declined the offer, but he said that there was a brief moment in which it sounded very inviting. So be alert as to when you are vulnerable. That's when the enemy will hit!...Satan tries to get us to meet legitimate needs or goals in illegitimate ways. Hunger is a legitimate need, but for Jesus to use His power independently of the Father to meet His need would have been wrong. ([The Temptation of Jesus](#))

The tempter came and said to Him - **Tempter** is a "verbal noun" in this case, as it is the same verb **peirazo** used in Mt 4:1. What a dramatic contrast - The Holy Son of God confronted by the unholy serpent of old! In the only other use of the name **tempter** for the devil Paul writes the saints at Thessalonica "For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that **the tempter** might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain." (1 Th 3:5+).

Brian Bell makes the interesting observation on the devil's triple temptation, reminding us that "Most assaults come from more than 1 direction...(Lk 4:1-13 is) A triple attack on the Son of God!"

If You are the Son of God - If introduces a first class conditional clause which assumes the condition to be a reality and the conclusion follows logically and naturally from that assumption. **Son** is emphatic by position. The first two temptations begin with the same phrase **If you are...**(Mt 4:6). **Are** (eimi) is present tense so devil assumes the deity of the Son. He may be alluding to the words of the Father in Mt 3:17+ "And **behold**, a voice out of the heavens said, "**This is My beloved Son**, in Whom I am well-pleased."

As **Robertson** says the **tempter** "challenges this address by a condition of the first class (IF) which assumes the condition to be true and deftly calls on Jesus to exercise his power as Son of God to appease his hunger and thus prove to himself and all that he really is what the Father called him."

There is a tragic irony in those words "**If You are the Son of God**" for here this address marks the **beginning** of Jesus' public ministry while the same words mark the **end** of Matthew's Gospel as He hangs on the Cross and the mockers hurl insults like "You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! **If You are the Son of God**, come down from the cross." (Mt 27:40)

Wiersbe - "Since You are God's beloved Son, why doesn't Your Father feed You? Why does He put You into this terrible wilderness?" This temptation sounded like Satan's words to Eve in Genesis 3! It is a subtle suggestion that our Father does not love us. But there was another suggestion: "Use Your divine powers to meet Your own needs." When we put our physical needs ahead of our spiritual needs, we sin. When we allow circumstances to dictate our actions, instead of following God's will, we sin. Jesus could have turned the stones into bread, but He would have been exercising His powers independently of the Father; and He came to obey the Father (John 5:30; 6:38). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Criswell on if you are - "If You are" can be translated "since You are." The tempter knows the condition to be true and will tempt Jesus regarding the nature of His messianic mission (REDEMPTION BY THE SINLESS REDEEMER). He will be tempted to under-confidence, over-confidence, and other-confidence with respect to God. The first two temptations (Mt 4:2-7) attempt to make Jesus doubt His divine sonship, the basis for His role as Messiah. Jesus counters the first (Mt 4:2, 3), which appeals to physical appetite (Mt 4:4), with Deut. 8:3; the second (Matt. 4:5, 6), which calls for spectacular display (Matt. 4:7), He counters with Deut. 6:16. (Because Jerusalem became the center of redemptive history, Luke places this temptation last as a climax; cf. Luke 4:1-13. Thus, Luke's order is more theological/geographical, whereas Matthew's is the more chronological.) The final temptation listed here (Mt 4:8, 9), which deals with ambition, is countered by Deut. 6:13 (Matt. 4:10, 11). Thus, Jesus repels the temptation to compromise, choosing instead the path of the Suffering Servant Messiah. (Believer's Study Bible)

Satan's seduction was for Jesus to "act in independence of the Holy Spirit who had led Him into the wilderness, and in independence of the Father who had permitted Him to be deprived of bodily sustenance. Satan was suggesting that Jesus use the resources of His sonship to violate the responsibility of His Sonship. The responsibility was never to act in independence of His Father. (Incidentally, a prolonged fast has to be broken gradually, and initially with liquids; solid food can kill.)**(ED: WE DISCOVERED THAT IN FEEDING THE STARVING JEWS IN HEINOUS GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS!)** (Phillips)

William MacDonald - To fulfill a natural appetite by using divine power in response to Satan's prompting is in direct disobedience to God. The idea behind Satan's suggestion is an echo of Genesis 3:6 ("good for food"). John classifies this temptation as "the lust of the flesh" (1 Jn. 2:16). Our corresponding temptation is to live for the gratification of natural desires, to choose a pathway of comfort instead of seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The devil says, "You have to live, don't you?" (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Command that these stones become bread - Instant food! Instant gratification! (Does this sound familiar? cf Heb 11:24-25+) **Command** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#). The arrogance of the devil to command God! The evil irony of the creation commanding his Creator! We are reminded of the devil's shrewdness in temptation as we consider this narrative from the life of Christ. The devil came with flattery not blazing guns. His methodology comes by way of trickery, deceit, and often stealth (cf his [modus operandi](#) in Genesis 3:1+. He has not changed! He attacked the Word in Genesis and here attacks the Word in Matthew!). Just as Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel to usurp David's kingdom (2 Sa 15:1-5, 6), so the devil steals away our affections through his sophistry. Notice that in the first two temptations, both begin with a similar phrase. Also notice that the temptations became progressively worse. **These stones** could have been smooth, round stones he held in his gnarly hand or pointed to with his crooked finger! So simple. So satisfying. So sinister. So seductive. So serpentine!

Stone (3037) ([lithos](#) English - [lithograph](#); [monolith](#)) is a mass of hard consolidated mineral matter ([English definition](#)) which in Scripture refers both to a literal stone or piece of rock used for various purposes: building material (Mt 24.2), sealing graves (Mt 27.60), millstones for processing food (Rev 18.21), flat stones for engraved writing (2Cor 3.7), etc.; (b) of precious stones jewels (Rev 4.3); (c) of idols stone image (Acts 17.29); (2) metaphorically, of Christ as the keystone in God's spiritual temple (Mt 21.42); of Christians as living stones in God's spiritual temple (1Pe 2.5). All uses by Matthew Matt. 3:9; Matt. 4:3; Matt. 4:6; Matt. 7:9; Matt. 21:42; Matt. 21:44; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 27:60; Matt. 27:66; Matt. 28:2

As **Steven Cole** says "Matthew has **stones** (plural), while Luke has **stone**, but there need not be any contradiction. The devil easily could have said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread. In fact, there is a stone right at your feet. Why not command that stone to become a loaf of bread?" We do not know nor can we speculate on whether the devil took on human form, whether he spoke audibly or whether he suggested the thought to Jesus without an audible voice. ([The Temptation of Jesus](#))

1. The first was for Jesus to distrust the providential care of His Father and to use His own divine powers to serve Himself.
2. The second was to presume on the Father's care by putting Him to the test.

3. The third was for Him to renounce the way of His Father and to substitute the way of Satan.

Satan:

1. Appeals to physical appetite
2. To personal gain
3. Power or glory

COMPARISON OF SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS OF EVE AND JESUS		
TEMPTATION	GENESIS 3	LUKE 4
Appeal to physical appetite	You may eat of any tree (Ge 3:1+)	You may eat by changing stones to bread (Mt 4:3-4+, Lk 4:3-4+)
Appeal to personal gain	You surely will not die (Ge 3:4+)	You will not strike Your foot (Mt 4:6+, Lk 4:9-12+)
Appeal to power or glory	You will be like God (Ge 3:5+)	You will have all the world's kingdoms (Mt 4:8-9+, Lk 4:5-8+)

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

- **It is written:** Mt 4:7,10 Lu 4:4,8,12 Ro 15:4 Eph 6:17
- **Man:** De 8:3 Lu 4:4
- **but:** Mt 14:16-21 Ex 16:8,15,35 23:15 1Ki 17:12-16 2Ki 4:42-44 7:1,2 Hag 2:16-19 Mal 3:9-11 Mk 6:38-44 8:4-9 Joh 6:5-15 31-59,63
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Luke 4:4+ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

John 6:35+ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

Deuteronomy 8:3+ He humbled you (IS HE HUMBLING YOU TODAY? THEN THIS VERSE IS FOR YOU AND YOUR GOOD! EAT!) and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that **man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.**

GOD SAID SO!

But He answered and said, "It is written - Do not miss that the first words out of Jesus' mouth after His anointing for ministry are the Words of God! There is a lesson there for all of us beloved (cf Ps 19:14+) **It is written** ("It stands written") occurs 76 times in the Bible and four uses are in the temptation of Christ, 3x by Jesus and once by the Tempter (Matt. 4:4; 4:6; 4:7; 4:10). When we were children and our parents told us to do something and we questioned "Why?", the answer was usually "Because I said so!". Why are we commanded to be holy? Because God said so! A popular saying is "God said it, I believe it, that settles it." This sounds good but isn't accurate because God's Word is true, irregardless of whether we believe it or not. A more accurate "saying" would be **God said it, that settles it!** It is written should put a stop to every complaint or excuse. In essence, Jesus sets Satan's suggestion next to Scripture's statement. There is an important principle here - we should always lay God's Word besides Satan's subtle seductions - The best way to show a stick is crooked is not to argue about it or spend time denouncing it, but to lay a straight stick alongside it. "**It is written**" should be in the heart and on the lips of every Christian." (F. Whitfield) **'it is written'** should decide every controversy, settle every doubt, and overcome every difficulty. (Amen!)

Written (1125) ([grapho](#)) from root **graph-** = primarily means to scratch on or engrave as on an ornament,

reports, letters, etc; **English** = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John), paper, etc. The phrase **it is written** in the Gospels - Matt. 4:4; Matt. 4:6; Matt. 4:7; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 11:10; Matt. 21:13; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:31; Mk. 1:2; Mk. 7:6; Mk. 9:13; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:27; Lk. 2:23; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 4:4; Lk. 4:8; Lk. 4:10; Lk. 7:27; Lk. 19:46; Lk. 24:46; Jn. 6:31; Jn. 6:45; Jn. 12:14

THOUGHT - Grapho is in the [perfect tense](#) which indicates that God's Word was written down at a point in time and still stands written—its truth and authority remain unchanged and unchanging!! It is still active, still relevant, and still binding on our lives! Jesus in fact said "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." (Mt 24:35+) This begs the question - why don't we [memorize His Word](#)? All of the shiny trinkets and baubles we spend time collecting will vanish (cf 1 Jn 2:17+), but God's Word will endure. The toys of earth will seem like such poor things when we exchange them for a crown. So, beloved, feed on the Word (1 Pe 2:2+, Heb 5:14+), so that may be enabled by the Spirit to [meditate on the Word](#) anywhere, anytime—and in doing so, experience the the rich blessings promised to those who mediate on His Word (Ps 1:1+, Ps 1:2+, Ps 1:3+, Joshua 1:8+)

'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE - Notice the word **man**. The point is that Jesus faced the Tempter as a Man, a human being, not in His power as the Son of God. While He had laid aside His divine prerogatives (Php 2:6), He was not defenseless. To the contrary, He showed us how we too can deflect and defeat temptation whether from an internal source (our fallen [flesh](#)) or external sources (the [world](#), the [devil](#)). And what is the "Jesus Way" we should imitate (1 Jn 2:6+, 1 Cor 11:1+; see [Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#))? We must (EMPHASIZE **MUST**) be continually (EMPHASIZE **CONTINUALLY**) filled with/controlled by the Spirit (Eph 5:18+) and filled with the Word (Col 3:16+)! Then we are armed and ready to battle the incessant temptations that come against us each day (cf 1 Pe 2:11+ where "**wage war**" is in the [present tense](#) = lusts of the flesh are continually assaulting our heart and mind)! See [chart](#) comparing the value/impact on a life [Filled with God's Spirit and Richly Indwelt with God's Word](#).

*Feeding the inner spiritual person
is far more important than feeding the physical.*
-- Warren Wiersbe

Jesus emphasizes this **eternal efficacy** (cf 1 Pe 1:23+ = "**the living and enduring word of God**" 1 Pe 1:25+ = "**THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.**") of the living Word of God (Heb 4:12+) by appealing to its **inherent efficacy**, its inherent power to give and sustain life! Thus all three of Jesus' responses to the devil were begun with verbatim quotations from the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) of Deuteronomy.

THOUGHT - What if my spiritual well-being depended on my knowledge of Deuteronomy? Even as the Psalmist had written, Jesus too could say, "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11). Let us follow Jesus in His suffering (including His temptations) by walking in His steps (1 Pe 2:21+) and let us imbibe the pure milk of God's undiluted, unadulterated Holy Word as if our very life depended on it (because it does beloved...for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God/Christ Ro 10:17+).

BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD - **But** highlights the contrast between physical bread to meet our physical needs and spiritual bread to meet our spiritual needs. The point Jesus makes is that man is to accept in trust everything that God ordains and not try to take things into his own hands and act apart from His will.

THOUGHT - I am a physician and have seen tragic cases of starvation because of failure or inability to take in adequate nutrition. It is easy to diagnose one who is physically malnourished, but not so easy to diagnose one who is spiritually starving because they may look fine physically. One has to wonder how many true believers look fine in their Sunday clothes but are starving in their souls because their only exposure to Word of God is the Sunday sermon (which in America seems to be less and less expository). That is not enough intake. We do best with physical food taken in each day, and we do best spiritually by taking in God's pure milk daily. Peter is very clear in one of the more important passages in the New Testament for Christians to grasp writing "like newborn babies, **long for** ([epipotheo](#)) the pure milk of the word, so that (WHAT IS PURPOSE?) by it you may grow in respect to salvation." (1 Pe 2:2+) Did you catch that last phrase (A PURPOSE CLAUSE) "that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." Peter's point is NO INTAKE, NO GROWTH! It is really that simple, but it is simply profound! If your spiritual life is anemic, the first question I as a believing physician would ask you "How is your intake of "milk" and "bread"?"

Jesus teaches His disciples who bring Him physical food about what is true "food" (real "soul food" so to speak)

But He said to them, **'I have food to eat that you do not know about'** 33 So the disciples were saying to

one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" 34 Jesus *said to them, "**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work**". (Jn 4:32-34+).

Every Word means just that - the Old Testament and the New Testament (contrary to some who say the Old is no longer useful and relevant! WRONG! How can Andy Stanley sleep at night teaching such "satanic" gibberish? See [Why We Can't Unhitch from the Old Testament](#) and [3 Nagging Problems with Andy Stanley's Approach to the Bible](#)) To get a properly balanced diet, we must feed on the whole Bible. Certain chapters and verses in the Bible are like pie and cake to our souls, and the temptation is to read them often and to try to live by them alone, neglecting the rest of the Scripture. Jesus said, "**EVERY** word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). Every Christian should read and ponder and meditate **IN** (Ps 1:2+) the Bible chapter after chapter, book after book, until finished and then go back and start over again. Only in this way can we get the benefit of "**every word**" that God has spoken. Let us not skip the "dry" chapters for in them will be found many of the brightest gems of spiritual truths. Let us read the OT as much as the NT for it is the foundation upon which the NT is built. As alluded to, the modern evangelical movement is in grave danger here as there is a strong tendency in even sound, conservative, Bible believing churches to emphasize the NT sometimes to the virtual exclusion of the OT. When was the last time you heard a sermon Ezekiel or Leviticus? This will lead to spiritual "tunnel vision" and the sheep will not be as fully nourished as God intended them to be on a complete healthy diet that takes in both OT and NT! As **Henry Morris** says "it is not just the "thoughts" of Scripture that are vital, but **every word!**" (See [verbal plenary inspiration](#))

Word (4487) (**rhema** from verb **rheo** = speak or utter words) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. **Rhema** focuses upon the content of the communication. Why such preeminence for and focus on the Word? Luke explains "**For no word (rhema) from God shall be void of power.**" (Luke 1:37+ ASV) **Rhema** is used in the Septuagint translation of Joshua 21:45 (some of Joshua's last words - last words are lasting words) - "Not one of the good **promises** (Septuagint = rhema) which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass." And this declaration is still true beloved! (See related article THE SECRET OF REVIVAL- Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation!)

Charles Ryrie - Quoting Deut. 8:3+ (a book whose authority is often rejected and whose contents not well known), the Lord refused to act independently of the Father's power but chose rather to rely on God's Word.

Spurgeon - Out flashed the sword of the Spirit: our Lord will fight with no other weapon. He could have spoken new revelations, but chose to say, 'It is written.'

Henry Morris on **It is written** - Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3. This testing targeted His urgent physical need, the second (Matthew 4:6) appealed to His human desire for recognition and approval, which He turned back by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. Finally, the third testing (Matthew 4:9) offered the immediate attainment of His spiritual goal of making the entire world His own kingdom of peace and love, but He refuted this by referring to Deuteronomy 10:20. It is noteworthy that in Matthew's gospel alone, Jesus quotes from the Old Testament at least 39 times.

Warren Wiersbe adds that "We must not think that Jesus used His divine powers to overcome the enemy, because that is just what the enemy wanted Him to do! Jesus used the spiritual resources that are available to us today: the power of the Holy Spirit of God (Matt. 4:1), and the power of the Word of God ("It is written')." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*The one who twists truth will fail
to ensnare the one filled with the Spirit.*

--Daniel Block

THOUGHT - The preceding quote begs the question "Are you filled?" (Eph 5:18+ - see [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#)) If not, beware! The Holy Spirit is the great antidote against error. (1Jn 4:1-6+) Those who follow His guidance will be preserved from the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. Where the Spirit dwells, deception dies. Falsehood cannot long live in a heart where the Holy Spirit is Teacher. The mature believer, grounded in truth and indwelt by the Spirit, cannot be easily deceived (Heb 5:14+), because truth and error cannot coexist in a heart dominated by the Spirit of truth. The Spirit-filled believer discerns lies by intimacy, not intellect. The closer we walk with Truth Himself, the quicker we sense the counterfeit. Truth in the heart is the best armor against lies from without. The indwelling Spirit is both teacher and test, guarding the soul from the serpent's snare (cf 1Th 5:21-22+).

*The one who twists truth will fail in his snare,
When hearts are aflame with the Spirit's care.
The lie may glitter, the words may seem fair,
But truth indwelling leaves falsehood bare.*

Related Resources:

- [The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)
- [1 Peter 2:2-3 Commentary](#)
- [2 Timothy 2:15 Commentary](#)
- [2 Timothy 3:16-17 Commentary](#)
- [A Primer On Biblical Meditation](#)
- [Application: Meditate on the Bible](#)
- [Colossians 3:16 Commentary](#)
- [Hebrews 4:12 Commentary](#)
- [How to Study the Bible-Stalker](#)
- [Illumination of the Bible](#)
- [Inductive Bible Study: Observation](#)
- [Joshua 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [Memory Verses by Topic](#)
- [The Bible On One Page-ESV](#)
- [The Bible On One Page-NAS](#)
- [The Power of God's Word](#)

Brian Bell - You must be filled with the Word of God to fight temptation! In response to the 3 temptations Jesus responded with Scripture! (Deut.8:3, Deut 6:16, Deut 6:13) Jesus understood the truth of Ps.119:11,"Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You." There is nothing magical about the words of Scripture. Jesus is saying, "here is a principle to live by... and I will live by it!" God's word is given to be lived. Here is where Jesus found victory, and in doing God's Word is where we'll find ours also! 3. ILLUSTRATION - **Anatoli Shcharansky**, a dissident Soviet Jew, kissed his wife goodbye as she left Russia for freedom in Israel. His parting words to her were, "I'll see you soon in Jerusalem." But Anatoli was detained and finally imprisoned. Their reunion in Jerusalem would not only be postponed, it might never occur. During long years in Russian prisons and work camps Anatoli was stripped of his personal belongings. His only possession was a miniature copy of the Psalms. Once during his imprisonment, his refusal to release the book to the authorities cost him 130 days in solitary confinement. Finally, twelve years after parting with his wife, he was offered freedom. In February 1986, as the world watched, Shcharansky was allowed to walk away from Russian guards toward those who would take him to Jerusalem. But in the final moments of captivity, the guards tried again to confiscate the Psalms book. Anatoli threw himself face down in the snow and refused to walk on to freedom without it. Those words had kept him alive during imprisonment. He would not go on to freedom without them.

The body can live without luxury, but the soul cannot live without the Lord.

A well-fed body with a starving soul is still poverty.

We eat to live, but we live to know God.

What bread is to the body, Christ is to the soul.

Neglecting the soul to nourish the flesh is trading the eternal for the perishable.

Man's greatest hunger cannot be filled from the earth but from heaven.

There are two kinds of life, the lower sustained by bread, and the higher sustained by truth. To feed the body and starve the soul is man's madness.

The table may feed the flesh for a day, but the Word of God feeds the soul for eternity.

Bread sustains life; truth transforms it.

To fill YOUR body and neglect YOUR spirit is to strengthen the shell and starve the pearl within!

J C Ryle on Matthew 4:1-11

THE first event in our Lord's ministry which St. Matthew records after His baptism, is His temptation. This is a deep and mysterious subject. There is much in the history of it which we cannot explain. But there lie on the face of the history plain practical lessons, to which we shall do well to take heed.

Let us learn in the first place, what a real and mighty enemy we have in the devil. He is not afraid to assault

even the Lord Jesus Himself. Three times over he attacks God's own Son. Our Saviour was "tempted of the devil." It was the devil who brought sin into the world at the beginning. This is he, who vexed Job, deceived David, and gave Peter a heavy fall. This is he, whom the Bible calls a "murderer," a "liar," and a "roaring lion." This is he, whose enmity to our souls never slumbers and never sleeps. This is he, who for nearly 6000 years has been working at one work, to ruin men and women, and draw them to hell. This is he, whose cunning and subtlety pass man's understanding, and who often appears "an angel of light."

Let us all watch and pray daily against his devices. There is no enemy worse than an enemy who is never seen and never dies, who is near to us wherever we live, and goes with us wherever we go. Not least let us beware of that levity and jesting about the devil, which is so unhappily common. Let us remember every day, that if we would be saved, we must not only crucify the flesh, and overcome the world, but also "resist the devil."

Let us learn in the next place, that we must not count temptation a strange thing. "The disciple is not greater than his master, nor the servant than his lord." If Satan came to Christ, he will also come to Christians. It would be well for all believers, if they would remember this. They are too apt to forget it. They often find evil thoughts arising within their minds, which they can truly say they hate. Doubts, questions, and sinful imaginings are suggested to them, against which their whole inward man revolts. But let not these things destroy their peace, and rob them of their comforts. Let them remember there is a devil, and not be surprised to find him near them. To be tempted is in itself no sin. It is the yielding to the temptation, and giving it a place in our hearts, which we must fear.

Let us learn in the next place, that the chief weapon we ought to use in resisting Satan is the Bible. Three times the great enemy offered temptations to our Lord. Three times his offer was refused, with a text of Scripture as the reason, "it is written." Here is one among many reasons, why we ought to be diligent readers of our Bibles. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. We shall never fight a good fight, if we do not use it as our principal weapon.—The Word is the lamp for our feet. We shall never keep the king's highway to heaven, if we do not journey by its light.—It may well be feared, that there is not enough Bible-reading amongst us. It is not sufficient to have the Book. We must actually read it, and pray over it ourselves. It will do us no good, if it only lies still in our houses. We must be actually familiar with its contents, and have its texts stored in our memories and minds. Knowledge of the Bible never comes by intuition. It can only be got by hard, regular, daily, attentive, wakeful reading. Do we grudge the time and trouble this will cost us? If we do, we are not yet fit for the kingdom of God.

Let us learn in the last place, what a sympathizing Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ is. "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:18.) The sympathy of Jesus is a truth which ought to be peculiarly dear to all believers. They will find in it a mine of strong consolation. They should never forget, that they have a mighty Friend in heaven, who feels for them in all their temptations, and can enter into all their spiritual anxieties. Are they ever tempted by Satan to distrust God's care and goodness? So was Jesus.—Are they ever tempted to presume on God's mercy, and run into danger without warrant? So also was Jesus.—Are they ever tempted to commit some one great private sin for the sake of some great seeming advantage? So also was Jesus.—Are they ever tempted to listen to some misapplication of Scripture, as an excuse for doing wrong? So also was Jesus.—He is just the Saviour that a tempted people require. Let them flee to Him for help, and spread before Him all their troubles. They will find His ear ever ready to hear, and His heart ever ready to feel. He can understand their sorrows.

May we all know the value of a sympathizing Saviour by experience! There is nothing to be compared to it in this cold and deceitful world. Those who seek their happiness in this life only, and despise the religion of the Bible, have no idea what true comfort they are missing.

The responsibilities for believers:

(1) We must eat God's Word as if our life depended on it.

(2) [We must memorize](#) God's Word (Ps 119:9, 11).

Note that Jesus in His humanity alone (our example) had memorized the Scriptures so that He could apply them to specific situations and needs. Our Lord did not have or need a Bible concordance or hand held computer Bible with Him in the wilderness! He reached into the Books of Moses, selected Deuteronomy, and quoted three verses using them as the sword of the Spirit to refute Satan. Most adults think that Bible memorization is for children in Sunday school, when actually it is for every believer. Adult Christians need

the Word far more than the children, although it is good for children to memorize God's Word.

(3) [We must meditate](#) on God's Word because meditation is to the inner man what digestion is to the outer man. If we did not digest our food, we would become weak, listless, tired, ineffective (think of these now in terms of one's spiritual effectiveness).

(4) We must adroitly & accurately apply God's Word to every situation we encounter. The believer's mind should become like a "spiritual computer" so saturated with Scripture that when one faces a "fork in the road" or a temptation, he recalls to mind the Scriptures that relate to that situation.

The Holy Spirit brings God's Word to our remembrance when we need it but He will not bring to remembrance what is not there. Just as a well cannot yield water where none has been dug, the Spirit cannot draw forth Scripture from a heart that has never hidden it within. The Word hidden is the Word recalled. The Spirit uses what we store to strengthen us in the hour of temptation. The Spirit's office is to bring things to remembrance, not to give new revelations. What Christ has spoken must be lodged in the memory before it can be brought to mind. He will not remind us of texts we never knew. The Holy Spirit quickens memory, but He does not supply ignorance. The Spirit is our Reminder, not our Replacer. He draws living water from the wells we have filled through the Word. A heart without Scripture is like an empty well for the Spirit may descend, but He finds nothing to draw. Yet when the Word is stored within, He stirs the waters of memory and truth flows forth in the very moment it is needed.

- Study the Word — give the Spirit material to work with.
- Meditate daily — turn verses over in your mind; meditation is spiritual digestion. (Learn to interrogate with [5W/H](#) questions)
- Obey promptly — obedience seals truth into the heart.
- Trust continually — the Spirit will recall precisely what you need, when you need it.

In summary, the Spirit reminds, but He does not invent. He illuminates, but He does not replace learning. His voice will whisper the Word you have hidden but not the one you have ignored.

ILLUSTRATION - EVERY WORD - Hold everything! Wait a minute! Have you read the Scripture for today? It's only eight short verses, and it will take you only 45 seconds. No, don't lay this booklet down and mumble to me, "I'm in a hurry and you're delaying me." I see you're eating breakfast this morning even though you're late. You take time to feed your body, but you were going to starve your soul. Take 45 seconds and read Ps 119:33-40 (**ED**: AND DO NOT MISS THE 9 PRAYERS IN THIS PASSAGE - THEN GO BACK AND PRAY THEM TO GO FROM YOUR HEART! SEE **WORDS IN BOLD** IN THIS PASSAGE BELOW. NOTE TWO CRIES FOR **PERSONAL REVIVAL!**). If you don't read the rest of this devotional, that's okay--as long as you read the Bible. These articles in Our Daily Bread are not designed to be a substitute for the Bible; they are meant to stimulate your desire to read more of the Bible. If reading this booklet has caused you to neglect the Word of God, please throw this booklet in the wastebasket! Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12-[SEE JOB'S SECRET FOR SURVIVING INDESCRIBABLE AFFLICTIONS](#)). Jesus taught, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). **Yes, you may have had a rough day yesterday and you're way behind. But why should you be surprised that it was such a bad day if you started it without God's Word? Don't make the same mistake today. Take time to read.** If you're too busy to read the Bible, you're too busy! --M. R. De Haan, M.D. (founder of RBC Ministries) ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Psalm 119:33-40

33 He. **Teach** me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, And I shall observe it to the end.

34 **Give** me understanding, that I may observe Your law And keep it with all my heart.

35 **Make** me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.

36 **Incline** my heart to Your testimonies And not to dishonest gain.

37 **Turn away** my eyes from looking at vanity, And **revive** me in Your ways.

38 **Establish** Your word to Your servant, As that which produces reverence for You.

39 **Turn away** my reproach which I dread, For Your ordinances are good.

40 Behold, I long for Your precepts; **Revive** me through Your righteousness.

Many of us live in countries where food is abundant and people are well-fed. That's why we may not be familiar with the symptoms of starvation. At the outset, victims have an insatiable craving for nourishment. As time passes, however, the body weakens, the mind is dulled, and the desire for something to eat wanes. In fact, starving people actually reach a point when they don't even want

food that is placed before them. Spiritual starvation follows much the same course. If we have been feeding daily on God's Word, it's natural to feel "hungry" when we skip our quiet time. But if we continue to neglect it, we may lose all desire to study the Scriptures. In fact, we may be starving ourselves. How much time do you spend reading the Bible and meditating on its truths? Do you miss the Word when you neglect it? Thomas Guthrie wrote, "**If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven--take alarm.**" If you've lost your taste for the "bread of life," confess your negligence (ED: OR YOUR SINS AS IN 1 Peter 2:1 WHICH "BLUNTS" A NEWBORN'S DESIRE FOR MILK BECAUSE THEY ARE "SIN-SICK!" SEE SIMILAR PATTERN IN Psalm 1:1 CAN BLUNT DESIRE FOR THE WORD Psalm 1:2! CONFESS AND REPENT AND GOD'S SPIRIT WILL ENABLE YOUR "APPETITE" TO RETURN TO NORMAL!) and ask God to revive your appetite for His Word. Avoid spiritual starvation! --RWD

Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea.
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word. --Lathbury

A well-read Bible is a sign of a well-fed soul.

ILLUSTRATION - Most of us are familiar with the Pony Express and its oft-romanticized contribution to the history of the Old West. But for all its glamour, the Pony Express was a business enterprise-and was run like one. To ferry mail across the open expanse of the western territories, the express route ran 1,900 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California. The trip was made in about 10 days, using 40 men who each raced about 50 miles, riding a total of 500 fine horses in the process. To conserve weight, riders wore light clothing, rode on extremely small saddles, and carried no weapons. Their mail pouches were also compact and lightweight. Letters cost \$5 per ounce for postage. Yet for all these efficiencies in terms of weight, one thing was not sacrificed: every rider carried a full-size Bible, presented to him when he joined the Pony Express.

By contrast, how often are we found without the Word of God at our side, in our day of comfort and convenience? The Pony Express made room for the Bible despite hardship; we often forget it despite ease. WOE! They treasured it as essential weight; we treat it as optional baggage. DOUBLE WOE! The Pony Express carried the Word as a treasure, not a token. They valued it for strength but how often we shelve it for convenience. If Pony Express riders could carry a full Bible through peril, how can we, in an age of abundance, leave it behind? If they rode with courage to deliver the mail of men, how much more should we walk in faith to deliver the Message of the Gospel.

Supporting Scriptures - Deuteronomy 6:6-8 Psalm 119:11 Job 23:12 Colossians 3:16 2 Timothy 3:16-17

*The man who carries the Bible
in his heart is never unarmed.*

No Deal!

It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." —Luke 4:4

We've all seen and heard advertisements that entice us to take shortcuts to happiness. Buy our product and make no payments for one year! Instant gratification!

When the devil tempted Jesus (Luke 4:1-13), he offered a shortcut to "satisfaction." He tried to tempt Jesus to take matters into His own hands rather than trust His Father.

When Jesus was hungry from 40 days of fasting (Lk 4:2), Satan suggested that He use His power to turn stones into bread. Had the Lord done so, He would have been using His powers for His own benefit, but He refused.

Why didn't Jesus accept the devil's offer of ruling all the kingdoms of the world right away? (Lk 4:5-7). He could have avoided the cross. But that would have gone against God's plan for Him—to give His life on the cross, to be resurrected, and to sit at the Father's right hand in His kingdom. Satan's offer of a shortcut was no deal at all.

Beware of enticements that seem to cost little for the present. Satan hopes to get you to do things his way. And he doesn't give up easily. Even after Jesus overcame a third temptation, Satan left only "until an opportune time" (Lk 4:13). Whenever you are offered a shortcut to happiness, watch out to see who's behind the cashier's counter!

Lord, help me see the devil's offers for what they are—enticements to sin. Help me to keep my eyes focused on You and Your Word, and my ears attentive to You in prayer. Amen. By C. P. Hia ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The best way to escape temptation is to run to God.

INSIGHT - Illustrations of Running to God

Joseph (Genesis 39:12): "He left his garment in her hand and fled." He didn't debate; he departed — to preserve purity and honor God.

David (Psalm 63:1): "O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly." Desire for God displaced desire for sin.

Jesus (Matthew 4:1–11): Tempted by Satan, He ran to the Word — "It is written." Scripture was His sanctuary; obedience His refuge.

*When sin's sweet whisper calls your name,
Don't stand to argue — flee the flame.
The safest flight, the surest plan,
Is running to the Son of Man.*

*His Word's a refuge, His grace a shield,
His presence guards the battle field.
Temptation fades where Christ is near—
Run to your Refuge; find rest there.*

Matthew 4:5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

- **took Him:** Lu 4:9 Joh 19:11
- **into the holy city:** Mt 27:53 Ne 11:1 Isa 48:2 52:1 Da 9:16 Rev 11:2
- **on the pinnacle of the temple:** 2Ch 3:4
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Luke 4:9+ And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;

The devil having lost round one, moves on to the second temptation, designed to test our Lord's trust in His Father. Satan's point was if Jesus refused to throw Himself off the high point on the temple, it would show He did not trust His Father.

Chamblin adds "His first temptation having failed, the devil becomes bolder. He, the unholy one, having first 'come to' the holy Son (4:3), now 'takes' him (which presumes a certain authority over Jesus) into the holy city. Here he issues another command, and has the audacity to buttress it with an appeal to Holy Scripture. In going with the tempter, Jesus exercises his liberty as the Son of God, and positions himself to win a battle." (Matthew: A Mentor Commentary)

Zodhiates points out that "This was not the first time Satan challenged God" referring to his prideful rebellion in Isaiah...

But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (Isa. 14:13, 14)

Then (see note on Greek word [tote](#)) **the devil** (see above for [diabolos](#)) **took Him into the holy city** - For **Holy City** Luke says to **Jerusalem** (Luke 4:9+ cf. Ne 11:1; Isa 48:2; Da 9:24; Mt 27:53). This is quite a contrast as the unholy one the devil takes the Holy One of God into the holy city and onto the Holy Temple!

Took (3880) ([paralambano](#) from **para** = beside + **lambano** = appropriate, receive) means to receive or to take to oneself. The idea is to take in close association with another (in this case unholy versus holy in close association!). Zodhiates says this verb represents the closest possible proximity. This verb is used in Mt 1:20, Mt 2:13 and Mt 2:20 with the same sense of to take possession of and thus also to take along. Vincent adds this note on **paralambano** - "The preposition para (with, by the side of), implies take along with himself, or conduct. It is the same word which all three evangelists use of our Lord's taking his chosen apostles to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1; Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28+). Here **paralambano** is in the [present tense](#) in what is known as the historic present which represents an action as going on, and not yet finished. The **historic**

present tense is used to recount a past event as if they were unrolling before our eyes. Stated another way, the **historic present** allows Matthew to tell his story vividly as though it were happening in the audience's presence (even though it has occurred in the past). The **historic present** is a more vivid way of relating an event—representing an action as presently going on and not yet finished.

COMMENT Luke has **he led Him to Jerusalem** - Luke uses the verb **ago** for led which means to take along, to lead as when conducting someone somewhere (first use = Mt 10:18 of fate of disciples). This was Luke's second use of ago in Luke 4, the first time in his description that Jesus was "**led around** (ago) by the Spirit" (Lk 4:1±). Mark it down -- a man led by the Spirit is not likely to be led (better "misled") by the devil!

And had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple(**hieros**) - The **pinnacle** or highest point of the **temple** is thought by most writers to probably be the top of what was known as Herod's royal portico at the southeast corner which is directly over a cliff overlooking the Kidron Valley some 450 ft below.

Pinnacle (4419)(**pterugion** = diminutive of **ptérux** = wing) means literally a little wing and figuratively as in the only NT uses (Lk 4:9, Mt 4:5) refers to anything like a wing, and hence signifies the pointed extremity of anything (tip, edge, apex, summit). It is the outermost or farthest point either vertically or horizontally. **Pterugion** is anything shaped like a wing and thus which come to a point as does a fin on a fish (Lxx for fin = pterugion in Lev. 11:9, 10, 12); the corner or skirt of a garment (Nu 15:38; 1 Sa 24:5). **Thayer on pterugion** - some understand this of the top or apex of the sanctuary (tou/ naou/), others of the top of Solomon's porch, and others of the top of the Royal Portico; this last Josephus (Antiquities 15, 11, 5) says was of such great height. See note by [Vincent](#) below.

[Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 15](#) writes "but the fourth front of the temple, which was southward, had indeed itself gates in its middle, as also it had the royal cloisters, with three walks, which reached in length from the east valley unto that on the west, for it was impossible it should reach any farther: [412](#) and this cloister deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun; for while the valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, **this further vastly high elevation of the cloister stood upon that height, insomuch that if any one looked down from the top of the battlements, or down both those altitudes, he would be giddy**, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth. (Bolding added)

See [excellent schematic diagram of Temple Mount at the Time of Jesus](#) - "the pinnacle of the temple is probably the southeast corner of the temple area [Ed: It would be the corner pointing toward you as you view the diagram], the top of which was some 300 feet (91 m) above the floor of the Kidron Valley." (ESV Note) See also [Justin Taylor's article with pictures of the Temple in Jesus' day](#).

Marvin Vincent's lengthy comment on **pinnacle of the Temple - Pinnacle**, from the Latin Pinnaculum, a diminutive of pinna or penna (a wing), is a literal translation of **pterugion**, which is also a diminutive (a little wing or winglet). Nothing in the word compels us to infer that Christ was placed on the top of a tower or spire, which is the popular meaning of pinnacle. The word may be used in the familiar English sense of the wing of a building. Herod's temple had two wings, the northern and southern, of which the southern was the higher and grander; that being the direction in which the chief enlargement of the temple area made by Herod was practicable. That enlargement, according to Josephus, was effected by building up walls of solid masonry from the valley below. At the extremity of the southern side of the area, was erected the "royal portico," a magnificent colonnade, consisting of a nave and two aisles, running across the entire space from the eastern to the western wall. Josephus further says, that "while the valley of itself was very deep, and its bottom could scarcely be seen when one looked down from above, the additional vastly high elevation of the portico was placed on that height, insomuch that, if any one looked down from the summit of the roof, combining the two altitudes in one stretch of vision, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth." This, in comparison with the northern wing, was so emphatically the wing of the temple as to explain the use of the article here, as a well-known locality. The scene of the temptation may have been (for the whole matter is mainly one of conjecture) the roof of this portico, at the southeastern angle, where it joined Solomon's Porch, and from which the view into the [Kidron valley](#) beneath was to the depth of four hundred and fifty feet. The word **temple** (**hieron**, lit., sacred place) signifies the whole compass of the sacred enclosure, with its porticos, courts, and other subordinate buildings; and should be carefully distinguished from the other word, **naos**, also rendered temple, which means the temple itself—the "Holy Place" and the "Holy of Holies." When we read, for instance, of Christ teaching in the temple (**hieron**) we must refer it to one of the temple-porches. So it is from the ἐπὶ, the court of the Gentiles, that Christ expels the money-changers and cattle-merchants. In Matt. 27:51, it is the veil of the **naos** which is rent; the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies. In the account of Zacharias entering into the temple of the Lord to burn incense (Luke 1:9), the word is **naos**, the holy place in which the altar of incense stood. The people were "without," in the fore-courts. In John 2:21, the temple of his body, ἐπὶ would

be obviously inappropriate.

Matthew 4:6 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, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'

- **it is written:** Mt 4:4 2Co 11:14
- **HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS:** Ps 91:11,12 Lu 4:9-12 Heb 1:14
- **SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT:** Job 1:10 5:23 Ps 34:7,20
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Luke 4:9-11+ And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' 11 and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"

Psalm 91:11-12 For He will give His angels charge concerning you, (SATAN OMITTS THIS NEXT PHRASE IN BOLD) **To guard you in all your ways.** 12 They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.

SATAN TWISTS SCRIPTURE

Satan twists Scripture (Ps 91:11–12) from trusting God to testing God! As discussed below, some writers feel Satan actually misquoted the Scripture, whereas others say he misapplied the Scripture. The net result with either interpretation is to seek to seduce the Son of God to sin against His Father.

Wiersbe introduces this temptation - "The second temptation was even more subtle. This time Satan also used the Word of God. "So You intend to live by the Scriptures," he implied. "Then let me quote You a verse of Scripture and see if You will obey it!" ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

And said to Him, "If You are the Son of God- IF introduces a First class conditional clause which assumes this is true of Jesus, so could be phrased "**Since** You are the Son of God." (See also [note above](#) on same introductory conditional clause)/

Throw Yourself down - The verb [ballo](#) (to throw or cast) is a command in the [aorist imperative](#), a command that conveys a sense of urgency so the idea "Just do it!" "Just jump!" "Don't delay!" "Obey now!" What devilish hubris to command God the Son to obey and in so doing to disavow His obedience to the will of His Father! The devil was trying to get Jesus to accept the Crown w/o the Cross. With that subtle and clever twist, the tempter thought He had backed Jesus into a corner. If Jesus lived only by the Word of God, then He would be confronted by something from the Word of God. "You claim to be God's Son and You claim to trust His Word," Satan was saying. "If so, why don't you demonstrate your sonship and prove the truth of God's Word by putting Him to a test—a scriptural test? If you won't use your own divine power to help yourself, let your Father use His divine power to help you. If you won't act independently of the Father, let the Father act. Give your Father a chance to fulfill the Scripture I just quoted to you."

THOUGHT- Satan was using his powers of persuasion on Christ, just as he does when he tries to trap us. We need to remember that he can persuade, but he cannot push. He creates the temptation; we create the transgression. (John Phillips - [Exploring the Gospel of Matthew: An Expository Commentary - Page 64](#))

Kent Hughes comments that "By urging (**Ed**: commanding) Jesus to **jump**, Satan was trying to take advantage of Jesus' twice-voiced determination to trust and obey God's Word—"You are committed to obeying God's Word, so obey this!"....There may even have been a messianic overtone in Satan's challenge because a later Rabbinic saying read: "Our teachers have taught, when the King, the Messiah, reveals himself, he will come and stand on the roof of the Temple" (Pesiqta rabbati, 36). Add to this the tendency of the godly to be attracted by the challenge to "step out in faith" and you can feel the tug of the temptation. In fact, refusal or even hesitancy in such situations could appear to be a lack of faith. It was a powerful, beguiling temptation. Satan was saying, in effect, "In the first temptations you have shown your trust in God's Word. You are a faithful man—Psalm 91 is you! This is what the people are looking for in a Messiah. You are a man of faith, aren't you? Just jump, and the whole world will see who you really are!" Really? Jesus thought otherwise. He knew that he had no word from the Father directing him to leap off the temple. He again recognized that as God's Son he must never do anything in his own power, for that would be putting God to the test. (See [Luke: That You May](#)

[Know the Truth](#))

For it is written - see note above on [grapho](#). This phrase is found times in Matthew 4 and 4 times in rest of Matthew - Matt. 4:4; Matt. 4:6; Matt. 4:7; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 11:10; Matt. 21:13; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:31. Here even Satan appeals to the immutability of God's Word and promises, in effect telling Jesus that these promises still hold true.

Jamieson - "But what is this I see?" exclaims stately Bishop Hall. "Satan himself with a Bible under his arm and a text in his mouth!" Doubtless the tempter, having felt the power of God's Word in the former temptation, was eager to try the effect of it from his own mouth (2Cor 11:14).

Several writers such as D A Carson and the [NET Note](#) says the devil did not actually misquote Ps 91:11-12, but others like Wiersbe and Spurgeon do not agree. Robertson does add that the devil "**misapplies** it and makes it mean presumptuous reliance on God."

D A Carson comments "Satan quoted Psalm 91:11–12 (v. 6) from the LXX, omitting the words "to guard you in all your ways." The omission itself does not prove he handled the Scriptures deceitfully (contra Walvoord), since the quotation is well within the range of common NT citation patterns. Satan's deceit lay in **misapplying** his quotation into a temptation that easily traps the devout mind by apparently warranting what might otherwise be thought sinful. Psalm 91:11–12 refers to anyone who trusts God and thus preeminently to Jesus. The angels will lift such a person up in their hands like a nurse a baby (cf. Nu 11:12; Dt 1:31; Isa 49:22; Heb 1:14) (SEE [Matthew](#))

Joseph A Alexander - That the mere omission of the words, **in all thy ways**, was a part of that temptation, or designed to wrest the passage from its true sense, though a very ancient and still prevalent opinion, seems to be a gratuitous refinement, as our Lord himself makes no such charge; as the first words of the sentence would of course suggest the rest; and as ways, in the original, does not mean ways of duty, but of Providence. Neither the tempter's argument nor Christ's reply to it would be at all affected by the introduction of the words suppressed. ([Matthew 4](#))

R C H Lenski - The cunning of the temptation is doubled by the devil's use of Scripture. By himself quoting Scripture the devil would block any further resort of Jesus to Scripture; he would wrest the sword of the Spirit from Jesus' hand. The devil here shows himself an expert in handling Scripture. Luther well calls him a doctor non promotus sed expertus. The passage he quotes seems to fit the proposal he makes in the most perfect way. Read the entire Psalm and see how all of it fits quite exactly. All that Satan has done is to invent an act to match the two verses quoted, one in which God's angels can bear a man up and prevent him from crashing his feet on the stones beneath. They will catch him under the arms and let him light on the rocks below as gently as feather down. The devil's art of quoting Scripture has been spread far and wide in the devil's school, and some of his pupils and graduates are doctors that are quite as expert as he is. In this case the deception does not lie in misapplying to Jesus what really does not apply to him. Psalm 91 applies to any son of God and certainly also to this Son. Satan abbreviates by omitting the line, "to keep thee in all thy ways." Some find the deception in this omission as though the promise of God were conditional: to protect us only when we walk in the path of divine duty. But then the words should read, "to keep thee in all his ways." If the deception lay in omitting this line, it would have been rather easy to overthrow Satan. A misquotation is removed by the corrected quotation. Jesus, however, makes no correction, does not point to the omitted line but accepts the quotation as being substantially correct. The deception in the use of this quotation by Satan lies in setting one Scripture against another. One statement is stressed, and others that should go with it are quietly disregarded. The trick is constantly practiced, often on a large scale, when a mass of passages are combined in such a way that it makes the Bible say what it most certainly does not say, in fact, openly contradicts elsewhere in the plainest language. This type of deception easily catches the unwary, especially the devout who regard the Scriptures highly; it is also the delight of those who love to harass devout believers while they think they are fortifying themselves behind impregnable walls. (BORROW [The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel PAGE 148](#))

Thomas Constable observes that Satan "omitted the words "to guard you in all your ways." Many expositors have assumed that Satan wanted to trick Jesus with this omission, but his free method of quoting was very common. Many New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament in the same loose way. Probably Satan wanted Jesus to demonstrate His trust in God in a spectacular way to challenge God's faithfulness. He misapplied the Scripture he quoted. The Psalms passage refers to anyone who trusts in God. That certainly applied to Jesus. The verses promise that the angels will uphold such a person as a nurse does a baby (cf. Num. 11:12; Deut. 1:31; Isa. 49:22; Heb. 1:14). God had revealed Himself most particularly at the temple throughout Israel's history. Therefore what better place could there have been to demonstrate the Son of

God's confidence in His Father's promise?

Reformation Study Bible - Satan quotes Scripture, but he uses Ps. 91:11, 12 in a way exactly opposite to the original meaning. Ps. 91 is an exhortation to trust in God; Satan attempts to replace trust with a test, casting doubt on God's faithfulness. Presumption is not too great a faith but no faith at all.

Gilbrant - After the devil was confronted in the first temptation with the Word of God and with Jesus' trust in the Father, he resorted to the same means—he the great pretender—to attack Jesus' trust in the Father. He cited Psalm 91:11, 12 which contains a promise for believers. The devil can indeed use the Bible, but he takes verses out of context and distorts them, applying them incorrectly. (The Complete Biblical Library – Matthew)

The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Here the devil cites Psalm 91:11-12 out of context; Psalm 91:10 makes clear that God's angelic protection (cf. Mark 1:13) is for events that *befall* his servants, not an excuse to seek out such dangers. (SEE [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament - Page 54](#))

John MacArthur does not comment on the misquotation but focuses on the misapplication writing "that Satan also quoted Scripture (Ps 91:11, 12)—but utterly twisted its meaning, employing a passage about *trusting* God to justify *testing* Him. (SEE [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

A T Robertson - The devil urged presumptuous reliance on God and quotes Scripture to support his view (Psalm 91:11-12). So the devil quotes the Word of God, misinterprets it, omits a clause, and tries to trip the Son of God by the Word of God. It was a skilful thrust and would also be accepted by the populace as proof that Jesus was the Messiah if they should see him sailing down as if from heaven. This would be a sign from heaven in accord with popular Messianic expectation. The promise of the angels the devil thought would reassure Jesus. They would be a spiritual parachute for Christ. (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

HCSB Study Bible - Jesus did not deny the truth of the Scripture the Devil quoted, just the application he gave it.

Warren Wiersbe writes "Of course, he (devil) misquoted the promise (Ps 91:11,12) and besides he omitted '**in all thy ways.**'" ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Louis Barbieri - Satan may have thought if Jesus could quote Scripture to him, he could quote it too. However, he purposely did not quote Psalm 91:11-12 accurately. He left out an important phrase, "in all Your ways." According to the psalmist, a person is protected only when he is following the Lord's will. For Jesus to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple in some dramatic display to accommodate Himself to the people's thinking would not have been God's will. (SEE [The Bible Knowledge Commentary Gospels](#))

Nelson's NKJV Study Bible - In quoting the protective promise of Ps. 91:11, 12 to Jesus, Satan omitted the words "**to keep you in all your ways.**" Satan tempted Jesus to gain public attention through spectacle rather than through His righteous life and message.(SEE [Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary](#))

John Phillips writes that Satan "was careful to leave something out: "to keep thee**in all thy ways.**" And he omitted Psalm 91:13, which speaks of the Lord treading on the lion and adder and trampling the young lion and the dragon under His feet. Naturally Satan did not even want to think about that verse! Thus in handling Scripture, Satan used a convenient translation, paraphrased it to serve his own purpose, eagerly accepted an addition, deliberately left something out, and ignored the context. The Lord knew His Bible better than to be taken in by Satan's garbled version of a great and much-loved Messianic Psalm." (SEE [Exploring the Gospel of Matthew: An Expository Commentary - Page 64](#))

Phillips makes an interesting statement that Satan omits Ps 91:13 "You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down." ([Exploring the Gospel of Matthew](#)) This passage actually goes on to promise God's ultimate victory over Satan! Here is Spurgeon's interpretation

"The strongest foe in power, and the most mysterious in cunning, shall be conquered by the man of God. Not only from stones in the way, but from serpents also, shall we be safe. To men who dwell in God the most evil forces become harmless, they wear a charmed life, and defy the deadliest ills. Their feet come into contact with the worst of foes, even Satan himself nibbles at their heel, but in Christ Jesus they have the assured hope of bruising Satan under their feet shortly. The people of God are the real "George and the dragon, "the true lion kings and serpent tamers. Their dominion over the powers of darkness makes them cry, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy word."

Henry Morris adds "Satan also knows the Scriptures, but he will attempt to distort them to his own ends. Here he quotes from Psalm 91:11-12, but takes it out of context, and omits the key phrase, "to keep thee in all thy

ways." ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Hendriksen - The passage quoted is from Ps. 91:11, 12. As rendered here in Matt. 4:6, it follows the Septuagint (Ps. 90:11, 12). As quoted by the devil, there is, however, an omission, which some regard as being important, others not. According to the Hebrew, Ps. 91:11 ends with the words "to guard you in all your ways." Matt. 4:6 contains nothing that corresponds to this. Luke 4:10 merely has "to guard you." Hence, in both of these Gospels the words "in all your ways" are left out. When these words are included, God promises to protect the righteous man in all his righteous ways; for these are the ways of the man who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, abides under the shadow of the Almighty and has found his refuge in Jehovah, upon whom he has set his love. They are, accordingly, the ways of the saint (Prov. 2:8), the good man (Prov. 2:20). It is to such a one that the words apply, "He will give his angels instructions concerning you, to guard you in all your ways." When these words "in all your ways" are omitted, does it not become easier to interpret the passage as if it were a promise of Jehovah to protect the righteous no matter what he does? So read, the passage would seem to correspond more closely with what the devil wants Jesus to do. (BORROW [Baker Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew](#))

C H Spurgeon comments on Psalm 91:11 - You remember how the devil misapplied this text to Christ. He was quite right in the application; but he was quite wrong in the quotation, for he left out the words "**in all thy ways.**" God will help us in our **ways** if we keep in His **ways**. (Treasury of David - comments on Ps 92)

Shearman on all thy ways - Now this is the phrase that the devil omitted. He would have found it difficult to use, because it implied obedience to the will of God. Thus the secret of Christ's victory over Satan's temptation lay in His obedience to the will of His Father. (Day by Day in the Psalms)

So here is how the devil quoted it "HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU, and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"

And here is the original verse in Psalm 91:11-12 with the **devil's deletion** highlighted in yellow "For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you **in all your ways**. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone."

If indeed Satan was deliberately misquoting the passage for his purposes as is favored by some writers, He is disregarding a cardinal rule in handling of God's Word in Dt 4:2+ which instructs us to neither add to or subtract from the Word of God. The Devil seems to have "**subtracted**" from the Word which in effect potentially turns the **text** into a **pretext**. The Oxford Dictionary says a **pretext** is "*a reason given in justification of a course of action that is not the real reason.*" Recall that Ge 3:1+ says "the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." So the god of this world is very deft at juggling and misusing the Word of God! The goal of this temptation was to entice Jesus to renounce the way of His Father and to substitute the way of Satan. In the Garden of Eden, the devil added an overt lie in keeping with his nature (Jn 8:44) declaring "You surely **will not die!**" (Ge 3:4+) Then Eve compounded the problem by adding to the Word stating that "God has said, 'You shall not eat from it **or touch it**, or you will die.'" (Ge 3:3) God had said nothing about touching the tree (cp Ge 2:16, 17). And so she was ensnared, and she and Adam ate and sin entered the perfect world. In the wilderness temptation the Devil misquotes Ps 91:11 attempting to entice Jesus to disobey the will of His Father and commit a sin (sin is basically acting contrary to the will of God). In other words the devil was attempting to deceive Jesus to go His own way, not His Father's way, and to go His own way would have been sin and would have nullified Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, for a sinless sacrifice was demanded.

THOUGHT - When our ways align with God's will, we can rest in the promise that His angels guard us. But if we choose willful sin and walk in spiritual darkness—the domain of Satan—we forfeit that protection and cannot expect God to safeguard our wayward path.

Guarded Ways

*The path of faith is safe and bright,
Beneath His wings, beneath His light.
But hearts that wander, proud and free,
Step past the place of His decree.*

*His angels guard the faithful way,
Where trust and truth keep sin at bay.
Yet those who choose the shadowed lane,
Walk unprotected in their pain.*

HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE - What Satan is saying is for Jesus to jump if he really believes God's promise in Ps 91:11-12 to protect Him. If one is to live by faith, accepting everything coming from God, then God could be put to the test to see if He would really help.

C H Spurgeon comments on Psalm 91:11 - You remember how the devil misapplied this text to Christ. He was quite right in the application; but he was quite wrong in the quotation, for he left out the words **"in all thy ways."** God will help us in our **ways** if we keep in His **ways**. When we meet with trouble and accident, we ought to inquire whether we are in God's **way**. That famous old Puritan, holy Mr. Dodd, having to cross a river, had to change from one boat into another, and being little used to the water, he fell in, and, when he was pulled out, in his simplicity and wisdom he said, "I hope that I am in my **way**." That was the only question that seemed to trouble him. If I am in my **way**, then God will keep me. We ought to ask ourselves, **Now, am I in God's way? Am I really moving today and acting today as divine providence leads me, and as duty calls me?"** **He who travels on the king's business, by daylight, along the king's highway, may be sure of the king's protection.** "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Heb 1:14⁺) Come here, Gabriel, Michael, and all the rest of you," says the great King of kings to the angels around His throne; and when they come at His call, he says, "Take care of my child. Watch over him today. He will be in peril; suffer no evil to come near him." (And on Ps 92:12 Spurgeon rightly says) What royal protection we have, a guard of angels, who count it their delight and their honour to wait upon the seed-royal of the universe, for such are all the saints of God!

Joseph Addison Alexander on Mt 4:6 - Here again some suppose the sin to which our Lord was tempted to have been a vain display of his miraculous power, not as in the other case without spectators, but before the multitude who thronged the courts of the temple, and by whom he might be recognized as the Messiah. But as no such purpose is referred to in the narrative, or in our Lord's reply to the temptation, a more probable interpretation is the common one, which makes this the converse of the former case, and as that was a **temptation to distrust**, explains this as a **temptation to presumption**, or a **rash reliance upon God's protecting care in situations where he has not promised it**, and where the danger is a voluntary or a self-produced one. **Cast thyself down, from the summit of the temple to the pavement of the court below, or from the lofty porch into the deep valley which it overlooked.** This he is solicited to do without necessity, or fear of the result, confiding in the promise of divine protection and angelic care. As the ground of this rash confidence, the tempter, borrowing the weapon which had just disarmed him, cites a passage from the ninety-first Psalm (Ps 91:11, 12). an inspired composition, the whole drift of which is to illustrate **the security of those who put their trust in God**, even with reference to temporal calamities. It relates to the Messiah, not exclusively, but by way of eminence. The argument suggested is a fortiori, namely, that if all God's people are thus cared for, much more will his Son be. The quotation is recorded in the words of the Septuagint version, which is here a correct transcript of the Hebrew. The plural (angels) shows that there is no allusion to a guardian angel attending each individual believer, but merely to the angels collectively, as "ministering spirits," the instrumental agents of God's providential care over his people (Heb. 1:14⁺). **The promise here given does not extend to dangers rashly incurred or presumptuously sought, and was therefore no justification of the act to which our Lord was tempted by the Devil.** That the mere omission of the words, **in all thy ways**, was a part of that temptation, or designed to wrest the passage from its true sense, though a very ancient and still prevalent opinion, seems to be a gratuitous refinement, as our Lord himself makes no such charge; as the first words of the sentence would of course suggest the rest; and as ways, in the original, does not mean ways of duty, but of Providence. Neither the tempter's argument nor Christ's reply to it would be at all affected by the introduction of the words suppressed. Bearing or carrying on the hands seems intended to denote a tender care like that of nurses, an allusion frequently found elsewhere.* Lest at any time is all expressed in Greek by one word (μήποτε), which may also be explained as denoting mere contingency, lest haply or by chance.† Dash, knock, or strike, in walking, i. e. stumble. Against, is twice expressed here by the same particle (πρός), once before the verb and once before the noun. The stone, i. e. the one which happens to be lying in the way. A smooth path and unobstructed walk is a natural and common figure for prosperity and safety. "Then (if thou keep wisdom and discretion) thou shalt walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble" (Pr 3:23).

Here are some other quotes that relate to God's hand of protection promised to obedient believers in Psalm 91:11-12...

- If the Father has the kingdom ready for us, he will take care of us on the way. -- Andrew Bonar
- Should storms of sevenfold thunder roll, And shake the globe from pole to pole; No flaming bolt could daunt my face, For Jesus is my hiding-place. -- Jehoiada Brewer
- If God has said, 'I will never leave,' we may well say, 'What shall man do?' -- John Brown
- Anyone who has the firm conviction that he will never be forsaken by the Lord will not be unduly anxious, because he will depend on his providence. -- John Calvin
- Nothing is more foolish than a security built upon the world and its promises, for they are all vanity and a lie. -- Matthew Henry
- Everyone who is a man of God has omnipotence as his guardian, and God will sooner empty heaven of angels than leave a saint without defence. -- C. H. Spurgeon

This only can my fears control,
And bid my sorrows fly;
What harm can ever reach my soul
Beneath my Father's eye?
Anne Steele

The High-Pinnacle Leap

Jesus is brought to the top of the temple's highest point (v. 5-6) and is challenged to throw Himself down, citing Scripture: "He will give his angels charge concerning you..." (Matt 4:6).

The picture: a daring jump from a great height, framed not as trust in God's will, but as presumption — "prove you're the Son of God by spectacle." The tempter uses Scripture (from Psalm 91) as bait. Bible Study Tools+3BibleRef.com+3Bible Hub+3

The illustration shows how Scripture, when mis-applied or taken out of context, becomes a trap. We shouldn't ask God to validate us on our terms — we follow Him in trust, not for display.

The Daredevil Pastor — "Watch What God Can Do"

A young preacher once planned to stand in front of a moving car to "demonstrate faith." His mentor stopped him, saying, "God never asked you to prove His power—He asked you to preach His truth."

Public displays that demand God's intervention are not acts of faith but of pride. Jesus refused Satan's dare on the temple pinnacle because He knew that to force a miracle is to cease trusting and begin tempting.

*Faith never asks God to perform so we can believe;
faith believes so God may perform in His will.*

The Firewalker — Presumption in the Name of God

In parts of Africa, some have claimed that "true believers" can walk through fire unharmed if their faith is strong enough. One zealous man attempted it during a revival service and was badly burned. His pastor later wept, saying, "God's promises are never meant for our pride's proving."

Psalm 91 promises God's protection to those who walk in His ways, not those who demand proof of His care. The difference between presumption and faith is obedience.

*Faith stands on the promise;
presumption jumps from the pinnacle.*

The Parachute Instructor — Faith vs. Foolishness

A skydiving instructor told his class: "Faith in the parachute doesn't mean jumping without checking your gear." One reckless student ignored the safety check, assuming all would be fine. His chute tangled midair, and the instructor barely saved him with a reserve pull.

Faith isn't closing your eyes and leaping—it's confidence in God expressed through obedience to His revealed truth.

Jesus' response to Satan shows that real trust obeys God's Word; false faith tests it.

The Cliffside Photographer — Testing the Edge

A travel photographer, eager for the perfect shot, once leaned too far over a cliff to capture a breathtaking view. The wind shifted, and he slipped, barely clinging to a root until rescuers arrived. Later he said, "I was sure I was safe—until I realized I had trusted my footing more than my fear."

Application: Presumption feels like faith but isn't. To "throw ourselves down" spiritually—to take reckless risks expecting God to bail us out—is to tempt Him. True faith doesn't prove God by extremes; it trusts Him through obedience and restraint.

"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." (Matt 4:7)

The Scripture Mis-used

Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12 to Jesus, "For He will command His angels concerning you... so that you won't strike your foot against a stone," yet omits the full context ("to keep you in all your ways"). BibleRef.com+2Bible Hub+2

Application: This is the cautionary tale of partial citation. The tempter uses Scripture to twist meaning. The illustration invites us to remember: it isn't enough to quote verses — we must heed how they apply in God's story, not just in our agenda.

Fix Your Eyes

- Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. —Hebrews 12:1-2

Over and over again, my driver's education instructor said these two words: "Drive ahead." This was his way of telling me to focus on the horizon, not just on my immediate surroundings. Drivers who continually look to the right or to the left may well go into the ditch.

Satan is good at causing "roadside distractions" that tempt us to look at him rather than at Jesus. If he can get our attention, he may be able to get us off track and delay our spiritual progress. He even tried this with Jesus Himself!

After Jesus was baptized, Satan tried to deter Him by suggesting "better" ways to accomplish His work. Satan told Jesus that He could prove He was the Son of God by throwing Himself from the temple (Luke 4:9-11). But Jesus knew that proving He was God's Son would come by submitting Himself to the cross, not by flinging Himself from a high building. He responded, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (v.12). Jesus had His eyes on our redemption, and He knew He couldn't accomplish it by taking a detour around the cross.

The way to stay out of spiritual ditches is to fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2) and refuse to even glance at Satan's distractions. By Julie Ackerman Link([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The only way to overcome
Temptations that we face,
Is to be focused on the Lord,
Who strengthens by His grace.
—Sper

Satan ought not be in our line of vision,
but behind us. —Leonard Sweet

Related Resources (In Light of the fact that our Adversary knows Scripture and will use it to trip us up!):

- [inductive Bible study](#)
- [observation](#)
- [context](#)
- [key words](#)
- [mark key words](#)
- [interrogate with the 5W/H questions](#)
- [term of conclusion](#)
- [term of explanation](#)
- [terms of purpose or result](#) - so that, in order that, that, as a result
- [term of contrast](#)
- Consider the "**5P's**" - **P**ause to **P**onder the **P**assage then **P**ractise it in the **P**ower of the Spirit
- [expressions of time](#) - e.g. [then](#); [until](#)
- [term of comparison](#)// [simile](#)// [metaphor](#)
- [Guidelines for Figuring our Figurative Language](#)
- [Interpretation](#)
- [Observe With a Purpose](#)
- [Keep Context King](#)
- [Read Literally](#)
- [Compare Scripture with Scripture](#)

- [Consult Conservative Commentaries](#)
- [Application](#)

Matthew 4:7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST:'

NET Jesus said to him, "Once again it is written: 'You are not to put the Lord your God to the test.'"

GNT φη α τ η σο ς, Π λι ν γ γρα πται, Ο κ κπει ρ σει ς κ ρι ο ν τ ν θε ν σου.

KJV Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

ESV Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

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

ASV Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

CSB Jesus told him, "It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God."

NKJ Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

NRS Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

YLT Jesus said to him again, 'It hath been written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'

- **it is written:** Mt 4:4,10 21:16,42 22:31,32 Isa 8:20
- **YOU SHALL NOT PUT:** Ex 17:2,7 Nu 14:22 De 6:16 Ps 78:18,41,56 95:9 106:14 Mal 3:15 Ac 5:9 1Co 10:9 Heb 3:9
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage:

Luke 4:12+ And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

JESUS COUNTERS SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE

One can almost envision two dueling swordsmen (although we are not 100% sure Satan had a visible body), Satan mishandling the sword of the Word, but Jesus accurately dividing the Word and lunging at Satan with the sword of the Spirit to defeat his perverted application of the Scripture.

Parallel passage - Luke 4:12+ And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Jesus said to him, "On the other hand - On the other hand probably does not signify "to the contrary" (arguing against the devil's declaration in Mt 4:6), but "but once more, in another place" with reference to his first quotation. Jesus immediately counters Satan with a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16. Jesus knew that Satan had omitted the phrase "in all your ways" from Ps 91:11. What is the significance? The point is that when the child of God is in the will of God, God will protect him.

THOUGHT - Jesus was comparing [Scripture with Scripture](#). He was taking into consideration the total message of the Bible ([Keeping Context King](#)) and not stopping (as did Satan) with one isolated passage. Satan enjoys taking verses out of context and using them to "prove" his false claims. You and I must have a grasp of all Scripture if we are to detect Satan's lies and defeat them.

D A Carson - Jesus' hesitation came not from wondering whether he or his Father could command the normal forces of nature (cf. 8:26; 14:31) but because Scripture forbids putting God to the test (Mt 4:7). The reference alludes to Exodus 17:2-7 (cf. Nu 20:1-13), where the Israelites "put the Lord to the test" by demanding water. So Jesus was tempted by Satan to test God, but Jesus recognized Satan's testing as a sort of manipulative bribery expressly forbidden in the Scriptures (cf. Robinson, Twelve New Testament Studies, 54-56). For both Israel and Jesus, demanding miraculous protection as proof of God's care was wrong; the appropriate attitude is trust and obedience (Dt 6:17). We see, then, something of Jesus' handling of Scripture. His "**also**" (Mt 4:7NIV) shows He would not allow any interpretation that generates what He knew would contradict another passage. (Expositor's Bible

Commentary)

It is written - see note above on [grapho. Perfect passive indicative](#), conveys the sense of *stands said*. Once again Jesus cuts apart Satan's ploy with the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." (Eph 6:17[±]).

Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:16

"You shall not put the LORD your God to the test as you tested Him at [Massah](#) (means "to test or try")."

Massah refers to the event that is described in Exodus 17:1-7 (see in depth commentary)

Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people **quarreled** with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you **test** (Heb = [nacah](#); Lxx = [peirazo](#)) the LORD?" 3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they **grumbled** against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." 5 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. (**Ed**: A foreshadowing of Christ - 1 Cor 10:4)" And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place **Massah** (Lxx = [peirasmos](#), cf use of same noun in Heb 3:8[±]) and [Meribah](#) (contention, strife; Lxx = *loidoresis* = railing, abuse) because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because **they tested** (Heb = [nacah](#); Lxx = [peirazo](#)) **the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"**

YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST - **Test** is not the simple verb [peirazo](#) but an emphatic compound ([ekpeirazo](#)) What did Jesus mean by tempting God? If Jesus had jumped off the Temple, He would have "put God on the spot" so to speak, forcing Him to act. This would not have been evidence of Jesus trusting but testing the promise in Psalm 91:11-12 This would have been [presumptuously](#) "testing" His Father which is something He refused to do. To accomplish his mission of bringing salvation to the world, Jesus would take the path of submission to God (cf Jn 4:34, Jn 5:19, 30, Jn 6:40, Jn 8:28, 49, Jn 14:10 and ultimately Mt 26:39, 42). He would worship and serve God alone.

THOUGHT - Jesus' point was that if we put ourselves in circumstances that are meant to force God to protect us, we are testing Him. Take the example of a diabetic who refuses to take insulin saying God promises He will take care of me and by so doing he is tempting the Lord.

Hughes rightly says that "Even the very highest and best ends do not justify operating contrary to God's will....This message is essential for us today. Willful swan dives test the LORD—diving into a marital relationship that does not have the approval of God's Word (**Ed**: Most of us know individuals where this brought about disastrous results and usually ended in divorce!); misapplying Scripture with disastrous consequences, then crying out for God to catch us before we hit bottom; rationalizing a headstrong plunge by saying, "If this works, God will receive great glory. Just think of the souls that will be saved. God, you have to be in this—you just have to!" True, he specializes in picking up the pieces, but we must not test him through rationalized disobedience." (See [Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior](#))

Wiersbe in his comments on putting **God to the test** in Luke 4:12+ writes "When a child of God is in the will of God (**ED**: THIS IS THE NECESSARY CONDITION!), he can claim the Father's protection and care. But if he willfully gets into trouble and expects God to rescue him, then he is tempting God. (For an example of this, see Ex. 17:1-7.) We tempt God when we "force" Him (or dare Him) to act contrary to His Word. It is a dangerous thing to try God's patience, even though He is indeed long-suffering and gracious. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

A T Robertson quoting Plummer - "Jesus points out to the devil that **testing** God is not **trusting** God." Do we ever test God? I am afraid we do, when we do something presumptuously, assuming it is His will, when we have not even taken time to prayerfully commune with Him to be sure it is His will. Father forgive us!

Addison writes on **put to the test** - As applied to God, it means to put him to the proof, to demand further evidence of what is clear already, ¶ as in this case by requiring him to show his watchful care by an extraordinary intervention in a case of danger wilfully and needlessly incurred. The precept has a double edge or application, to the Saviour, as a reason why he would not tempt God, and to the Devil, as a reason why he should not tempt Christ. As if he had said: I will neither tempt God by presuming on his providence,

nor suffer you to tempt me by presumptuous solicitation. ([Commentary](#))

Put to the test (1598)(**ekpeirazo** from **ek** = intensifies + **peirazo** = to test, tempt) means to test thoroughly, subject to test or proof. To test in order to understand the quality of something, including imperfections, faults or other qualities. **Ekpeirazo** is used only 4x in NT - Matt. 4:7; Lk. 4:12; Lk. 10:25; 1 Co. 10:9 (= "Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.") **Zodhiates** adds that "Sinners are said to tempt God (Mt. 4:7; Lk 4:12; 10:25; Acts 5:9, 1 Cor. 10:9), putting Him to the test, refusing to believe Him or His Word until He has manifested His power (Sept.: Deut. 6:16; 8:16; Ps. 78:18)

Ekpeirazo is used one other time in the Septuagint of Israel putting God to the test - Psalm 78:18 And in their heart they **put God to the test** (Lxx = ekpeirazo) By asking food according to their desire. (cp Ps 106:14, 15 where Lxx uses peirazo)

Here are two other uses of **ekperizo** in which men were **putting God to the test**..

Luke 10:25 And a lawyer stood up and **put** Him to the **test**, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

1 Corinthians 10:9 Nor let us **try** the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents ([Nu 21:4-9](#), [5](#) "The people spoke against God and Moses")

HCSB Study Bible - When Jesus suffered on the cross (Mt 27:41-44), those who tormented Him used arguments similar to that of the Devil: "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." They even quoted Ps 22:8 to argue that Jesus would be rescued if God really loved Him, much as Satan quoted Ps 91:11-12 to argue that God would rescue Jesus from a deadly fall if He were really God's Son. Again, Jesus knew better. He trusted God even through a brutal scourging, even when nails were driven through His limbs, and even when God let Him suffer a horrible death.

ILLUSTRATION - A little girl was asked if Satan ever tempted her to do wrong. "Oh, yes," she replied, "but when he knocks at the door of my heart, I just pray, 'Lord Jesus, please go to the door for me!'" "What happens then?" she was asked. "Oh, everything turns out all right. When Satan sees Jesus, he runs away every time!" In her simple faith, that little girl realized that even the strongest Christian is no match for the devil. Only Jesus has defeated him, so we must be strong in the strength of our Lord.

F. B. Meyer wrote, "There is only one way by which the tempter can be met. He laughs at our good resolutions and ridicules the pledges with which we fortify ourselves. Satan fears only One, He who in the hour of greatest weakness defeated him and who now has been raised far above all principalities and powers to deliver frail and tempted souls. Christ conquered the prince of this world in the days of His flesh (Heb 2:14-15+) and is prepared to do as much again for each of us as we seek His aid" (see Heb 2:18+) (in "Our Daily Bread," 1980).

THE PRICE IS WRONG

What would it take for you to "sell out"? What is there in life that would cause you to compromise your faith? Whatever it is—sexual temptation, financial inducement, fear of alienating or offending someone—it will be placed in your path at some point. The enemy wants to destroy believers or at least neutralize them through sin, shame, and guilt. When that temptation rears its seductive head, do what Jesus did: rely on the Word of God (**Ed**: And the enabling power of the Spirit of God), and stand fast in your commitment to worship God, and God alone, above all else. No matter the cost or the sacrifice, no matter how appealing the come-on, believers dare not put anything or anyone in his place. (Life Application Commentary)

DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE

What a sobering thought that Satan knows Scripture and knows how to use it for his own purposes! Sometimes friends or associates will present attractive and convincing reasons why you should try something that you believe is wrong. They may even find Bible verses that seem to support their viewpoint. Study the Bible carefully, especially the broader contexts of specific verses, so that you understand God's principles for living and what he wants for your life. Only if you really understand what the whole Bible says will you be able to recognize errors of interpretation when people take verses out of context to make them say what they want them to say. Choose your Bible teachers carefully. Believers have much to learn from others. Capable and wise teachers often present the broader context to help stimulate growth in Bible knowledge. (Life Application Commentary)

From the time John the Baptist declared Christ to be "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), Satan tried to keep our Lord from going to the cross. In the wilderness temptation he suggested that Jesus take the kingdoms of the world without the ordeal of Calvary. He incited the Jewish leaders to hate Christ, hoping they might kill Him by stoning. When these

attempts failed, he switched tactics. He induced Peter to speak against God's plan, and he "entered" Judas (John 13:27). He prompted Peter's denials of Jesus, the cowardice of the apostles, the brutality of the soldiers, and the heartlessness of the mob. Through all of this he hoped to convince Jesus that mankind wasn't worth dying for. Satan lost that battle, but he continues to fight. He does all he can to hinder the spread of the gospel. He even uses religions that pro-mote salvation by works and ritual. Despite his efforts, thousands are being saved through faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. They can joyfully sing, "Hallelujah for the Cross," because the cross and the empty tomb spelled Satan's ultimate defeat. —H. V. Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Calvary stands for Satan's fall.

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory

- **Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain** : Mt 4:5 Lu 4:5-7
- **and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory**: Mt 16:26 Esther 1:4 5:11 Ps 49:16,17 Da 4:30 Heb 11:24-26 1Pe 1:24 1Jn 2:15,16 Rev 11:15
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage -

Luke 4:5+ And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Again, the devil (see above for [diabolos](#)) **took Him to a very high mountain - Took Him is led Him** in Luke 4:5+. Satan now drops his pretense and makes one final, desperate effort to corrupt Jesus. He finally reveals his supreme purpose: to induce Jesus Christ to worship him. He had first suggested what Jesus ought to do for Himself. Next he suggested what the Father ought to do for Jesus. Now he suggests what Satan could do for Jesus-in exchange for what Jesus could do for him.

Took Him (see [note above](#)) (3880) ([paralambano](#) from **para** = beside + [lambano](#) = appropriate, receive) means to receive from another or to take into close association. To take with one in order to carry away (eg, Jesus' reference to the Rapture in John 14:3 below where the taking also conveys a sense close fellowship and agreement associated with the receiving to Himself)

And showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory - That the devil was able to show Jesus **all the kingdoms of the world** suggests God has allowed him to have supernatural power. Luke says this display of kingdom glory occurred in **amoment (stigma) of time** which supports this as being an actual supernatural vision, for it could not be done otherwise in **amoment (stigma) of time**. By some supernatural accommodation the devil showed Jesus the glories of Egypt-its pyramids, temples, libraries, and vast treasures. He showed the power and splendor of Rome, with its mighty empire spread over the known world. He showed great Athens, magnificent Corinth, and of course wondrous Jerusalem, the royal city of David, and more-all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory.

Showed (1166)([deiknuo](#)) means to show so as to draw attention to something, to present to one's view, to make known the significance of something. The devil exhibited prominently **all the kingdoms of the world** for Jesus to see. The point is that the devil wanted Jesus to see his offer clearly, hoping this would entice Him to forgo the Cross. The verb has the significance of trying to explain or demonstrate or convince. Here in Mt 4:8 [deiknuo](#) is in the vivid [historic present](#).

Kingdoms (932)([basileia](#) from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes the territory or people over whom a king rules There are two kingdoms at war, the **kingdom of this world** (cf Gal 1:4KJV+, Jas 4:4+, 1 Jn 2:15-17+), headed by Satan (Lk 4:5-6+, esp v6, cf 1 Jn 5:19+) and the **Kingdom of God** headed by Jesus (cf Jn 18:37+, Rev 19:16+).

World (2889)([kosmos](#)) means essentially something that is well-arranged, that which has order or something arranged harmoniously. **Kosmos** in this context refers to the earth (which seems to be more in chaos than kosmos [order] as the return of the Lord draws nigh!)

Glory (1391)([doxa](#)) describes the property possessed by these kingdoms which is of outstanding eminence and worthy of being acknowledged because of this eminence. Brightness. Splendor. Do the kingdoms of the world have **glory**? Of course they do (cf [ancient Egypt](#)), but it is a seductive, transient glory because this **world is passing away** (1 Jn 2:17+). Moses had been tempted by this **glory** but he refused it (read why)

By faith (note from the following description that faith is not passive, but is active, dynamic - it results in/produces godly actions) Moses, when he had grown up, **refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter**, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the **passing pleasures of sin**, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than **the treasures of Egypt**; for he was looking to the reward. (Heb 11:25-27⁺)

And it was Jesus who later ask rhetorically "what does it profit a man to **gain the whole world**, and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36). Answer? NOTHING! That is nothing except eternal torment because the wages of sin is (temporal and eternal) death. (Ro 6:23⁺)

THOUGHT - What **glory** of this world is seducing you to pursue worldliness over godliness, the former yielding only passing pleasure, while the latter holds promise not only for this present life but also for the life to come (1 Ti 4:8⁺)

Satan always comes at us in that way. He suggests that the world of business, the world of politics, the world of fame, or the world of whatever our heart desires can be ours-if only ... ! We can get what we want; we can fulfill our lusts and our fantasies; we can be somebody. All we must do to get those things of the world is to go after them in the way of the world-which is Satan's way. That, in essence, is what the lying tempter always promises. He promised Eve that by eating the forbidden fruit she would not die as God had warned, but that, in fact, she would become a god herself.

He tempts each of us in the same way. "Why set your standards so high? What's the use? You can get what you want by cutting a corner here and shading the truth there. Why wait for heavenly reward, when you can have what you want now?" When we set our hearts on money, prestige, popularity, power, or selfish happiness, we are doing exactly what Satan wanted Jesus to do-put self first and God last. Self-will is Satan's will and is therefore by definition the opposite of God's will, which is for us to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (Mt6:33). Abraham sought what God promised in his own self-styled act with Hagar, and tragedy resulted. It always does.

Satan is a counterfeiter. He offers what seems to be the same as what God offers, and his price is much cheaper. "God wants you to prosper, doesn't He?" Satan asks. "Well, I'll give you prosperity a lot sooner and for a lot less. Just turn your head a little at questionable practices. Give in when it's advantageous; don't be a prude; follow the crowd. That's the way to success." The basic argument is always a form of the idea that the end justifies the means.

Satan is also the father of lies. What he really demanded in the wilderness was Jesus' own soul: All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me. Satan had rebelled against God in the first place because he could not tolerate being second to the Trinity. Here, he thought, was his great opportunity: he would bribe the Son to worship at his feet. Satan's price is always immeasurably more than he leads us to believe. Do you really think Satan would KEEP HIS WORD! He is a LIAR.

And what he gives is always immeasurably less than he promises. For Jesus to have given in to this third temptation would have brought the same ultimate result as His having succumbed to either of the other two. He would have disqualified Himself not only as King but as Savior. The statement of those who mocked at the foot of the cross would have had to have been reversed: "He saved Himself; others He cannot save" (see Matt. 27:42). Instead of redeeming the world He would have joined the world. Instead of inheriting the world, He would have lost the world. The Christ would have played the antichrist, and the Lamb would have become the beast.

Matthew 4:9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

- **All these things** : Mt 26:15 Joh 13:3
- **I will give You**: 1 Sa 2:7,8 Ps 72:11 113:7,8 Pr 8:15 Jer 27:5,6 Da 2:37,38 4:32 Da 5:18,19,26-28 Joh 12:31 14:30 16:11 Rev 19:16
- **if You fall down and worship me**: 1 Co 10:20,21 2 Co 4:4 1 Ti 3:6 Rev 19:10 22:8,9

THE DEVIL TEMPTS JESUS TO BREAK THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Parallel Passage -

Luke 4:6-7+ And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain ([exousia](#)) and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

COMMENT - The devil has been granted the right and might over the kingdoms of the world. However the devil's claim to have authority over everything is a claim that is really a "half-truth" (a whole lie!). God is

sovereign over all Heaven and Earth. He reigns over all creation. Whatever Satan has dominion over, he has almost like a "[squat](#)ter" on a piece of land (cp [usurper](#)). One day even that **domain** will be decimated when he is devoured by fire from heaven and cast into the lake of fire where he "and the false prophet....will be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Rev 20:9, 10+).

Steven Cole comments on the parallel passage in Luke of Satan's words to Jesus **I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish:**

Satan's offer, like all his offers, was a mixed bag of truth and error. Jesus later calls Satan "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Paul calls him "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). But the Bible is also clear, and Satan cleverly alludes to it even here, that God alone sets up kings and grants authority to whomever He wills (Da 4:17, 25). Satan's authority is at best delegated and temporary. The Bible is clear, as Jesus answers, that God alone is to be worshiped and served. But Satan mixes up the truth of his powerful authority with the error of worshiping him. This is why you always have to be on guard against false teachers. Invariably they present something that is true, but they mix it up with that which is false and unbiblical. One current popular example is a man who does a great job of setting forth who we are in Christ, how we are saints. But then he states that we are not to see ourselves as sinners, but only as saints who occasionally sin. That's dangerous error, mixed up with truth! Satan baits his hook with truth so that we swallow the whole thing. (cf the word "[secretly introduce](#)" in 2 Pe 2:1+) Like a clever salesman, Satan sets out his wares without mentioning the price tag. He always shows the pleasures of sin (which are real)(**ED**: SEE "passing pleasures of sin" in- Heb 11:25+), but he doesn't mention the stiff consequences that inevitably follow....Satan still works that way: "Give in and enjoy the pleasures of sex like all your friends are doing! Why deprive yourself? Life is short, this may be your only opportunity." He doesn't mention the risk of venereal disease (including AIDS), or pregnancy, or the spiritual and emotional consequences of giving yourself to someone outside of God's design of lifelong marriage. He dangles before you the good feelings of taking drugs or getting drunk, but he hides the ruined lives of the drug addict or drunkard on the streets. And, of course, he never sets before you the eternal wrath of God!([The Temptation of Jesus](#))

And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You- All these things refers to the glorious **kingdoms of the world**. Luke tells us that the **kingdoms of the world** are Satan's domain and God has handed them over to him to do with as he wishes. John substantiates this writing "that **the whole world** lies in the power of the evil one (SATAN)." (1 Jn 5:19+)

John MacArthur has a helpful comment on 1 John 5:19+ writing that "Despite the existence of countless political, cultural, and social entities in the world, there are in reality only two realms. It is the comforting privilege of believers, in addition to having eternal life, answered prayer, and victory over sin, to know they belong to God. Though they exist in this world, they are not part of it (John 15:19; 17:14); they are children of God (John 1:12–13+), "aliens and strangers" (1 Peter 2:11; cf. 1 Pe 1:1, 17; 1 Chr 29:15; Ps. 119:19; Heb. 11:13), whose true citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). On the other hand, the whole world—its politics, economics, education, entertainment, and, above all, its religion—lies in the power of the evil one. The evil world system is hostile to God and believers (John 15:18–19), as John noted earlier in this epistle. It takes its cue from its ruler, Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; cf. Eph. 2:2; 6:12), the archenemy of God and His people. Because the world is completely under Satan's influence, believers must avoid being contaminated by it (1 Jn 2:15–17; cf. James 1:27). There is no middle ground, no third option. Everyone is part of God's kingdom, or of Satan's. In the words of Jesus, "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters" (Luke 11:23). Or as James scathingly declares, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). (MacArthur NT Commentary - Epistles of John)

If You fall down and worship me - **If** introduces the condition with the prospects of fulfillment. Satan the consummate shady salesman now gives the condition for possession, a two-fold condition (1) **fall down**, and (2) **worship**. Luke's version only mentions "**if you worship before me**" before is [enopion](#) which literally means in sight, in front of, in the presence of and thus the idea of face to face! The unholy one is calling for the Holy One to prostrate His Holy face before the devil's unholy feet in demonstration of His allegiance to the Evil One! Woe! Now if you did not believe that Satan was consumed by pride, this request from a condemned creature to His Creator should convince you. The deceiver is himself grossly deceived but the Lake of Fire ([synonymous with Geenna or Gehenna](#)) will correct his deceptive thinking!

Worship (bow down) ([4352](#))([proskuneo](#) from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect. The word [proskuneo](#) literally means to kiss toward someone, to throw a

kiss in token of respect or homage, to prostrate oneself in homage, to do reverence to, to adore and so to worship and show respect. In the ancient Oriental (especially Persia) the mode of salutation between persons of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips. When the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek. When one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, and as he was bowing down he would be throwing kisses toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that is intended by the Greek writers in the use of the verb [proskuneo](#). Luke used [proskuneo](#) in Acts 7:45+ in Stephen's description of Israel's idol worship even after deliverance from Egypt (Acts 7:43+). In Acts 10:25+ Cornelius attempted to worship Peter but Peter refused the worship declaring " I too am just a man." (Acts 10:26+) Luke used [proskuneo](#) twice to describe worship in Jerusalem (presumably at the Temple) (Acts 8:27+, Acts 24:11+).

Satan is tempting Jesus to take the crown without the cross. Jesus refuses and accepts the cross and receives the worship as described by Luke - "And they (His disciples), after **worshipping** ([proskuneo](#)) Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, (Luke 24:52+)

THOUGHT - Jesus will inherit the kingdom in God's time, and we will inherit the kingdom with Him (Mt 5:5+; Mt 25:34; Ro 8:17+; Jas 2:5+). In the eternal, heavenly state all the universe will be ours! Who would want to sacrifice that for the deceptive, disappointing, and short-lived imitations Satan offers?

Life Application note - Jesus didn't argue with Satan about who owned the world, but Jesus refused to validate Satan's claim by worshipping him. Jesus knew that he would redeem the world through giving up his life on the cross, not through making an alliance with a corrupt angel. (Life Application Commentary)

Steven Cole comments that "Like a clever salesman, Satan sets out his wares without mentioning the price tag. He always shows the pleasures of sin (which are real), but he doesn't mention the stiff consequences that inevitably follow. "Worship me and I'll give you dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth." Sounds good! But he fails to mention that Jesus will then be the servant of Satan, not of the Father, that the holy union between Father and Son will be forever broken and that Jesus' mission as Savior will be ruined. Satan still works that way: "Give in and enjoy the pleasures of sex like all your friends are doing! Why deprive yourself? Life is short, this may be your only opportunity." He doesn't mention the risk of venereal disease (including AIDS), or pregnancy, or the spiritual and emotional consequences of giving yourself to someone outside of God's design of lifelong marriage. He dangles before you the good feelings of taking drugs or getting drunk, but he hides the ruined lives of the drug addict or drunkard on the streets. And, of course, he never sets before you the eternal wrath of God! ([Sermon](#))

COMPARISON OF SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS OF EVE AND JESUS		
TEMPTATION	GENESIS 3	LUKE 4
Appeal to physical appetite	You may eat of any tree (Ge 3:1+)	You may eat by changing stones to bread (Lk 4:3-4+, Mt 4:2-4)
Appeal to personal gain	You surely will not die (Ge 3:4+)	You will not strike Your foot (Lk 4:9-12+, Mt 4:5-7)
Appeal to power or glory	You will be like God (Ge 3:5+)	You will have all the world's kingdoms (Lk 4:5-8+, Mt 4:8-10)

Matthew 4:1-11

TODAY IN THE WORD

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal told of a man living in Taiwan who claims the title of governor of Fukien Province. The problem is that Fukien, which is on the Chinese mainland, already has a governor who rules the affairs of its 27 million citizens. The other man's claim goes back to 1949, when the Nationalists fled China for Taiwan (then known as Formosa) after their defeat by the Chinese Communists.

The bottom line is that this Taiwanese man's claim to rule Fukien Province is essentially worthless. He has an office and a staff and carries on as if he were governor. But he has no real authority to rule at all.

Satan has also been carrying on as if he were a legitimate ruler. But at the temptation of Christ Satan's claims were proven to be false, and he was exposed as a temporary usurper.

The analogy doesn't hold at every point, of course. Unlike the "governor" in today's illustration, Satan does have real power. And at least for now, the kingdoms of the unbelieving world do lie in the devil's lap. But one day Jesus Christ will return as Ruler of all.

The temptation of Christ is an example of spiritual warfare without parallel. We can only read the text and watch awestruck as Jesus engages Satan in face-to-face battle. We do not believe that it was even possible for the sinless Son of God to yield to Satan's offers.

For that we can be eternally grateful! Whereas Adam and Eve had fallen to the serpent's temptation, there in the desert Jesus refused the temptation to bypass the cross. He also refused to go outside of the Father's will for His physical needs of food and protection.

We will never be tested to the same degree or with the same effects as Jesus was tested. But because He experienced temptation, He is sympathetic to us in our need (Heb. 4:14-16). And we can imitate Jesus' example by drawing on God's Word to refute and defeat Satan.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

If you want to turn today into an extraordinary Monday, consider the benefits available to you because Jesus endured and triumphed over temptation.

A Tempting Opportunity Read: Luke 4:1-13

If You will worship before me, all will be Yours. —Luke 4:7

The biggest theft in Philadelphia's history was carried out by a couple of men who just happened to be in the right place at the right time. According to witnesses, a yellow container fell out of an armored truck. Two motorists following the truck jumped out, grabbed the object, and sped off laughing.

The driver discovered later that the rear door had not been secured properly, allowing it to swing open and the money to fall out. The container had in it 12,000 one-hundred-dollar bills, which is 1.2 million dollars!

A criminal mind would interpret such a stroke of fortune as a gift from God. But in more subtle ways, all of us are tempted to assume that an unusual opportunity carries with it divine approval. Yet we see how wrong such thinking is when we consider the experience of Jesus in the wilderness.

After 40 days without food, Jesus was hungry and weak. Ahead of Him loomed the cross. But all He had to do was listen to the devil to change all that. Before Him was a golden opportunity to satisfy His body and avoid the torment of crucifixion. But He didn't give in. He showed how important it is to see some situations as temptations to be resisted rather than opportunities to be seized. How about us? By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We need a strength to keep us true
And straight in everything we do;
We need God's power to keep us strong
When we are tempted to do wrong.
—Anon.

Satan tempts us to get the worst out of us;
God tests us to get the best out of us.

Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

- **Go:** Mt 16:23 Jas 4:7 1Pe 5:9
- **Satan:** 1 Chr 21:1 Job 1:6,12 2:1 Ps 109:6 Zec 3:1,2
- **YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD:** Dt 6:13,14 10:20 Jos 24:14 1 Sa 7:3 Lk 4:8
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage -

Luke 4:8+ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Then (5119)(**tote**) is an **expression of time** which means "At that time."

THOUGHT - When used as an adverb **THEN** is always worth pausing to ponder and query asking questions like "What time is it? What happens next? Why does this happen now?, etc". When **then** is used (as determined by the context) to be an **expression of time** or "time phrase", it usually indicates **sequence** and thus marks that which is next in order of time, soon after that, following next after in order of position, narration or enumeration, being next in a series ([See English definitions](#) or [here](#)). Observing **then** can be very useful in following the course of events in a chapter or paragraph, especially in [eschatological](#) (prophetic) passages - e.g., in Nebuchadnezzar's dream there are several occurrences of "**then**" (in the NAS) - Da 2:35, Da 2:39, Da 2:40, Da 2:46, Da 2:48-[commentary](#). Compare the uses of then in the [Olivet Discourse](#) - Mt 24:9, Mt 24:14, 16, 21, 23, 30 (2 uses!), etc-[see commentary](#).

Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY - Jesus is quoting Deut 6:13 "You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and **swear by His name.**" (cf Dt 10:20) But He adds a phrase from the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translation of Deut 6:13 which says the "Him (the LORD) you shall **serve**" (kai auto latreuseis). So while Satan's temptations failed, but God's testings succeeded. Jesus' responses to the tempter were, in essence, "I will trust the Father; I will not presume on His Word; and I will not circumvent His will. I will take the Father's good gifts from the Father's own hand, in the Father's own way, and in the Father's own time." Thus the King was accredited by the severest test.

Why did Jesus add this phrase from the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#)? **Worship** is intimately linked to [service](#). If we worship God on Sunday, but are not willing to serve Him enabled by His Spirit Monday through Saturday, then our **worship** is at best "[defective](#)" and at worst [hypocritical](#)!

Warren Wiersbe "Satan had said nothing about **service**, but Jesus knew that whatever we **worship**, we will **serve**. Service to the Lord is true freedom, but service to Satan is terrible bondage. God's pattern is to start with suffering and end with glory (1 Peter 5:10-[note](#)), while Satan's pattern is to start with glory and end with suffering. Satan wants us to sacrifice the eternal for the temporary and take the "easy way." (**Ed**: Beloved don't be enticed by the passing pleasures of sin - Heb 11:25+) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

You shall worship (bow down) ([4352](#)) see above for [proskuneo](#)

Shall...serve ([3000](#)) ([latreuo](#) from [latris](#) = one hired or [latron](#) = reward, wages) means to work for reward, for hire or for pay, to be in servitude, render cultic service. **Latreuo** was used literally for bodily service (e.g., workers on the land, or slaves), and figuratively for "to cherish." In the NT the idea is to render service to God, to worship, to perform sacred services or to minister to God in a spirit of worship (in fact in the NT uses below, note several passages clearly associate worship with serving.).

J Vernon McGee - Oh, Satan left out something. Satan said, "If You will worship me only for a moment, I'll give You the kingdom." Our Lord said in effect, "You left out something. You cannot worship without serving. If I worship you, I'll serve you. And we are to worship God only, and Him only are we to serve." May I say to you, this is a mistake that even some Christians are making today. They think they can serve God on Sunday, and maybe through certain Christian agencies, but that they can live their own lives to suit themselves. My friend, you cannot do that. It's impossible. Listen to Paul in Romans 6:16: Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? Don't you know, my friend, that whomever you obey, whatever livery or uniform you wear, you are the servant of that one? If you are serving sin, then sin is your master. Don't fool yourself. I stood in front of my office window one day and looked across the street at the California Club. There were about fifteen chauffeurs standing and chatting. Walking very briskly, a man came out of the club. I couldn't hear what he said, but he lifted a finger and spoke something. Immediately one chauffeur withdrew from the crowd, went over and opened the door of the car, and the man got in. Then the chauffeur went around the car, got in the driver's seat, and drove off. So I came to the profound conclusion that he and no one else in the crowd was that man's chauffeur because the one you obey is your master. The others didn't obey him. My friend, today when you serve sin, sin is your master. Our Lord says you are to worship only God, and Him only are you to serve. You can't worship Him without serving Him. And if you're serving sin you cannot worship God. (Jesus: Centerpiece of Scripture)

Jesus would not short circuit the Cross for the seductive, passing glory of the kingdoms of this world. Jesus clearly understood His mission as shown by His declaration that His glory would follow His Cross

Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things (THE CROSS) and to enter into His glory (THE CROWN)? (Lk 24:26±)

Go ([present imperative](#)) ([5217](#))([hupago](#) from **hupo** = under or denoting secrecy + **ago** = to go) means literally to lead under or to bring under and is used in this sense only once in the only use in the Septuagint/Lxx in Ex 14:21 (to translate "swept... back" - caused to recede). Most commonly hupago means to go, to go away, to withdraw one's self (e.g., of Jesus' departure from the world (Jn 8:14, etc). **Hupago** has the notion of withdrawing.

THOUGHT - Because Satan's present power is only by God's permission, when the Son commanded him to leave, Satan had no choice but to obey. Therein Christ demonstrated the very sovereign power Satan wanted Him to misuse! Now believers are a beneficiary of this truth for John writes "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (1 Jn 4:4+). The Lord now gives all of His children the power to resist Satan. "**Resist** ([aorist imperative](#))(BUT NOT THE PRECEDING CLAUSE- "**SUBMIT** [[aorist imperative](#)] TO GOD") the devil," James assures us, "and he will flee from you" (Jas 4:7+). As he did with Jesus, Satan (his demons) will not long stay away from us; but we can take heart in the truth of God's Word which promises that with every temptation God "will provide a way of escape" (1Co 10:13+). For every temptation Satan leads us into, a way out is provided by our Father. We need to keep our spiritual eyes open to discern the way of escape!

Steven Cole - Satan's goal in all three temptations was to get Jesus to act independently of the Father rather than to submit to the will of God, which included the cross. It would have been a tempting shortcut to gain the glory of ruling all the kingdoms of this world without the agony of the cross. But the Bible is clear that anything we do apart from faith and obedience is sin (Ro 14:23). This means that we have to be careful not only to pursue godly goals, but also to use biblical means of attaining those goals. For example, church growth is a good goal, but if the church adopts worldly marketing and sales techniques or waters down the message to bring people into the church, we've fallen into the devil's trap. We need to be careful to follow biblical methods as well as goals. We should learn from our Lord Jesus how to be wise to Satan's schemes. ([The Temptation of Jesus](#))

It is written - This was the typical way to identify a specific quote from an Old Testament prophecy or an allusion to a prophecy (cf allusion in Mk 14:21 alluding to Ps 22:1-31 and Isaiah 53:1-12+). **As it is written** in the NT - Matt. 26:24; Mk. 1:2; Mk. 7:6; Mk. 9:13; Mk. 14:21; Lk. 2:23; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 6:31; Jn. 12:14; Acts 7:42; Acts 15:15; Rom. 1:17; Rom. 2:24; Rom. 3:4; Rom. 3:10; Rom. 4:17; Rom. 8:36; Rom. 9:13; Rom. 9:33; Rom. 10:15; Rom. 11:8; Rom. 11:26; Rom. 15:3; Rom. 15:9; Rom. 15:21; 1 Co. 1:31; 1 Co. 2:9; 1 Co. 10:7; 2 Co. 8:15; 2 Co. 9:9

Written ([1125](#))([grapho](#) from root **graph-** = primarily means to scratch on or engrave as on an ornament, reports, letters, etc; **English** = graph, graphic, etc) means to engrave or inscribe with a pen or stylus characters or letters on a surface which can be wood, wax, metal, leather, stone, parchment, dirt (John 8:6+), paper, etc. The [perfect tense](#) indicates it was written down in the Old Testament and it stands written. This speaks of the permanence of the Scriptures even as Jesus declared in Mt 24:35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

When we were children and our parents told us to do something and we questioned "Why?", the answer was usually "Because I said so!". Why are we commanded to be holy? Because God said so! A popular saying is "God said it, I believe it, that settles it." This sounds good but isn't accurate because God's Word is true, irregardless of whether we believe it or not. A more accurate "saying" would be "God said it, that settles it!" In fact **It is written** should put a stop to every complaint or excuse.

THOUGHT - May the absolute certainty of this truth uttered by He Who is Himself Truth (Mt 24:35) stir your hearts and motivate you to desire to treasure God's precious, permanent Word of Life in your hearts during your short sojourn on earth (Ps 119:9,11)? What a blessed but passing privilege we now have to [memorize His Word](#). Don't miss this golden opportunity, the opportunity of a lifetime! You will not regret it throughout eternity! To help start you on this journey see [Memory Verses by Topic](#). As they say when they serve your [filet mignon](#) in the restaurant "**Enjoy!**"

A Review of the ways Satan tempts us - they are the same basic ways he tempted Jesus in the wilderness.

1. First, he will try to get us to distrust God's providential care and to try to solve our problems, win our struggles, and meet our needs by our own plans and in our own power.
2. Second, he will try to get us to presume on God's care and forgiveness by willingly putting ourselves in the way of danger- whether physical, economic, moral, spiritual, or any other.
3. Third, he will appeal to selfish ambitions and try to get us to use our own schemes to fulfill the promises God has made to us- which amounts to trying to fulfill God's plan in Satan's way.

THOUGHT - The story is told of a man who was trying to teach his dog obedience. He would take a large piece of meat and put it in the middle of the floor. Each time the dog attempted to take the meat the man would swat the dog and say, "No." Soon the dog began to associate the swatting with the word "no" and learned to stop simply when the word was said. When meat was placed on the floor the dog would not look at it but rather at his master, waiting for his word of approval or denial. That is essentially the message God teaches in this passage: "When temptation comes, don't look at the temptation but at Jesus Christ. Keep your eyes on His example and do what he did. Look at the ways He was tempted and at the way He resisted, and learn from Him." The writer of Hebrews, perhaps with Jesus' wilderness temptations particularly in mind, tells us, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15+). Even more encouraging is the declaration: "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (Heb 2:18+). Jesus has been there before us; He has met the worst Satan can give and has been victorious. More than that, He is eager to share that victory with His own people when they are tempted. We can have victory over temptation only by resisting in the way that Jesus resisted—by holding with complete obedience to God and His Word. Jesus endured temptation to the very limit of Satan's power, and He resisted to that very limit. He did not in the least degree allow temptation to develop into desire, much less into sin (cf. Jas 1:13-15+). He did not think the matter over or give it any consideration. He simply stood firmly in His Father's will and said no! We find help against temptation, just as we find help for everything else in the Christian life, by "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith" (Heb 12:2+). A hurdler soon learns that if he looks at the hurdles as he runs, he will trip and fall. From start to finish he looks only at the goal, and when he does that the hurdles are cleared in stride as each one is encountered. Keeping our eyes on our Lord Jesus Christ is our only hope of conquering temptation and faithfully running "with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1+).

The same principle of looking to Jesus before looking to the temptation is found in the wonderful truth of the [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#) (check it out!)

Deuteronomy 6:1-15 - Who Is On The Throne?

According to English poet Oliver Reynolds, an old man had a family altar where he burned incense to an engraving of Napoleon. When asked why he worshiped the picture as a god, the man replied that he would worship anything.

Imagine venerating a picture of that French general! Imagine burning incense to the portrait of a human being who has no meaningful relationship to his worshipers! That's idolatry at its worst! We don't think of ourselves as idolaters, of course, but are we in subtle ways disobeying God's commandment: "You shall have no other gods before Me"? (Exodus 20:3). We would never dream of bowing down to the picture of any mortal, however famous or powerful. But who is on the throne of our hearts? Are we giving a loved one first place in our lives? Is that person number one in our affections? Maybe we're worshiping money. Or perhaps our job is our top priority. Jesus said, "**You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve**" (Luke 4:8). Are we worshiping and serving only Him?

Spend some time alone with God to examine your heart. Make sure that you haven't become an idolater. —V C Grounds [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Unless we worship only God
Our lives cannot be truly free;
For we were made for Him alone—
All else is but idolatry.
—D. De Haan

An idol is anything that takes the place of God.

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

NET Then the devil left him, and angels came and began ministering to his needs.

GNT Τ ἄ φ η σ ι ν ἄ τ ν δι β ο λ ο ς , κα ῶ γ γ ε λ ο ι π ρ ο σ λ θ ο ν κα δι η κ ν ο υ ν ἄ τ .

NLT Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

KJV Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

ESV Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

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

- **Then the devil left Him:** Lu 4:13 Lk 22:53 Joh 14:30
- **behold, angels came and began to minister to Him** Mt 4:6 26:53 28:2-5 Mk 1:13 Lu 22:43 1Ti 3:16 Heb 1:6,14 Rev 5:11,12
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS WON THE BATTLE

Jesus won the battle over three fierce temptations from the devil who believers will surely never face, although they will be continually assaulted by his demonic hordes who are also crafty. Note that Jesus was victorious because He depended on the empowering of the Spirit of God and the powerful Word of God. These are the same "weapons" God has given every believer that we too might experience victory over the manifold and incessant temptations from the the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). It therefore behoves us to do two things each morning before we go out into the battle, for Peter says "fleshly lusts...wage war against the soul." (1 Pe 2:11+) - (1) **Be filled** with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18+) and (2) **Let** the Word of Christ **dwell** in us richly (Colossians 3:16+). If you falter on either of these points, then rest assured you are at the very least vulnerable and at the worst will surely experience defeat that day. As a commercial used to say "Don't leave home without it" (referring to a credit card)! Don't leave home without the Spirit and Word empowering your walk!

Then ([see note on tote above](#)) When? When Jesus said Be gone! (Mt 4:10)

The devil (see above for [diabolos](#)) **left Him** - Luke says "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time ([kairos](#))." (Luke 4:13+) We need to always be on the lookout for temptation, for the devil (and our flesh) is always looking for an "opportunity" to pounce (cf Ge 4:7). The word **left** is also translated "forgive" 47x in the NT which of course shows the importance of the [context](#) when one does word studies, lest he arrives at an inappropriate definition. The **devil** hardly "forgave" Jesus for not falling for his temptations! And as Luke adds, he would return when he thought would be the "right time." Of course, he would never find a "right time" for Jesus was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." (Heb 4:15+).

Devil (Latin diabolus) ([1228](#)) ([diabolos](#) from **diá** = through, between + **ballo** = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser, slanderer** (one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one not present), one given to malicious gossip or a **calumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions). See also study on Satan ([4567](#)) [satanas](#)

THOUGHT - Notice the derivation of **devil** is **dia** meaning between and **ballo** meaning throw giving us a word picture of one of his primary tactics/goals to come between. He constantly throws between seeking to divide whether it be between a husband and wife, a child and parent, a church, etc. Resist his divisive, condemnatory accusations firm in your faith. He did this successfully with Adam and Eve in a perfect setting (Ge 3:12, 16+ where "desire" in the Lxx = apostrophe - basic meaning = turning away from) and dear believing husband or wife, his minions seek to accomplish the same evil goal in your marriage! Look out! As Paul warns:

BE ANGRY ([present imperative](#)) AND yet **DO NOT SIN** ([present imperative with a negative](#)); **do not let** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) the sun go down on your anger, 27 and **do not give** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) the devil an opportunity ([kairos](#) - SAME WORD IN Luke 4:13+! DID YOU GO TO BED ANGRY AT YOUR SPOUSE LAST NIGHT? THEN LOOK OUT, YOU CAN BE SURE YOU ARE THE DEVIL'S RADAR! CONFESS, REPENT, BE RECONCILED QUICKLY!). 28 He who steals **must steal** no ([present imperative with a negative](#)) longer; but rather he **must labor** ([present imperative](#)), performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 (HERE IS WHAT THE DEVIL WILL TEMPT YOU TO DO) **Let** no unwholesome (ROTTEN) word **proceed** from your mouth ([present imperative with a negative](#) = stop doing this or don't begin and necessitates daily dependence on the [Holy Spirit to obey](#)), but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30+ (NASB IS NOT CORRECT HERE -- THERE SHOULD BE THE WORD "**AND**" FOR GREEK "KAI" WHICH DIRECTLY LINKS GRIEVING OF THE SPIRIT WITH GRIEVOUS SPEECH! LOOK OUT WHAT

YOU SAY DEAR SPOUSE LEST YOU BLUNT THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN YOUR LIFE AND SET YOURSELF UP FOR Eph 4:31+!) **Do not grieve** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) the Holy Spirit of God (A GRIEVED SPIRIT WILL BLUNT HIS POWER IN YOUR LIFE!), by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.(Eph 4:26-30+)

Left (863)([aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. Literally aphiemi means to send from one's self, and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. In secular Greek literature, **aphiemi** was a fundamental word used to indicate the sending away of an object or a person. In the present context it refers to Jesus commanding the devil to "Go" in Mt 4:10. The devil obeyed giving us clear evidence of Jesus' authority over the Creation, specifically the supernatural world.

Behold, angels came and began to minister to Him - Mark has "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." (Mk 1:13+). Notice the fascinating juxtaposition of wild beasts on one hand and ministering angels on the other. Have you ever heard wild animals in a deserted place at night? Wolves and coyotes howling? The sound of those wild animals piercing the darkness of the night is enough to stop the heart. In this sense Jesus would have experienced the test of fear. But perfect love casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18+). There was no fear in Jesus because in Him was perfect love of His Father (cf Mt 3:17+). **Ministering** is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing the angels ministering to Jesus over and over. He was fully Man and as such He was in a sense demonstrating for us the truth in Hebrews where the writer asks "Are they (ANGELS) not all **ministering** ([leitourgikos](#)) spirits, sent out to render service ([diakonia](#)) for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14+) Luke 4:13+ omits **the angels** and simply says "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time."

THOUGHT - Because of his sin, the first Adam lost the dominion over nature which God had given to him (Genesis 1:28). Contrast this with the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, to whom dominion is returned as evidenced by the wild beasts that surrounded Him in the wilderness—a sneak preview of the coming kingdom wherein the wolf shall lie down by the lamb ([Isaiah 11:6](#)). Where Adam failed in the garden, Jesus came through in the desert.

Behold(2400)([idou](#)) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **idou** in the [middle voice](#) means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The [aorist imperative](#) is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" In 2Cor 5:17 Paul uses **idou**, to get his reader's attention as he introduces the truth that the one who is now **in Christ** is a qualitatively new person. (see also notes above on "behold") **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

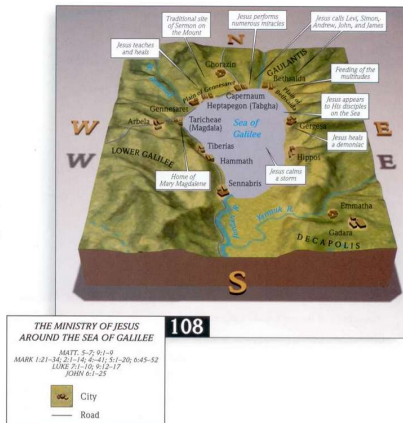
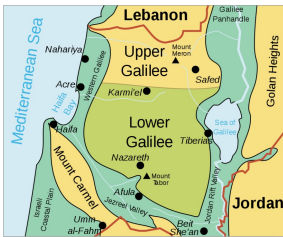
Began to minister (the vivid [imperfect tense](#) - you can picture the angels beginning to minister and ministering over and over)(1247)([diakoneo](#) - derivation uncertain - cp **diakonias** = in the dust laboring or running through the dust or possibly **diako** = to run on errands; see also study of related noun - [diakonia](#)) means to minister by way of rendering service in any form or to take care of by rendering humble service. How did they minister? The Bible does not say but by implication they brought Him food would be a reasonable consideration given His hunger.

William Hendriksen summarizes the lessons from Matthew 4:1-11

1. Resist the devil by appealing to Scripture, as Jesus did three times in succession.
 2. Rest assured that Jesus, as his people's Representative, has vicariously rendered the obedience which Adam, as mankind's representative, failed to render.
 3. Derive comfort from the fact that we have a Highpriest who, having himself been tempted, is able to help us in our temptations (Heb. 4:14–16).
 4. Note that by not giving heed to the devil, Jesus receives the very blessings which Satan had held out to him. However, it is in a far more glorious sense and with the Father's favor resting upon him that he receives the strength to endure physically, the ministry of the angels, and authority over the kingdoms of the world. (Baker NTC-Matthew)
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Matthew 4:12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee;

- when: Mk 1:14 6:17 Lu 3:20 Lk 4:14,31 Joh 4:43,54
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

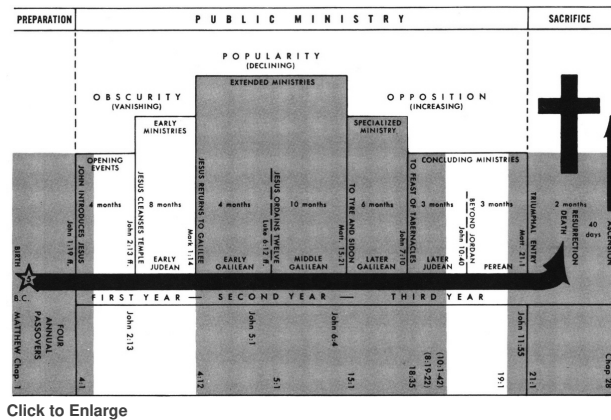


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THE GREAT GALILEAN MINISTRY

Now when - Now when is an important [expression of time](#). Why so? Because by comparing the events in the beginning of the Gospel of John it is apparent that all three Synoptic writers bypass the events that transpire during the first year of Jesus' ministry. In other words between Matthew 4:11 and Matthew 4:12 there is **TIME GAP** of from 12-14 months of Jesus' EARLY MINISTRY, a period which is omitted from THE Gospel of Matthew (see note below). You may read in some commentaries that this period was referred to as **THE YEAR OF OBSCURITY** (See study by S Lewis Johnson - [The Messiah's Year of Obscurity](#)). Stalker writes that if we did not have "John 1:19-3:36 we should know nothing of the "year of obscurity." Jesus may have been "obscure" (during this time in the Synoptic Gospels) but He was not inactive (in John's Gospel)! We see this period described by John from about John 1:19 through John 4:44, 45. It is also known as the **Early Judean ministry** for most of the events occurred in Judea the province in which Jerusalem is located ([See map](#)). Note however that some of the events in John 1:19-4:54 took place in Samaria and even Galilee. We see a similar **TIME GAP** in Luke's and Mark's Gospel between Jesus Baptism and Temptation and the beginning of His ministry in Galilee - see Mk 1:13+ and Mark 1:14+, Luke 4:13+ and Luke 4:14+

Irving Jensen comments on the timing - "Matthew's reporting skips most of the first year of Jesus' ministry. Only John reports the early Judean ministry of that year (John 1:19-4:42). The passage in this unit opens Jesus' Galilean ministry, beginning the second year of His mission." **Click Irving Jensen's diagram below to enlarge** - Note that the **SHADED** areas refer to Jesus' Ministry in the Gospel of Matthew. Note on the left side of the diagram the **UNSHADED** area which depicts a period of Jesus' ministry lasting about 12 months and described only in the Gospel of John.



Hendriksen observes that "A new section of Matthew's Gospel begins here (Matthew 4:12). Therefore, a chapter division at this point would have been very proper. Matthew does not indicate any chronological connection between this verse and the preceding material (the account of the baptism and the temptation). There may well have been a time interval of about a year, during which the events related in John 1:19–4:42 occurred. (Baker NTC - Matthew)

John MacArthur - John was a bridge between the Old Testament and the New, and that bridge had now almost completed its service. He himself would soon say of Jesus, "**He must increase, but I must decrease**" (John 3:30). During that first year of Jesus' ministry, John continued to preach, and their two ministries overlapped. As John's work began to phase out, Jesus' work began to build. Among the other highlights of that year were Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11), His cleansing of the Temple (John 2:12–25), His testimony to Nicodemus (John 3:1–21), the final public testimony of John the Baptist (John 3:22–36), and Jesus' ministry in Samaria at Sychar (John 4:1–42). In John 4:12–17, Matthew picks up the story of that first year where the apostle John leaves off, giving three features of Jesus' early ministry that show God's perfect work through His Son. It was at the right time; it was in the right place; and it was the right proclamation. (Matthew Commentary)

Matthew Henry adds that "John Baptist said about Christ, **He must increase, but I must decrease**; and so it proved. For, after John had baptized Christ, and borne his testimony to him, we hear little more of his ministry; he had done what he came to do, and thenceforward there is as much talk of Jesus as ever there had been of John. As the rising Sun advances, the morning star disappears.

John Phillips gives us a good summary of the "**Year of Obscurity**" - Much had happened since He had gone south to be baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist. The apostle John filled in the details in his Gospel. John told of the Lord's preliminary activities in Galilee: the calling of the disciples, the first miracle in Cana, and the first visit to Capernaum (John 1:35-2:12). John went on to tell of the Lord's early Judean ministry, His first Passover after His anointing, the cleansing of the temple, the talk with Nicodemus, the Lord's baptism of His disciples, and the loyalty of John the Baptist (Jn 2:13-3:36). And the apostle told of the Lord leaving Judea for Galilee, His short stop in Samaria, and His encounter with the woman at the well (Jn 4:1-42). ([Exploring the Gospel of Matthew](#))

David Guzik - John 3:22 and 4:1–2 indicate that the first ministry Jesus did with His disciples was a baptizing ministry at the Jordan. Sometime after that and after the arrest of John the Baptist, Jesus went to Galilee to begin His itinerant ministry in that region.. John's Gospel (John 1:19–2:12) records an early ministry in Galilee and in Judea before Jesus went to Galilee as mentioned here. This early Judean ministry included the earliest call of the disciples and the wedding at Cana (in Galilee), and the first cleansing of the temple followed by His interview with Nicodemus (in Judea). Then John tells us what happened when Jesus traveled north to Galilee through Samaria, and met a Samaritan woman at a well.

PARALLEL PASSAGES:		
JESUS' RETURNS TO GALILEE		
MINISTRY LASTS ABOUT 18 MONTHS		
Matthew 4:12-17	Mark 1:14-15	Luke 4:14-15

<p>12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.</p> <p>14 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 15 "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES—16 "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED." 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."</p>	<p>14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."</p>	<p>14 And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.</p>
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Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody - Although there were times which Scripture says Jesus used supernatural "intuition" (see Jn 2:24-25+), in the case of John, Jesus heard about his imprisonment just like any other man. This event gives us the reason Christ **withdrew to Galilee** and also marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry where John the Baptist left off. The end of herald's work for the King, now gave way to the work of the King Himself. Jesus did not compete with John, but in God's sovereignty, waited for John's ministry to come to its termination. Matthew 14:3-4 tells us the reason for John's incarceration "For when Herod ([Herod Antipas](#) - non-Jewish Idumean tetrarch of Galilee and Perea) had John **arrested**, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her. (he dared to say that Herod Antipas's marriage to his brother's wife was immoral)" (cf Lk 3:19-20+) And apparently John was in Herod's prison for almost a year before he was martyred.

THOUGHT - It is always dangerous to confront evil, and John's fearless condemnation of moral wickedness in high places led to his being beheaded. With similar bravery John Knox of Scotland stood ground against a corrupt monarchy. Standing before the repressive and corrupt Queen Mary, who had just rebuked him for resisting her authority, he said, "If princes exceed their bounds, madam, they may be resisted and even deposed." (MacArthur)

John MacArthur comments on the timing of Jesus' ministry with the news of John's incarceration - The Son of God always worked on His Father's divine timetable. He had, as it were, a divine clock ticking in His mind and heart that regulated everything He said and did. Paul affirms that "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4). Jesus spoke of His hour as not having yet come (John 7:30; 8:20) and then of its having arrived (Matt. 26:45; John 12:23; 17:1). (Matthew Commentary)

Spurgeon notes that "When one servant of God is laid aside, it is a call to the rest to be the more earnest. So after John the Baptist was put into prison, "Jesus came into Galilee." Sometimes a loss may be a gain, and if the loss of John was the means of bringing out Jesus, certainly both the Church and the world were the gainers."

Taken into custody (handed over) (3860)(**paradidomi** from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. It means first, to *give*, or hand over to another. So, to surrender a city or a person, often with the accompanying notion of treachery. Thus this is the verb Matthew used to describe "Judas Iscariot, the one who **betrayed** (paradidomi) Him." (Mt 10:4)

He withdrew into Galilee - So we learn the **WHEN** and **WHY** Jesus came into Galilee, both clearly in God's timetable. Matthew however does not describe **HOW** Jesus came into Galilee, but when we cross reference Luke, he says that "Jesus returned to Galilee in **the power of the Spirit**..and He **began teaching** in their synagogues and was praised by all." (Lk 4:14-15±) Once again we see Jesus giving us (teachers, preachers and all disciples) the **perfect pattern** by which we can perform the ministry He has assigned to each of us (and WE ALL have a ministry! see Eph 2:10±) If Jesus continually relied on the Spirit to empower His ministry (as indicated by Peter's summary of Jesus' 3 year ministry in Acts 10:38±), we too must continually rely on the Holy Spirit to successfully, supernaturally accomplish His ministry in and through us. There is simply no **PLAN B**. Sadly (I fear) many saints are

attempting to minister and live the "Christ life" in their own **natural power** and without continual reliance on the **supernatural power** of the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9b+)! The results of a ministry may "look good" to men, but they are as "filthy rags" before God (Isa 64:6), dead fruit unattached to the Vine (Jn 15:5) and will ultimately lead to frustration and "flame out," (with a puff of smoke in at judgment - cf 1 Cor 3:10-15+, cf 2 John 1:8+) because of failure to rely fully of the filling of the Spirit!

THOUGHT- The story is told of a man who was a great lover of the arts, who travelled widely and brought back to his home masterpieces of all types. His beautiful mansion, overlooking a lovely lake, was filled with these art treasures. One night he awakened, coughing and choking with heavy smoke. He crawled out of bed and over to an open window. As he looked out, both wings of the house roared into flames. Just then a fireman looked up at him leaning out of the window and cried: "Jump for your life, man; the roof is about to cave in!" Scarcely had he jumped into the firemen's net below when that part of the house in which he had just been crashed down behind him. He looked back to see the efforts of a lifetime and the expenditure of a fortune go up in smoke, a total loss. He was saved, but so as through the flames. This is the picture that Paul gives us in 1 Cor 3:10-15+, and it is a sad warning that many a Christian will SUFFER loss.

Withdrew (402) (**anachoreo** from **ana** = back again or emphatic + **choreo** = depart, make room) means to depart from a location. **Anachoreō** is used several times in Matthew to describe a strategic withdrawal in the face of danger (Mt 2:12–14, 22; 4:12; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21) but Jesus going to Galilee was not out of fear of Herod, for Jesus feared no man! **Anachoreo** describes the magi who after being warned by God "left for their own country by another way." (Mt 2:12). Joseph was also warned and "left for Egypt" (Mt 2:14) and then later "left for the regions of Galilee." (Mt 2:22) In Mt 12:15 Jesus withdrew, retreating to a secluded place (cf Jn 6:15). **Liddell-Scott** says **anachoreo** was used by Homer to retire or withdraw from battle, to retire from a place, to come back or revert to the rightful owner, to withdraw from the world. **Gilbrant** adds that "In classical Greek literature the word's semantic range includes "walk backwards," "revert to," or even "to strike" (i.e., "refuse to work"). In the Septuagint **anachōreō** especially depicts flight or withdrawal from a place or area (e.g., Ex 2:15; Nu 16:24; Josh 8:15)." **Anachoreo** - 14x - departed(1), gone(1), gone aside(1), leave(1), left(3), stepping aside(1), withdrew(6). Matt. 2:12; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:14; Matt. 2:22; Matt. 4:12; Matt. 9:24; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 15:21; Matt. 27:5; Mk. 3:7; Jn. 6:15; Acts 23:19; Acts 26:31. **Septuagint** uses = Exod. 2:15; Num. 16:24; Jos. 8:15; Jdg. 4:17; 1 Sam. 19:10; 1 Sam. 25:10; 2 Sam. 4:4; Ps. 114:5; Prov. 25:9; Jer. 4:29; Hos. 12:12

Constable writes "The word "withdrew" (NASB) or "returned" (NIV; Gr. **anachoreo**) is significant. Evidently Jesus wanted to get away from Israel's religious leaders in Jerusalem who opposed John (John 4:1–3; 5:1–16)."

John's Gospel adds that Jesus **withdrew to Galilee** because of the Pharisees not because of Herod and as with Herod He was not afraid of them but wanted to avoid a premature confrontation, the Jewish leaders being less likely to directly oppose Him since He was farther away from Jerusalem...

Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went away again into **Galilee**. (John 4:1-3)

HCSB Study Bible - As tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (Lk 3:1+), Herod did not have jurisdiction over Judea, the locale of Jesus' baptism and wilderness temptation. Thus Jesus fearlessly marched into the heart of Herod's territory when He heard of John's arrest. In Lk 13:31-33+, the Pharisees urged Jesus to leave Galilee in order to escape arrest by Herod. Jesus replied by calling Herod "that fox" and insisted that He would travel to Jerusalem only because it was necessary for Him to die there, not to flee Herod. Jesus caused kings to tremble (Mt 2:3; 14:1-2), but He Himself feared no man. ([CSB Study Bible](#))

Constable points out that "Jesus changes setting more than forty times in his travels throughout **Galilee** and into gentile territory."

John MacArthur on **Galilee** - The Roman region of Galilee was primarily to the west, but also extended north and south, of the Sea of Galilee—which was really a lake, sometimes called Tiberias (John 6:1) or Gennesaret (Luke 5:1). The region is some 60 miles long, north to south, and about 30 miles wide. The area around the lake was heavily populated (estimated by some to have had as many as two million people in Jesus' day) and had long been the breadbasket of central Palestine. The soil was extremely fertile, and the lake furnished great quantities of edible fish. The Jewish historian Josephus, who at one time was governor of Galilee, said of the area, "It is throughout rich in soil and pasture, producing every variety of tree, and inviting by its productivity even those who have the least inclination for agriculture. It is everywhere tilled and everywhere productive" (The Wars of the Jews 3. 3.2). The Jews who lived in Galilee were less sophisticated and traditional than those in Judea, especially those in the great metropolis of Jerusalem. Josephus observed that Galileans "were fond of innovations and by nature disposed to change, and they delighted in seditions." They even had a distinct accent in their speech (Matt. 26:73). The Galilean Jews' constant association with Gentiles

contributed greatly to their nontraditional character. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

[David Guzik](#) on [Galilee](#) - The region of Galilee was a fertile, progressive, highly populated region. According to figures from the Jewish historian Josephus, there were some 3 million people populating Galilee, an area smaller than the state of Connecticut. In an area of about 60 by 30 miles, Josephus says that there were some 204 villages with none having less than 15,000 people. That gives a population of more than 3 million for the region. Galilee was predominately Gentile in its population, but with a large number of Jewish cities and citizens. Also, Galilee was known as an incredibly fertile region. Many successful farms took advantage of the good soil.

ISBE excerpt on [Galilee](#) - The name seems originally to have referred to the territory of Naphtali. Joshua's victorious campaign in the north (Josh 11), and, subsequently, the triumph of the northern tribes under Deborah and Barak (Jdg 4 f) gave Israel supremacy; yet the tribe of Naphtali was not able to drive out all the former inhabitants of the land (Judges 1:33). In the time of Solomon the name applied to a much wider region, including the territory of Asher. In this land lay the cities given by Solomon to Hiram (1 Kings 9:11). Cabul here named must be identical with that of Joshua 19:27. The Asherites also failed to possess certain cities in their allotted portion, so that the heathen continued to dwell among them. To this state of things, probably, is due the name given in Isaiah 9:1 to this region, "**Galilee of the nations** (Gentiles)," i.e. a district occupied by a mixed population of Jews and heathen.While **Jewish in their religion, and in their patriotism too, as subsequent history showed, the population of Galilee was composed of strangely mingled elements** - Aramaean, Iturean, Phoenician and Greek. In the circumstances they could not be expected to prove such sticklers for high orthodoxy as the Judeans. Their mixed origin explains the differences in speech which distinguished them from their brethren in the South, who regarded Galilee and the Galileans with a certain proud contempt (John 1:46; John 7:52). But a fine type of manhood was developed among the peasant farmers of the two Galilees which, according to Josephus (*BJ*, III, iii, 2), were "always able to make a strong resistance on all occasions of war; for the Galileans are inured to war from their infancy ... nor hath the country ever been destitute of men of courage." Josephus, himself a Galilean, knew his countrymen well, and on them he mainly relied in the war with Rome. **In Galilee also the Messianic hope was cherished with the deepest intensity.** When the Messiah appeared, with His own Galilean upbringing, it was from the north-countrymen that He received the warmest welcome, and among them His appeal elicited the most gratifying response.

The Sea of [Galilee](#) is a large somewhat kidney shaped inland lake on the eastern side of the [region of Galilee](#) ([note](#)) which is also known by three other names in Scripture - (1) the [Sea of Chinnereth](#) (Hebrew name - Nu 34:11, Dt 3:17, 1 Ki 15:20), (2) the [Lake of Gennesaret](#) (Lk 5:1+), and (3) the [Sea of Tiberias](#) (Jn 6:1+). The sea of Galilee is no more than a lake ringed by mountains. On the western shore the mountains were fertile and covered with orchards, farms, and villages in Jesus' day. Across the lake rose the forbidding ramparts of the desert, which are part of a range that keeps pace with the Jordan all the way south to the Dead Sea and on to the gulf of Aqaba. To the north were the mountains of Lebanon, dominated by majestic Hermon, the summit of which is never free from snow. This freshwater lake is about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide, and lies some 690 feet below sea level making it the lowest body of freshwater on earth (Dead Sea is lower but is salty). The primary source of inflow for the **Sea of Galilee** is the [Jordan River](#), which arises from several sources near [Mt Hermon](#) (9,200 ft above sea level) and flows into the lake from the north. The enlarged Jordan River exits the southern end of the lake, and flows south into the [Dead Sea](#). It is well known for its clear pure water, abundant fish, and frequent storms.

John Phillips adds some "color" to the description of Galilee - In Jesus' day nine cities bordered the lake and a busy life went on all around it. Township ran into township about the feet of the green western hills, and along the shore there were docks and harbors. Farmers elbowed fishermen; dockworkers jostled coopers and shipwrights. Fishing and fish curing were big business, employing thousands of families and making Galilee famous in the Roman world long before the Gospels were written. An intricate system of aqueducts carried water to the farms and orchards. There were dyeworks at Magdala and pottery kilns and shipyards at Capernaum. Presiding over the whole scene was the regal city of Tiberias with its magnificent Herodian palace, where Greek sculptures shone in the sun and reminded the Jews that their land was in the hands of the Gentiles. Walking the roads of Galilee, a Jew would meet long caravans heading south to the fords of Jordan. He would meet Rome's marching cohorts encased in iron, and their officers richly arrayed in armor adorned with purple and gold. He would meet Phoenician merchants bringing the treasures of lands across the sea to the bazaars and markets of a hundred towns. He would see chariots of the wealthy, troops of gladiators, and bands of roving entertainers coming to play before the cosmopolitans of Caesarea, Tiberias, and

Decapolis. This was "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matthew 4:15), as the proud Judeans contemptuously termed it. This was where Jesus chose to live. ([Exploring the Gospel of Matthew](#))

Related Resources:

- [Galilee](#) in Multiple Dictionaries
- American Tract Society [Galilee](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Galilee](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Galilee](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Galilee](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Galilee](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Galilee](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Galilee](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Galilee](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Galilee \(2\)](#) [Galilee](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Galilee](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Galilee](#)

Lowell Johnson on Jesus waiting for John to step aside -

John 4:1-3 tells us why Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee. Why now? Why not fully begin his public ministry earlier? Jesus could not and would not give the appearance of competing with John. If Jesus had begun His ministry in full force before John's ministry had been completed, the loyalty of the people would have been divided. John was sent to prepare the way and the way was not fully prepared until John was removed from the scene. Believers are not rivals. They are joint servants of the Lord who work together in their respective ministries. They are not to compete against each other. And when the time comes, when a servant's ministry is completed, he is to willingly step aside for the new ministry. I know I will not always be your pastor, if Jesus carries His coming. Part of my responsibility as your pastor is to prepare you for the next man of God that will lead you.

In Joshua 1:2 God speaks to Joshua and says, "Moses my servant is dead, now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land I am giving them." In other words, "Moses is dead, but the work must go on. **When the workman dies, none of the work of God dies.**" Moses had been preparing Joshua to take over when he was gone.

- Take Moses from the people of God and He will give them Joshua.
- Elijah is caught up to heaven, so Elisha will do the work.
- Take John the Baptist away and the Voice of Jesus will be heard. It has been that way throughout the history of the Church.

Notice: "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came preaching in Galilee." John would remain in prison for a year before he was beheaded by Herod because he preached against his sin of taking his brother Philip's wife. "When John was put in prison and Jesus came forth preaching" serve as a date to fix the approximate time that Jesus began to minister in Galilee. ([Sermon](#))

Matthew 4:13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

- **leaving:** Lu 4:30,31
- **Capernaum:** Mt 11:23 17:24 Mk 1:21 Joh 4:46 6:17,24,59
- **Zebulun:** Jos 19:10-16
- **Naphtali:** Jos 19:32-39, Naphtali
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And leaving ([kataleipo](#) - leaving behind) **Nazareth** - Even though He **settled** in **Capernaum**, even at the triumphal entry, **Nazareth** would still be described as his hometown (Mt 21:11). Why did Jesus leave Nazareth? In a word it was because of their unbelief that led them to reject Jesus.

And He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.'" 24 And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown (THIS PROPHECY WOULD BE FULFILLED A FEW MINUTES LATER AS THEY SOUGHT TO KILL HIM!). 25 "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; 26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." 28 And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; 29 and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, **in order to throw Him down the cliff**. 30 But passing through their midst, He went His way. 31 **And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath** (Mk 1:21+ describes Jesus' teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum but this event is not in the Gospel of Matthew) (Luke 4:23-31+)

John Phillips makes an interesting comment that "Galilee was cut off from the theological bastion of Jerusalem. The district had never been wholly Jewish, for Solomon had given twenty Galilean cities to Hiram, king of Tyre. Constant invasions and settlement by Gentiles gave the area a mixed population; the western shore of the sea of Galilee was dotted with numerous towns and fishing villages occupied by large numbers of Gentile people. The more racially pure cities of Judea looked with scorn on Galilee and ridiculed the Galilean accent. By leaving Judea and settling in Galilee, Jesus made a significant gesture. It was an indication of His worldwide purpose, always present in His thinking even when He was ministering to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ([Exploring the Gospel of Matthew](#))

He came and settled - This city became Jesus "home base" over the months of His great Galilean ministry. In Matthew 9:1 Jesus refers to Capernaum as "**His own city**." John Trapp adds "'Here He dwelt in a house, either let or lent him; for of His own He had not where to rest His head (Mt 8:20). Here He paid tribute as an inhabitant; and here He resorted and retired when He was tired.'" (Trapp)

Settled (resided) ([2730](#))([katoikeo](#) from **kata** intensifies verb **oikeo** = dwell, reside in) means literally to settle down in a place so to take up residence or even permanent abode. To live or dwell in a place in an established or settled manner. The same verb **katoikeo** describes Joseph returning with his family from Egypt "and **lived** in a city called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Mt 2:23+)



Click to Enlarge for Labels

In Capernaum, which is by the sea - In the aerial view of the ruins of **Capernaum**, you can see that the city is situated directly **by the sea** of Galilee. **Capernaum** (Kfar = village + Nahum = "Nahum's Village) was a **city of Galilee** (Lk 4:31+), in the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas on the border of his brother Philip's domain. ([map of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee](#)) and was 680 feet below sea level (cf Nazareth at 1200 ft above sea level so Nazareth to Capernaum is "straight downhill" so to speak - which explains Luke's verb that they "**came down** to Capernaum" Lk 4:31+), located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee and began Jesus' "headquarters" during His Galilean ministry. **Capernaum** was the largest city on the lake (NICNT says up to 10,000 population) because it was located about two miles west of the Jordan River and was a crossroads of a major trade route between Damascus then along the Mediterranean coast and down to Egypt. Other places in Galilee and surrounding areas were easily accessible, either from the nearby road going from Damascus to the Mediterranean, or by boat on the lake itself. **Capernaum** was about twenty-five miles from Nazareth and ten miles from **Tiberias**, an important city not mentioned in the New Testament. The Romans had a famous spa at **Tiberias** and hot baths attracted many sick people. From Isaiah's day on, many foreigners had lived in Galilee; in the first century more than half the population was Gentile. It had a customs tax office because of its thriving fishing industry and a Roman garrison

because it was a potential area of crime because there was so much action, so much trade, so much travel traffic. Capernaum was the base of the fishermen Peter, Andrew, James, and John the fishermen as well as Matthew the tax collector (Mt 8:14+; Mt 9:9). **Collins Dictionary** note is interesting referring to **Capernaum** as "a ruined town in northern Israel (**Ed**: Compare Jesus' words to this city - Mt 11:23, 24), on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee." Capernaum is no longer a city and in Lk 10:15+ Jesus warned the city that because it had rejected the Light (Jesus actually lived there), "you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!" Dear reader, if you have not received Jesus as Savior, then you too will be like Capernaum for you have rejected the Light of the world (Jn 8:12), just as most of the inhabitants in that ancient city did! (read 2 Cor 6:2, Acts 16:31+, Ro 10:9-10+).

In the region of Zebulun and Naphtali - see map above.

Chamblin - Naphtali's territory lay along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and extended northward; Zebulun's lay west and southwest of Naphtali. 'The way of the sea' denotes land lying between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean. (Mentor Commentary - Matthew)

Related Resources:

- [map of the setting of Luke](#)
- [map of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee.](#)
- [map of ministry around the Sea of Galilee](#)
- [map of Jesus' Ministry in John](#)
- Other Maps related to Galilee - [_map](#), [map](#)
- [What is the significance of Galilee in the Bible?](#)
- [Who were the Galileans in the Bible?](#)

Matthew 4:14 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

- **This was to fulfill:** Mt 1:22 2:15,23 Mt 8:17 12:17-21 26:54,56 Lu 22:37 24:44 Joh 15:25 Joh 19:28,36,37
- **what was spoken through Isaiah:** Isa 9:1,2
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY FULFILLED

Beloved, every fulfilled prophecy ought to be another truth undergirding and strengthening our faith in our God as One Who is worthy of our complete trust and Who will fulfill everything prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled. We can count on His Word of Truth! This reminds me of the aged Joshua's last words (last words are always lasting words!) ""Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that **not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.**" (Joshua 23:14, cf Ro 10:17+)

This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet(cf similar statement in Mt 8:17+) - In Greek the first word is [hina](#), which is used to express result or purpose and means "in order that." Isaiah 8 contains a prophecy of coming judgment, but in Isaiah 9 God promised to deliver His people through a child who would be born, whose name would be "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). This reference the Messianic prophecy fulfilled by Jesus is not found in either Mark's or Luke's parallel passages. Jesus' move to Galilee was fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 9 and it signals a salvation not just to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. In short, Jesus is showing He is the Savior of all men, for as Mark 10:45 said "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (MANY JEWS AND MANY GENTILES)."

But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali (LOCATED IN GALILEE - [SEE LOCATION ON MAP](#)) with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, **Galilee** of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light ([John 1:4](#), [5](#), [9+](#), [Jn 8:12+](#), [Jn 12:46+](#)); Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. (Isaiah 9:1-2+)

John Walvoord commenting on Isaiah 9:1-7 writes - These prophecies, as interpreted in their normal literal sense, predicted fulfillment of the expectation of a kingdom on earth after the second coming of Christ in keeping with the premillennial interpretation

of Scripture. There was nothing in this passage that corresponded to the present reign of Christ on earth or the present position of Christ in heaven, the interpretation of amillenarians. In this passage, as in many passages in the Old Testament, the first and second coming of Christ were not distinguished and the Child who was born (Isa 9:6) in Bethlehem in His first coming will be the same Person described as the Everlasting King who will reign forever (Isa 9:7). The theme of the future kingdom of Christ on earth was a familiar subject of the prophecies of Isaiah (Isaiah 11:4; Isa 16:5; Isa 28:5-6, 17; Isa 32:16; Isa 33:5; Isa 42:1, 3-4; Isa 51:5). (Every Prophecy of the Bible)

Matthew 4:15 "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES--

- **Galilee:** Jos 20:7 21:32 1Ki 9:11 2Ki 15:29
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ZEBULUN AND NAPHTALI

THE LAND OF ZEBULUN - Zebulun was the sixth son of Jacob and Leah; the name means "dwelling" (cf. Gen. 30:20). Part of what would later be called Galilee was apportioned to the tribe of Zebulun after the conquest of the promised land (cf. Josh. 19:10; 19:16, 27; 21:34; Jdgs 1:30). What divine irony, the region of Israel's first national defeat in 722 BC by the Assyrians, would now be the region of the presentation of her Great Deliverer!

AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI - Naphtali was the second son of Bilhah, Rachel's maid; the name means "wrestling" (cf. Ge. 30:8; 35:25). The tribe of **Naphtali** also settled in the north (cf. Dt. 33:23; 34:2; Josh. 19:32; 20:7).

BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN - **Blomberg** says that "The phrases "way to the sea" and "along the Jordan" (literally, beyond the Jordan) probably reflect the perspective of foreigners from the northeast heading through Israel to the Mediterranean (as with the Assyrians' invasion that Isaiah consistently predicted)" (NAC) **Utley** writes **beyond the Jordan** is an "idiom usually referred to the east side of the Jordan (the transjordan) but here it referred to the west (the promised land)."

GALILEE OF THE GENTILES - In Hebrew *Galil ha goyim*. (Galil means "circle"). It was a "circuit" or "district of the Gentiles," a district filled with Gentiles! And so this phrase comes from the fact that this region was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles with a majority being Gentiles, which of course was looked down upon by the Jews of Judea. **Gentiles** resided especially in the eastern part of the province and to the east of the Jordan, in the area called the Decapolis. **Utley** makes an interesting observation that "The land of Zebulun and Naphtali were the first to fall to the Assyrian invaders and the first to hear the good news." **R T France** adds that "**Galilee of the Gentiles** was now an even more appropriate description than in Isaiah's day, as successive movements of population had given it a predominately Gentile population until a deliberate Judaizing policy was adopted by the Hasmonaean rulers, resulting in a thoroughly mixed population."

Allen Ross - God humbled the land of **Zebulun** and the land of **Naphtali**, but in the future he will honor them (Isaiah's reference jumps 700 years to the coming of Jesus). The humbling refers to the punishment for sin--this gloom and darkness; the honoring refers to the dawning of a great light in their region, rather than in the holy city of Jerusalem. The light would be far more effective shining in the darkness and despair of Galilee, than on the self-righteous leaders of the land in Jerusalem. And so it would begin in **Galilee of the Gentiles**. Judgment from the Assyrians had first begun there; the preaching of the Messiah would therefore begin there, calling the people to repent. Isaiah 9, of course, goes on to explain who this great light is--it is the Son who is given, the child who is born, the one whose name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7+). It is the Messiah, the Great Light to the Nations. And Matthew says this passage from Isaiah began to be fulfilled in the public ministry of Jesus the Messiah in and around Capernaum, at the heart of the Galilean region. By light Isaiah meant salvation in the coming of the Messiah, including the proclamation of that salvation. When Jesus preached, a light began to shine in the darkness to uncover their sin (repent) and show them the way (the kingdom is at hand). And many responded to the light, and believed in him, including most of his disciples. He is the great light that shines in the darkness and the gloom, offering salvation to the sinner who will repent. (Devotional)

John Phillips - **Galilee of the Gentiles** was soon ablaze with the light of another world, with the shekinah glory of God now dwelling among them in the person of Jesus Christ. The Lord's move to Capernaum placed Him right in the middle of all the bustle of a world where Hebrew and heathen met and mingled as nowhere else in the promised land. ([Exploring the Gospel of Matthew](#))

"Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan."—Isaiah 9:1

In 1865, the East End of London was a very depressed area. In Whitechapel, the center of this churchless slum, William Booth and his wife Catherine started a mission. Their tent meetings used lively music and fiery preaching to reach the toughest characters of that neighborhood. They preached in the taverns, the jails, and in the open air.

The mission in Whitechapel was the first of what was to become the many stations for the Salvation Army. By 1879 there were eighty-one stations with 127 full-time evangelists holding seventy-five thousand services a year. By 1884 there were over four thousand workers in the Army. By 1891 there were ten thousand officers ministering in twenty-six countries.

When William Booth died his funeral was held in West London. Queen Victoria slipped in to attend the ceremony. Sitting next to her was a woman who quietly confessed to the queen that she had been involved in a life of prostitution. "What brought you here to the service?" asked the queen.

"Well," the woman replied, "he cared for the likes of us."

When Christ started His earthly ministry He chose the rough region of Galilee and for His disciples he chose, tough fishermen. Christ went to the lost to save them. If you see the Salvation Army this Christmas season with their handbells and red kettles, remember: "Christ cared for the likes of us." Be willing to bring the light of Jesus Christ where it may have never shined before. "I am convinced the world is more eager to hear our message than we are to deliver it."—Howard Hendricks (From Generation to Generation - Peter Kennedy)

Matthew 4:16 "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."

- **in darkness:** Ps 107:10-14 Isa 42:6,7 Isa 60:1-3 Mic 7:8 Lu 1:78,79 Lk 2:32
- **shadow:** Job 3:5 10:22 34:22 Ps 44:19 Jer 13:16 Am 5:8
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS IS THE GREAT LIGHT

THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS - Where is light generally seen the most obviously? In the **darkness!** The Galileans were **sitting in darkness**, especially spiritual darkness. The center of the Jewish religion was in Jerusalem, but sadly their "religious light" was a sham, a counterfeit, powerless to save, and so they too were in darkness. The difference was the Jews in Jerusalem thought they were in the "light" whereas the Gentiles in Galilee knew they were in the darkness.

THOUGHT - I am an infectious disease expert and have seen the powerful effect of a vaccination (for example years ago, the polio vaccine), the effect being to keep one from contracting the real disease. This same dynamic unfortunately works in spiritual matters, for the Jews of Jerusalem had "vaccination" which made it difficult for them to receive the "real disease" (in a good sense of course), the purity of the Gospel. The same is true of many religions today that practice rituals and extra-Biblical routines and beliefs, which in effect serve to make them "immune" to the true Gospel. The most difficult people for me to share the Gospel with are those who are in this category of *religious* but without a *relationship* with Christ, for they think their religion will guarantee a place in Heaven but they are tragically deceived and I fear there are millions and millions of them in the United States! Intellectual knowledge without heart transformation saves no one.

John writes about this spiritual darkness - "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the **darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth." (1 John 1:6+). Then John gives the antidote for spiritual darkness "but if we walk in the **Light** as He Himself is in the **Light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7+).

John describes the natural inclination of all men and women in Adam - "This is the judgment, that the **Light** has come into the world, and men loved the **darkness** rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the **Light**, and does not come to the **Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20+)

SAW A GREAT LIGHT - NET = "Have seen a great light." Notice the use of the past tense because the prophecy was so certain to come to pass. The "**Great Light**" is the Great Savior Jesus Who would enlighten those sitting in spiritual darkness. John described Jesus as the **Light** writing "In Him was life, and the life was the **Light** of men. The **Light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness

did not comprehend it." (Jn 1:4-5+) adds that "There was the true **Light** which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." (Jn 1:9+). Jesus described Himself as the light - "Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am **the Light of the world**; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the **Light of life**." (Jn 8:12) "I have come as **Light** into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.(Jn 12:46) This **Light** presages the universal message of hope, because from this same region of "**Galilee of the Gentiles**" Jesus sends the disciples to carry out the commission to make disciples of all the nations (Gentiles) (Mt 28:16, 18-19+).

This description of light and darkness reminds me of Jesus' words to Paul (at the inception of his call) regarding his ministry to the Gentiles in which He declares

"But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the **Gentiles**, to whom I am sending you, 18 **to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:16-18+, cf Col 1:13+).

Isaiah prophetically described Jesus "As a **light to the nations** (GENTILES), to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in **darkness** from the prison." (Isaiah 42:6-7)

Simeon "came in the Spirit into the temple" (Lk 2:28+) and enabled by the Spirit He prophetically described Jesus Who would be "A **LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES**, and the glory of Your people Israel." (Lk 2:32+) So even here we see Jesus prophesied as the Savior of all men, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Darkness (4653)(**skotia** from **skotos** = darkness) means literal darkness in some NT uses (Jn 6:17, 20:1), but more often (14/16x) is used figuratively to refer to spiritual darkness. In every NT figurative use, **darkness** is contrasted with **light** in all but one passage (1Jn 2:11). Ponder this thought - **Darkness** has no existence by itself, being definable simply as an absence of light. In the spiritual sense **darkness** describes both the state and works of a person. It symbolizes evil and sin, everything that life should not be and everything that a person should not do! Woe!

Gentiles (nations) (1484)(**ethnos** gives us our word "ethnic") in general refers to a multitude (especially persons) associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions and summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural which refers to the heathen nations), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular). In a negative sense **ethnos** conveys the meaning of godless (generally idol worshipping) pagans, foreign nations not worshipping the true God.

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery has a helpful summary of **darkness** in Scripture - **Darkness** has no existence by itself, being definable simply as an absence of light. It is a physical and spiritual reality as well as an apt symbol for some of the profoundest human experiences. With approximately two hundred references, darkness is a major actor in the biblical drama... Darkness stands out from virtually all other literary images, which are finally ambivalent (having both good and bad manifestations), because it is uniformly negative in its import... **Throughout the Bible, darkness is an implied contrast to light, regardless of whether the darkness is physical or symbolic.** In fact, sixty verses present light and darkness as a contrasting pair, and being brought out of darkness into light is a major biblical image of redemption... If light symbolizes understanding, darkness represents ignorance (Ps 82:5), folly (Eccles 2:13-14), a silencing of prophetic revelation (Mic 3:6), the state of the human mind unilluminated by God's revelation (2Pet 1:19), falsehood (1 Jn 1:6) and the loss of walking in God's truth "because the darkness has brought on blindness" (1 Jn 2:11NRSV). If light symbolizes good, darkness is the corresponding image for evil people "who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness" (Pr 2:13NRSV; cf. Pr 4:19). In Jesus' mysterious picture of the eye as "the lamp of the body," physical blindness becomes a metaphor for the lost state (Mt 6:22-23; Lk 11:34-36). (Ryken, Leland; et al, Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, InterVarsity Press)

Related Resources:

- Darkness in [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- Darkness in [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH - What a dramatic figure of speech. It is as if these souls though alive were in the **shadow of death**, doomed to die eternally without belief in the Messiah.

Shadow (4639)(**skia**) refers to a pale shadow, as contrasted with a sharp, distinct one. Luke uses skia in a similar passage writing "Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit

us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN **DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW** (skia) OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace." (Lk 1:78-79+) A shadow is literally a region of darkness where light is blocked. In this context the region was spiritually dark because it had not had exposure to the Gospel, but that was now changing because of the Light of the World in this region.

UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED - **Light dawned** means a light arose, which is the same verb used by in the Septuagint of Malachi 4:2+ "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness **will rise** (Lxx = *anatello*) with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall." While not everyone agrees, this prophecy in Malachi seems (to me) to clearly refer to the Sun (Son) of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Malachi's context, it refers most likely to His second coming when He heals the nation (1/3 of Israel - Zech 13:8-9+) and restores the land to Israel. *Anatello* is also used in another messianic prophecy in Isaiah 60:1 "Arise, shine; for your **light** has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you." Peter's figurative use is somewhat similar to the figurative use here in Matthew - "So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day **dawns** and the morning star arises in your hearts." (2 Pe 1:19+). It is also notable that this same verb **anatello** is used in a Messianic prophecy in the book of Numbers predicting the future coming of Israel's King who would have total dominion - "I ([BALAAM'S FOURTH ORACLE](#)) see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; **A Star shall come forth** ([Septuagint](#) = *anatello*) from Jacob (THE MESSIAH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST), a scepter (PICTURE OF HIS POWER) shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth." (Nu 24:17) The fulfillment of Balaam's prophecy awaits Messiah's Second Coming when the One **from Jacob**, the Messiah, will be Victor over all His foes (see Ps 2:9-12; Ps 110:1-2; Rev. 19:11-21+, Daniel 2:34, 35+, Daniel 2:44, 45+).

Dawned ([393](#)) (*anatello* from *aná* = up + *téllō* = set out for a goal) means to cause to arise, spring up, be up and was used of the rising of a heavenly body, sun, star, of a cloud, of the springing up of plants. To descend from as the Lord Jesus rose up from the tribe of Judah. Friberg - with an indication of upward movement; (1) transitively cause to spring up or rise (Mt 5.45); (2) intransitively; (a) literally, of the sun rise, come up (Mk 4.6); of a cloud appear (Lk 12.54); (b) figuratively, of one's family origin be descended, arise from (Heb 7.14); (c) metaphorically, of increased understanding of spiritual things made possible through Christ's return, likened to the appearance of the morning star rise, shine forth (2Pt 1.19).

Anatello in the NT - arises(1), causes...to rise(1), dawned(1), descended(1), risen(3), rises(1), rising(1). = Mt 4:16, 5:45 Mk 16:2 Lk 12:54 Heb 7:14 Jas 1:11, 2Pe1:19. **Anatello** in the Septuagint - Gen. 2:5; Gen. 3:18; Gen. 19:25; Gen. 32:31; Exod. 22:3; Lev. 13:37; Lev. 14:43; Num. 24:17; Deut. 29:23; Jdg. 9:33; Jdg. 14:18; Jdg. 16:22; 2 Sam. 10:5; 2 Sam. 23:4; 2 Ki. 3:22; 2 Ki. 19:29; 1 Chr. 19:5; 2 Chr. 26:19; Est. 1:1; Job 3:9; Job 9:7; Job 11:17; Ps. 65:10; Ps. 72:7; Ps. 85:11; Ps. 92:7; Ps. 97:11; Ps. 104:22; Prov. 11:28; Eccl. 1:5; Eccl. 1:6; Isa. 13:10; Isa. 14:12; Isa. 42:9; Isa. 43:19; Isa. 44:4; Isa. 44:26; Isa. 45:8; Isa. 58:8; Isa. 58:10; Isa. 58:11; Isa. 60:1; Isa. 61:11; Isa. 66:14; Ezek. 16:7; Ezek. 17:6; Ezek. 29:21; Hos. 10:4; Jon. 4:8; Nah. 3:17; Hab. 2:3; Zech. 6:12; Mal. 4:2

The Right Light - Eating in the dark is no fun. Low light in a restaurant is one thing; eating in a room with no light at all is another. The same is true in our walk with God. Unless we take advantage of the light He gives, we will miss seeing what He is doing for us.

We have an Old Testament picture of this—the tabernacle. As the priest entered a room called the Holy Place, he could see only by the light of a golden lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40). Like everything else in the room, it had been carefully fashioned according to the pattern God gave Moses (v.40).

The lampstand is a picture of spiritual light. The gold speaks of value. The oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The six branches coming out from the center shaft portray unity in plurality. The symbol of the almond blossom is linked to God's anointed priesthood (Numbers 17:1-8). When all this is combined with a New Testament reference that uses a golden lampstand to represent the church (Revelation 1:20), we have the complete picture. God gives light through the Spirit, who works through His congregation of anointed people (1Peter 2:9).

Yes, the Holy Spirit provides us with the light we need. Are we daily spending time in prayer and reading God's Word so that we can take advantage of it?— by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Holy Ghost, with light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away,
Turn my darkness into day.
—Reed

**The light of God's holiness
convicts the sinner
and guides the saint.**

Secrets - "God is light," the apostle reminded us, "and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). But if that is true, how can a holy God have anything to do with the likes of us?

Fyodor Dostoevsky, in *Notes from the Underground*, writes what we all know:

There are certain things in a man's past which he does not divulge to everybody but, perhaps, only to friends. Again, there are certain things he will not divulge even to his friends; he will divulge them perhaps only to himself, and that too as a secret. But, finally there are things which he is afraid to divulge even to himself, and every decent man has quite an accumulation of such things in his mind.

If we have so many deep dark secrets, how can we hope to have fellowship with God? An illustration from Martin Luther's life shows us. Luther had a dream in which he stood before God. Satan was there to accuse Luther, and when the books were opened the accuser pointed to sin after sin in his life. Luther despaired. Then he remembered the cross and, turning to the devil, he quoted 1 John 1:7, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Because of Jesus, sinners can be forgiven and stand before a holy God. How do you stand today?— by Haddon W. Robinson (*Our Daily Bread*, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Thinking It Over

"God is light" (1 Jn. 1:5). What does that mean?

What creates distance between us and God? (1 Jn. 1:6,8,10).

What is the solution to the problem? (1 Jn. 1:9).

**No sin is so secret
that it is beyond God's forgiveness.**

An Illustration of Spiritual Darkness - A new preacher came to town and was meeting the people.

He asked a stranger, "Are you a Christian?"

"No," the man responded. "Name is Jones. The Christians live a block over."

"No, you don't understand," the preacher continued. "I mean, are you lost?"

"Lost?" the man queried. "No, of course I'm not lost. I've lived here all my life."

"You still don't understand," the preacher continued. "I mean, are you ready for judgment day?"

"When will it be?" the local resident questioned. "It could be today, it could be tomorrow," responded the preacher.

"Well," the man answered, "don't tell my wife. She'll want to go both days!" (Brian Harbour)

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, **Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

- **From that time** Mk 1:14
- **Repent**: Mt 3:2 9:13 10:7 Mk 1:15 Lu 5:32 9:2 10:11-14 15:7,10 24:47 Ac 2:38 3:19 11:18 17:30 20:21 26:20 2Ti 2:25,26 Heb 6:1
- **kingdom of heaven**: Mt 11:12 13:9,11,24,47 25:1
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**REPENT
ABOUT FACE!**

The command "[About Face](#)" describes the act of pivoting 180 degrees, especially in a military formation. Another English definition says it is "a reversal of direction, of attitude, behavior, or point of view." This is a good picture of repentance that Jesus commands. Jesus continues the call to repentance made by John in Mark 1:4+.

From that time - From the time He left **Nazareth...and settled in Capernaum** (Mt 4:13), which became His base of operations. This is an important time phrase and should prompt the question what happens from that time? In short, this [expression of time](#) marks an important turning point and points something new when compared to the preceding passages.

Jesus began to preach and say - The verb **began** ([archo](#)) literally means to be first and in the [middle voice](#) means to begin or start and thus calls attention to the "special" status or importance of what follows (the [primacy of preaching](#)!) **Preach** is in the [present tense](#) which indicates Jesus was beginning a continuous action, specifically beginning the proclaiming of the Good News of the Kingdom (While we will not all be formal preachers, we should still be proclaimers of the Good News like our Master Teacher for we are enabled by the same Spirit Who enabled Him! cf Mt 4:1+, Lk 4:14+, 1 Pe 2:21+. See [Walking Like Jesus Walked](#)) Notice that the focus is on Jesus preaching the Word, not on performing wonders (miraculous healings, etc). Men are saved only by the Word, not by seeing miraculous works. John 12:37 says "But though He had performed so **many signs** before them, yet **they were not believing in Him**." There is however one miracle Jesus performed that did effect genuine belief. John records "So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they **believed the Scripture** and the word which Jesus had spoken." (Jn 2:22+) Of course that miracle is one every true believer believes, having seen it with eyes of faith, not sight (in contrast to the **many signs** Jesus performed while on earth).

Preach (proclaim, herald) ([2784](#))([kerusso](#) from [kerux/kerux](#) = a herald - one who acts in place of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; [kerugma](#) = thing preached) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **our gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+)! [Present tense](#) pictures the carrying out of His ministry.

Certain qualities were required of **heralds**. They must have powerful voices, so voice auditions were often held. Also they had to be capable of calming down an unruly mob, in order to faithfully communicate the command. An honest disposition was also required, as a protection against the exaggeration of a royal decree. Furthermore, **they could make no additions or subtractions from the received message**. Later these heralds were also used to declare the message of a Greek deity or a religious oracle. The Imperial Herald would enter a town in behalf of the Emperor, and make a public proclamation of the message which his Sovereign ordered him to give, doing so with such formality, gravity, and authority as to emphasize that the message must be heeded! (Think about this in regard to the Gospel of God instead of the decree of a man! cf 1Th 2:13+). He gave the people exactly what the Emperor bade him give, nothing more, nothing less. He did not dare add to the message or take away from it.

The verb [kerusso](#) used to describe the official activity of a [herald](#) ([kerux](#)) in the ancient world, who brought a message direct from the king. Jesus was sent forth to herald the good news of salvation from God (Jn 3:16+). The irony is that the "Herald" of the Good News was in fact the personification of the Gospel! The **herald** also described an emissary when two armies were opposed to each other, and Jesus message was that He was the ONLY go-between (the "one Mediator" 1 Ti 2:5+) to offer conditions of peace to men who were at war with God (Ro 5:10+). **Kerux** was also used of a merchant shouting out his wares and inviting people to come and buy. Jesus clearly saw the gospel as something to be VERBALLY communicated. While it is absolutely essential that our walk backs up our talk, it is equally essential that our talk explains our walk. Otherwise, how will people come to know the real reason for the difference in our lifestyle? (cf 1Pe 3:15+, Col 4:5-6+) Our conduct should catch their eye, so that our confession might capture their heart. Conversely, when our talk outpaces our walk, our witness "limps."

*A godly life adorns the gospel;
a faithful tongue announces it.*

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand - Mark has "**repent and believe in the gospel**." (Mk 1:15+). In both Gospels **repent** is in the [present imperative](#), a command calling for a lifestyle of repentance, a command that while requiring a decision of one's will, ultimately can only be obeyed [as one is enabled by Holy Spirit to obey](#) (Yes, I realize [God's sovereignty and free will](#) is a mystery, one we will not fully understand in this life, but hopefully in the next!) In Europe before the fall of the [Iron Curtain](#), those who became believers at great risk were called "Repenters." They were not playing games praying a prayer to ask Jesus into their heart (with not call to repentance). Their lives changed for they have a new power, Christ in them and His Holy Spirit empowering them.

Jesus' forerunner proclaimed the same message - "**Repent** ([present imperative](#)), for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand ([eggizo](#) in [perfect tense](#))." (Mt 3:2+)

Repent (3340) ([metanoeo](#) from **meta** = with, among + **noeo** = to think, exercise the mind <> from **nous** = mind; cf [metanoia](#)) means to have another mind. **Friberg** says it literally means to "perceive afterward, with the implication of being too late to avoid consequences." (Analytical Lexicon). **Metanoeo** means to change one's mind (one's heart) in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7,10+ = "one sinner who **repents**", cf illustration of repentance = 1 Th 1:9, 10+). While **repentance** involves an intellectual decision, it is more than that because the intellectual decision must produce a change in one's behavior.

Peter makes it clear that repentance is an integral aspect of salvation writing "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to **repentance**." (2 Peter 3:9+) Come to what? Salvation. In context of course God's desire is that none would perish but all come to salvation (cf 1 Ti 2:4). But here Peter substitutes "**repentance**." Peter's point is DO NOT leave repentance out of your message or it will not be a message of salvation!

Paul declared "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God** and **faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**" (Acts 20:20-21+)

Repentance is aptly depicted by the military command "[About, face!](#)" The repentant person in effect turns around 180 degrees and goes the other direction. And keep in mind that the spiritual dynamics of true repentance are enabled by the Holy Spirit - repentance is a GIFT FROM GOD! (cf Acts 5:31+, Acts 11:18+). In Romans Paul writes "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness ([chrestos](#)) of God ([present tense](#) - continually) leads you to repentance?" (Ro 2:4+) What is it that "leads you to repentance?" God's **kindness!** In his last letter Paul writes we as teachers should "with gentleness (be) correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps **God may grant them repentance** leading to the knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." (2 Ti 2:25-26+) In other words **repentance is a gift from our gracious God** and not merely a human effort, although it does ultimately call for the repentant individual to make a [volitional](#) choice. Repentance involves the mysterious interaction of **God's sovereignty and man's responsibility**. Further, this change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (2 Cor 7:8, 9, 10, 11); but sorrow for sin, though it may cause repentance, is not repentance. Darrell Bock writes "the point is that repentance involves a reorientation of perspective, a fresh point of view. When dealing with God's plan, it means to see that plan in a new way and to orient oneself to it. Luke demonstrates the fruit of repentance expresses itself concretely (Lk 3:10-14+). Repentance expresses itself in life, especially in how one treats others." (**Gulp!**) There can be no genuine conversion without genuine repentance.

"This word (**repent**) was the message of the Baptist, of Jesus, of Peter, of Paul, this radical change of attitude and life." (Robertson)

William Barclay - There is the word **repent**. Now repentance is not so easy as sometimes we think. The Greek word *metanoeo* literally means to change one's mind. We are very apt to confuse two things--sorrow for the consequences of sin and sorrow for sin. Many a man is desperately sorry because of the mess that sin has got him into, but he very well knows that, if he could be reasonably sure that he could escape the consequences, he would do the same thing again. It is not the sin that he hates; it is its consequences. Real repentance means that a man has come, not only to be sorry for the consequences of his sin, but to hate sin itself. Long ago that wise old writer, Montaigne, wrote in his autobiography, "Children should be taught to hate vice for its own texture, so that they will not only avoid it in action, but abominate it in their hearts--that the very thought of it may disgust them whatever form it takes." Repentance means that the man who was in love with sin comes to hate sin because of its exceeding sinfulness. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Spurgeon - It is clear, from this passage, that our Lord exhorted men to repent, and to believe the gospel. There are some, who profess to be his followers, who will not suffer us to do this. We may teach men, and warn them, they say, but we must not exhort them to repent and believe. Well, as the contention of these people is not in accordance with the Scriptures, we are content to follow the Scriptures, and to do as Jesus did, so we shall say to sinners, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Kingdom of Heaven -

In the first Beatitude Jesus declares "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**." (Mt 5:3)

Guzik notes that "**poverty of spirit**" is not a man's confession that he is by nature insignificant, or personally without value, for that would be untrue. Instead, it is a confession that he is sinful and rebellious and utterly without moral virtues adequate to commend him to God. The **poor in spirit** recognize that they have no spiritual "assets."

They know they are spiritually bankrupt. With the word **poor**, Jesus uses the more severe term for poverty. It indicates someone who must beg for whatever they have or get. Poverty of spirit cannot be artificially induced by self-hatred; **it is brought about by the Holy Spirit and our response to His working in our hearts.** (see John 16:8-11, Acts 2:37+, Acts 16:29,30+)

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven: Those who are poor in spirit, so poor they must beg, are rewarded. They receive the kingdom of heaven, and poverty of spirit is an absolute prerequisite for receiving the kingdom of heaven, because as long as we harbor illusions about our own spiritual resources we will never receive from God what we absolutely need to be saved. The call to be poor in spirit is placed first for a reason, because it puts the following commands into perspective. They cannot be fulfilled by one's own strength, but only by a beggar's reliance on God's power ([Guzik's Notes on Matthew 5](#))

Just and holy is Thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
Vile and full of sin I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace.
(Play [Jesus, Lover of My Soul](#))

Related Resources:

- [What is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven?](#)

Matthew 4:18 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

- **walking:** Mt 1:16-18 Lu 5:2
- **sea:** Mt 15:29 Nu 34:11 De 3:17 = Chinnereth, Lu 5:1 = lake of Gennesaret, John 6:1 Jn 21:1 = Sea of Tiberias
- **two:** Mt 10:2 Lu 6:14 Joh 1:40-42 6:8
- **for they were fishermen** Ex 3:1,10 Judges 6:11,12 1Ki 19:19-21 Ps 78:70-72 Am 7:14,15 1Co 1:27-29
- [Matthew 4:18-22 By the Sea of Galilee - the Final Call of the First Disciples, and the Miraculous Draught of Fishes](#)- Alfred Edersheim
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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Parallel passages Mt 4:18-22 - Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11

Mark 1:16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother - One might get the impression this was the first time they had met Jesus, but in fact they had met Him some time earlier near where John the Baptist was baptizing (Bethany on east side of Jordan - not the Bethany near Jerusalem), John recording

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and *said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" 39 He *said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was **Andrew**, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He found first his own brother **Simon** and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). (John 1:35-42+).

COMMENT - Not only did they follow Jesus in John's account but they went to a wedding in Cana with Him

and after witnessing His creative miracle of water to wine which demonstrated His glory, they believed in His Name (Jn 2:11+)

Casting a net into the sea - Casting is [ballo](#) (cf second verb amphiballos) in the [present tense](#) indicating this was their continual activity. You can picture Simon and Andrew diligently at work.

NET Note on fishing - The kind of fishing envisioned was net - not line - fishing (cf. v. 18; cf. also BDAG 55 s.v. amphiblestron) which involved a circular net that had heavy weights around its perimeter. The occupation of fisherman was labor-intensive. The imagery of using a lure and a line (and waiting for the fish to strike) is thus foreign to this text. Rather, the imagery of a fisherman involved much strain, long hours, and often little results. Jesus' point may have been one or more of the following: the strenuousness of evangelism, the work ethic that it required, persistence and dedication to the task (often in spite of minimal results), the infinite value of the new "catch" (viz., people), and perhaps an eschatological theme of snatching people from judgment (cf. W. L. Lane, Mark [NICNT], 67). If this last motif is in view, then catching people is the opposite of catching fish: The fish would be caught, killed, cooked, and eaten; people would be caught so as to remove them from eternal destruction and to give them new life.

Net (only NT use) ([293](#)) (**amphiblestron** from **amphiballos** from **amphi** = around + **ballos** = throw) which describes a net that was cast from over the fisherman's shoulder standing either on the shore or in a boat. As he spotted a school of fish he would cast the net, the throw causing the net to spread out in a circle on the water, sinking rapidly because of weights on the edges and trapping whatever was below. The net would be drawn up by a cord on the center of the net and draw in the catch in the form of a sack that could then be examined.

For they were fishermen - **For** (gar) is a term of explanation, in this case simply explaining why they were by the sea and casting nets. These are things fishermen do! And it was a good place for Jesus to find "fishers of men."

Fishermen ([231](#)) (**halieus** from **hals** = the sea) is literally one who earned their living from the sea, catching fish. Jesus introduced the great figurative meaning of men who would now be catching men instead of fish. They would be evangelizing and winning disciples to Christ (Mk 1:17, Mt 4:19+). Fishermen on Galilee did not enjoy a high social standing, but their work required skill and was profitable. **Halieus** - fishermen(3), fishers(2). - Matt. 4:18; Matt. 4:19; Mk. 1:16; Mk. 1:17; Lk. 5:2. **Septuagint** = Job 41:7; Isa. 19:8; Jer. 16:16; Ezek. 47:10

Holman Apologetics Commentary on Gospels and Acts - At first glance we might assume that this is Jesus' first encounter with these two brothers, and that he is calling them to respond to his message to repent and enter the kingdom (Mt 4:17). Seen this way, the call and response has been perceived to give an indication of Jesus' evangelistic influence; he is calling these four to salvation, and as they respond, they become believers. **But the Fourth Gospel indicates that the two sets of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John, had extensive prior acquaintance with Jesus, and even believed in him as Messiah** (cf. John 1:41; 2:11). It is difficult to determine when it is that these individuals were "saved" according to our current post-resurrection categories. Perhaps we should emphasize most that the true nature of Jesus' identity was so mind-boggling that it is difficult to determine how much these four understood about Jesus at this time. But we should likewise emphasize that they were responding as much as they could, to as much as they understood. Luke 5:1-11 gives a fuller account of the calling of the first disciples. Luke 5:1-11 gives a fuller account of the calling of the first disciples. Does Matthew's briefer version leave room for the details in Luke's account? In Luke's account, when Peter saw the miraculous catch of fish produced by Jesus, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). It is difficult to reconcile the chronology of these incidents, but it is likely that they are similar but had different intended effects on the brothers. Throughout Jesus' ministry there is an increasing understanding of who he was, and that increasing understanding required a corresponding adjustment of their commitment to him. Comparing incidents in the later ministry, we see Peter making a confession about Jesus' identity that had only at a later point been revealed to him (Mt 16:16), and the Fourth Gospel tells of an incident some time later when Peter makes a statement of commitment to Jesus for eternal life (John 6:66-68). As we watch various persons encounter Jesus, we must always recognize that this was a unique time, where the full significance of the entrance of the God-man into history was only slowly comprehended. Indeed, it would take the resurrection to finally break through and bring full comprehension. Although the explicit intention of the call is to join Jesus in fishing for men, these brothers are first and foremost being called to commit themselves to Jesus. (See further comments at Luke 5:1-11.) (See [The Gospels and Acts](#))

Matthew 4:19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

NET He said to them, "Follow me, and I will turn you into fishers of people."

GNT κα λ γει α το ς, Δε τε π σω μου, κα ποι σω μ ς λιε ς νθρ πων.

NLT Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!"

KJV And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

ESV And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

- **Follow:** Mt 8:22 9:9 16:24 19:21 Mk 2:14 Lu 5:27 9:59 Joh 1:43 12:26 Joh 21:22
- **I will:** Ezek 47:9,10 Mk 1:17,18 Lu 5:10,11 1Co 9:20-22 2Co 12:16
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE EFFECTUAL CALL COME WALK IN MY DUST!

What's with the picture of "dusty feet"? In early Jewish writings the description of a follower of a rabbi was that he was to **cover himself in the dust of [the rabbi's] feet.** In other words he was to follow so closely behind the rabbi that he would walk in the dust stirred up by the rabbi's sandals! The picture was of the disciple walking so closely that he might be able to watch and imitate his every word and action. If you have ever been to the Wailing wall in Jerusalem you may have seen this played out as you watched an old white haired rabbi limping along, bent over, being followed by young men who are also limping bent over despite being young and vigorous! They are imitating their rabbi even to the point of limping like he did! And this is a literal picture of what Jesus was calling Simon, Andrew, James, and John to do in an ethical sense for the next three years so that they might become more and more like Him!

THOUGHT - This should be the picture of every disciple for we too are called to walk closely and spend quality time with Jesus. How? Of course by spending uninterrupted time in His living and active Word (Hebrews 4:12+) and speaking with Him in prayer. So let me ask you dearly beloved --- are your sandals covered with the dust of Jesus' sandals or are your Bibles simply covered with dust? And you can mark it down that dusty Bibles usually belong to people with dirty lives!

And He said to them, "Follow Me" - Note that this was not the first time Jesus had given the command **"Follow Me,"** for months earlier John records He spoke the same words to **Philip** (John 1:43+), although there He did not say "I will make you fishers of men."

And I will make you fishers of men - Fishers of fish would be transformed into fishers of men, simply by being with Jesus, by spending time with the Master Fisher of men! In Luke 5:10 "Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

THOUGHT - Our gift may not be evangelism, but we are still called to be "fishers of men." So if we are not fishing for men, what might bring about a "course correction?" From this passage in Mt 4:19 we see that Jesus is the One Who would make fishers to be fishers of men in the first century and He is still the One (and really the only One) Who is able to make us "fishers of men." How? Well, just like the first disciples. We need to "hang out" with Jesus. We need to walk with Jesus and talk with Jesus. We need to spend time in His Word, especially the Gospels and we need to talk with Him frequently in prayer, even leaving the phone off the hook (so to speak) to continue the conversation throughout the day! We need to keep the "On-Off Switch" of the Walkie-Talkie flipped to "On" throughout the day! That's when His Spirit will transform us into His image from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18+), and will supercharge" us with an inner desire (Php 2:13NLT+) and the necessary power (especially boldness) to go forth and fish!

Fishers (231) see above on [halieus](#)

THOUGHT - Why did Jesus choose these busy **fishermen** who had no theological training? Someone has said that when God looks for someone to use in a special mission, He looks for the person who is already busy, the energetic individual.

Ray Pritchard - Somewhere in my past I heard the story about a man who was a phenomenal fisherman. He was so good that his fame spread far and wide. When everyone else was catching two or three fish a day he would come back with two or three hundred.

Eventually the local game warden decided to investigate because it just sounded too good to be true. On a certain day, the game warden showed up at the man's door, identified himself, and asked to go fishing with him. The man was agreeable to that and off they went to the lake. When they got into the boat, immediately the warden noticed that something didn't seem right. The man didn't have any fishing poles or bait. He didn't even have a tackle box. All he had was a small duffel bag.

So off they went, chatting about this and that until the man maneuvered the boat to the middle of the lake. Without a word, he turned off the motor, reached into the duffel bag and pulled out what looked like a stick of dynamite. Before the warden could say anything, he lit it and threw it into the water. It exploded with a mighty roar and stunned fish by the dozens floated to the surface. The man calmly started his boat and began gathering the fish in his net.

The warden said, "Now see here. This is highly illegal." But the man just laughed and steered the boat to another part of the lake. He did the same thing with a second stick of dynamite and sure enough more fish floated to the surface.

By this time the warden had seen enough. He said, "Mister, you've broken so many laws I can't even begin to count them." The man just laughed and pulled out another stick of dynamite. The warden kept on talking. "This is illegal possession of dynamite and illegal detonation of dangerous material and disturbing the peace and about a half-dozen other misdemeanors and felonies." While the warden was talking, the man calmly lit the stick of dynamite and handed it to the game warden. As he did he asked him the question fishermen always ask, "Are you going to talk or are you going to fish?"

That really is our problem when it comes to evangelism—too much talking and not enough fishing. We're good at talking; we're not so good at fishing. Most of the time we act as if Jesus said, "Follow me and we'll talk about fishing for men." So we read books and go to seminars and watch videotapes and take training sessions and listen to sermons (just like this one!).

We end up experts at talking about fishing for men. We know how to bait the hook and what kind of lure to use. We learn all about how to fish for the loud-mouth speckle-bellied atheist and which bait works with the salt-water Pharisee. And most of us have a tackle box full of memorized Scripture, clever questions and some very old tracts. Yes, we're good at talking about fishing....

Researcher George Barna has discovered that nine out of ten people who attempt to explain what they believe to other people come away from those experiences feeling as if they have failed. Get that—9 out of 10 feel like failures when it comes to sharing what they believe. No wonder we don't do much evangelism. It's not fun to do something that makes you feel like a failure 90% of the time. Barna concludes that "despite the divine command to spread the Word, many Christians redirect their energies into areas of spiritual activity that are more satisfying and in which they are more likely to achieve success." ([Let's Go Fishing](#))

Pritchard tells the story of the famous evangelist Dwight L Moody - What is not so widely known is that Moody did not set out to be an evangelist. In point of fact, he was a very successful shoe salesman in the city of Chicago. During the early days of the Civil War, Moody experienced something which changed his life forever. Mr. Moody was a layman and a worker for God. He started a mission Sunday School that in time grew to over 100 attenders. It was a fantastic outward success, yet by his own admission, "none were converted; there was no harvest." There was a class of girls in that Sunday School who were worldly and very unruly. One Sunday Moody substituted for the regular teacher and could barely maintain order. The next week the teacher came by and told Moody that because of grave sickness, he had to resign the class and move to another state. Then the teacher said with great sadness, "I have never led any of my class to Christ. I really believe I have done them more harm than good." Moody said later, "I had never heard anyone talk like that, and it set me to thinking." So he told the teacher, "Let's go together and visit the girls in your class. You tell them how you feel and I'll go with you." So off they went to the first home. There was no laughter now. The girl listened, began to cry, and the teacher asked Moody to pray. "True, I had never done such a thing in my life as to pray God to convert a young lady then and there. But we prayed, and God answered our prayer."

Off they went to the other homes. Eventually they visited every girl in the class and each one put her faith in Christ. It took ten days to finish the visits. The time had come for the teacher to leave Chicago. Here is the story—in Moody's own words—of what happened next. He had to leave the next night, so I called his class together for a prayer-meeting, and there God kindled a fire in my soul that has never gone out. The height of my ambition had been to be a successful merchant, and if I had known that meeting was going to take that ambition out of me, I might not have gone. But how many times since then I have thanked God for that meeting. The dying teacher sat in the midst of his class, and talked with them, and read the fourteenth chapter of John. We tried to sing "Blest be the Tie that Binds," after which we knelt to pray. I was just rising from my knees when one of the class began to pray for her dying teacher. Another prayed, and another, and before we rose the whole class had prayed. As I went out I said to myself, "Oh, God, let me die rather than lose the blessing I have received tonight." The next evening I went to the depot to say good-bye to that teacher. Just before the train started, one of the class came, and before long, without any prearrangement, they were all there. What a meeting that was! We tried to sing, but we broke down. The last we saw of the teacher, he was standing on the platform of the rear car, his finger pointing upward, telling that class to meet him in Heaven. (The Life of D. L. Moody, by William R. Moody, pp. 62-66) ([Let's Go Fishing](#))

Matthew 4:20 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

- Mt 10:37 19:27 1Ki 19:21 Ps 119:60 Mk 10:28-31 Lu 18:28-30 Ga 1:16
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passage

Mark 1:18+ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

Immediately they left their nets - There was no hesitation as these men **immediately** obeyed Jesus. Their unhesitating obedience reminds me of Jesus' call in the following passage

And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "**If anyone wishes to come after Me** (TO FOLLOW ME, TO BE MY DISCIPLE), he must deny himself, and take up his cross and **follow** ([akoloutheo](#) - same verb as in this verse) Me. 35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it (NOTE HOW THESE MEN LEFT THEIR EARTHLY OCCUPATION), but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? (Mk 8:34-36)

Immediately (2112) ([eutheos](#) from [euthus](#) = straight, immediate, the word used repeatedly in Mark's Gospel) is an adverb which generally means at once, right away, forthwith, straightaway, without an interval of time or a point of time subsequent to a previous point of time. Note that the actual interval of time depends on the nature of the events and the manner in which the sequence is interpreted by the writer. **Eutheos** is a "time sensitive" word (see [expression of time](#)) and should prompt questions like "To what time does it refer?" or "What happens in this time?" **Eutheos** - Matt 4:20, 22; 8:3; 13:5; 14:22, 31; 20:34; 21:2; 24:29; 25:15; 26:49, 74; 27:48;

And followed Him - Swindoll writes "We might say of a boy adopting his father's occupation, "He's following in the footsteps of his father." The Old Testament doesn't make use of a similar Hebrew term for following after God, but the New Testament favors this term, perhaps because of the accessibility of the human example of Christ and His earthly relationship to His disciples." (Living Insights)

Followed (190) ([akoloutheo](#) from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?), to go the same way. Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) as soldiers, servants and pupils. Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example, imitating their thoughts, beliefs, actions, or lifestyle. **Grassmick** adds that in "the Gospels the verb "**follow**" (*akoloutheō*), when referring to *individuals*, expresses the call and response of discipleship." (BKC)

In other words, **akoloutheo** is a technical term in Hebrew and Greek for the reactions and relationships of a disciple to his teacher. It implies fellowship, joint-participation, a side-by-side walking with another. Thus it has come to mean, "to join one as a disciple, to cleave steadfastly to one, conform wholly to his example, in living and, if need be, in dying." The essence of Christianity in fact lies in the words "to follow Jesus." Genuine believers are followers of Jesus, disciples of Jesus. Disciples are not a separate group of "super Christians." Discipleship defines normal Christianity.

When we walk with Him, He promised we would never walk in darkness! (Jn 8:12). He (His Word) is our Lamp wherever we walk (cf Ps 119:105), always walking with us, His Spirit within us enabling us to obey the command to continually "**Walk** ([present imperative](#)) by the Spirit." (Gal 5:16+) Walking after Jesus is synonymous with imitating Him (1 Cor 11:1±) When He says go, I go. When He says stop, I stop (cf the Angel of God [surely the preincarnate Jesus](#)) leading of the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night - Ex 13:21, 22, 14:19, 24). He should order our starts and our stops! His sheep know His voice and follow Him (Jn 10:27) Sadly, many refused to follow Him (cf Mt 19:21-23). **Akoloutheo** is used multiple times in Matthew - Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55;

Matthew 4:21 Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

- **other:** Mt 10:2 17:1 20:20,21 26:37 Mk 1:19,20 3:17 5:37 Lu 5:10,11 Joh 21:2 Ac 12:2
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

"The Jesus Boat"

JESUS CALLS SECOND SET OF BROTHERS

Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother,

In the boat with Zebedee their father -

Boat (4143) (ploion from pleo = to sail) can refer to a rather large seagoing craft (Acts 20:13, 38; Acts 21:2f, 6; 27 Jas 3:4; Rev 8:9; Rev 18:19) or a small fishing craft boat as used on the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:21f; Mt 9:1; Mk 1:19f; Mk 6:51, 54; Jn 6:19, 21f; Jn 21:3). See [Wikipedia description of the "Jesus Boat"](#) discovered in 1986.

Mending their nets - Nets is plural so they were working on different kinds of fishing nets getting them ready for their next expedition. **Mending** is in the [present tense](#) picturing them as continually busy at their task. These men who were called by Jesus were not day-dreaming, but actively working, engaged diligently in their occupation as fishermen. Jesus would simply change the focus of their fishing activities from temporal fish to eternal souls. Fish spoil. Saved souls endure eternally! There is no comparison.

Mending (same verb Mk 1:19+)(2675) ([katartizo](#) from **katá** = with + **artízō** = to adjust, fit, finish, in turn from **ártios** = fit, complete) means to put in order (like the creation of the world in Heb 11:3+ = **prepared**), to make ready, to fit or join together, to mend or repair. It refers to parts working precisely together – fulfilling their intended purpose (potential) because properly adapted (adjusted). **Katartízō** conveys the fundamental idea of putting something into its appropriate condition so it will function well. It conveys the idea of making whole by fitting together, to order and arrange properly. When applied to that which is weak and defective, it denotes setting right what has gone wrong, to restore to a former condition, whether mending broken nets or setting broken bones. Peter promises that after we suffer for a little while "the God of all grace, who called (us) to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect" (THINK "MEND" PERFECTLY! THAT WILL BE GLORY!)(1 Peter 5:10+). This verb is used in a great prayer (excellent one to pray for one another)

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, 21 **equip** (katartizo) you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20-21+)

Hiebert adds that **katartízō** can also mean "to bring to completion a process of making whole already begun" as in Jesus statement that "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been **fully trained** (katartízō), will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40+) When the pupil's training is complete, he will be just like his master. Our standard of excellence is the perfection of Christ Himself. (Hiebert, D. E. 1 Peter. page 319. Moody)

Ray Stedman on mending their nets - But James and John were doing something else -- they were mending their nets. The Greek word for "mending" is the same word which appears in Ephesians 4, where Paul says of pastor/teachers that they are to "equip" (or mend) the saints to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12+ - **ED:** USES RELATED NOUN - [katartismos](#) = Make someone completely adequate and in context describes complete "furnishing" of a believer so that he or she might be made ready to fulfill their purpose - cf Eph 2:10+). Just as James and John were equipping their nets, getting them ready, when Jesus called them, so this would be the work they would be doing as fishers of men. They would do it as teachers, equipping the saints. Again, this is what you see in the lives of these men throughout Scriptures. **This is beautiful thought, because it indicates that when our Lord calls us he not only equips us, taking full responsibility to teach us everything we need to learn in order to fulfill that calling, but he does it in such a way as to retain those nuances of personality that mark us as us.** While I was at Wheaton College this past week a young student came up to me at the close of a chapel service and, with a very earnest look on his face, said, "Look, all week long you've been talking to us about Christ's working through us, saying that he will do the work. I have a question: How can Jesus work through us without destroying our personality?" I cast about for an answer, and all of a sudden an illustration came flashing into my mind: "When you prepare breakfast, if you plug an electric toaster and an electric mixer into the same outlet, would they both do the same thing?" He said, "I see what you mean." Of course they would not. They both use the same power, but they do not do the same thing. So it is with Jesus. He is the power in the Christian life, the One who is able to live in us and manifest himself through us -- whatever the demand of life may be -- but the result always retains something of our individuality. The glory of the call of Christianity is that we are all empowered by the same mighty One, but that we lose nothing of the distinct flavor of our particular personality. ([Sermon](#))

and He called them - **Called** is [kaleo](#) meaning “to call aloud, to utter in a loud voice” and together with the fact that James and John were in the large boat which had to be moored some distance from shore unless there was a wharf there, indicates that our Lord called across a stretch of water in order to reach them. In either event His call was an [effectual call](#). The immediate call brought immediate obedience even as did Andrew and Simon in Mk 1:18.

Related Resource:

- [What is the effectual calling/call?](#)

Matthew 4:22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

- Mt 10:37 Dt 33:9,10 Mk 1:20 Lu 9:59,60 Lk 14:26,33 2Co 5:16
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Parallel Passages:

Matthew 10:37+ “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Mark 1:20+ Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

Luke 9:59; 60+ (DISCIPLE "WANNA BE'S" - THERE ARE MANY LIKE THIS EVEN TODAY!) And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” 60 But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.”

Luke 14:26+ “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

Luke 14:33+ “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

2 Corinthians 5:16+ Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.

THE COST TO FOLLOW JESUS

Immediately ([eutheos](#)) they left the boat and their father, and followed ([akoloutheo](#)) Him - These early followers left possessions and parents. While they clearly had to make a decision of their will ([akoloutheo](#) is in the active voice = decision of one's will, volitional choice) to pay this price, the Spirit of God was undoubtedly giving them the desire and the power to follow through in following Jesus. This is the mystery of God's sovereignty and man's free will, found from cover to cover in the Scripture. Do not try to explain it, understand it or discount it, for it is God's truth.

THOUGHT - Dear reader have you counted the cost to be a follower of Jesus? Have you laid it all down for the glory of the Lord? If you have, rest assured that you will have no regrets in time, but especially throughout eternity!

Left (863) [aphiemi](#) from **apo** = prefix speaks of separation, putting some distance between + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) conveys the basic idea of an action which **causes separation**. Literally aphiemi means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and refers to total detachment, total separation, from a previous location or condition. It means to send forth or away from one's self. It refers to the act of putting something away or of laying it aside. In secular Greek aphiemi initially conveyed the sense of to throw and in one secular writing we read "let the pot drop" (aphiemi). From this early literal use the word came to mean leave or let go.

Aphiemi - 133v - abandoned(1), allow(5), allowed(2), divorce(2), forgave(2), forgive(23), forgiven(23), forgives(1), gave...permission(1), leave(7), leaves(2), leaving(8), left(38), let(9), let...alone(6), let him have(1), neglected(1), neglecting(2), permit(6), permitted(1), permitting(1), send...away(1), tolerate(1), uttered(1), yielded(1). Matt. 3:15; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 5:24; Matt. 5:40; Matt. 6:12; Matt. 6:14; Matt. 6:15; Matt. 7:4; Matt. 8:15; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:5; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 13:30; Matt. 13:36; Matt. 15:14; Matt. 18:12; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 18:32; Matt. 18:35; Matt. 19:14;

Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 22:22; Matt. 22:25; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:38; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:40; Matt. 24:41; Matt. 26:44; Matt. 26:56; Matt. 27:49; Matt. 27:50; Mk. 1:18; Mk. 1:20; Mk. 1:31; Mk. 1:34; Mk. 2:5; Mk. 2:7; Mk. 2:9; Mk. 2:10; Mk. 3:28; Mk. 4:12; Mk. 4:36; Mk. 5:19; Mk. 5:37; Mk. 7:8; Mk. 7:12; Mk. 7:27; Mk. 8:13; Mk. 10:14; Mk. 10:28; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 11:6; Mk. 11:16; Mk. 11:25; Mk. 11:26; Mk. 12:12; Mk. 12:19; Mk. 12:20; Mk. 12:22; Mk. 13:2; Mk. 13:34; Mk. 14:6; Mk. 14:50; Mk. 15:36; Mk. 15:37; Lk. 4:39; Lk. 5:11; Lk. 5:20; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 5:23; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 7:47; Lk. 7:48; Lk. 7:49; Lk. 8:51; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 10:30; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:39; Lk. 13:8; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Lk. 17:34; Lk. 17:35; Lk. 17:36; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:44; Lk. 21:6; Lk. 23:34; Jn. 4:3; Jn. 4:28; Jn. 4:52; Jn. 8:29; Jn. 10:12; Jn. 11:44; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:7; Jn. 14:18; Jn. 14:27; Jn. 16:28; Jn. 16:32; Jn. 18:8; Jn. 20:23; Acts 5:38; Acts 8:22; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:27; Rom. 4:7; 1 Co. 7:11; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:13; Heb. 2:8; Heb. 6:1; Jas. 5:15; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:12; Rev. 2:4; Rev. 2:20; Rev. 11:9

Followed (190)(**akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils. To go after someone or something (not as a true disciple however as we see with the crowds who physically followed Jesus, following however without a willingness to commit wholly to Him! cf [John 6:60-65, 66](#)) Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akoloutheo**.

Akoloutheo - 86v - follow(35), followed(36), following(17), follows(1).Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55; Mk. 1:18; Mk. 2:14; Mk. 2:15; Mk. 3:7; Mk. 5:24; Mk. 6:1; Mk. 8:34; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 10:21; Mk. 10:28; Mk. 10:32; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 11:9; Mk. 14:13; Mk. 14:54; Mk. 15:41; Lk. 5:11; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 5:28; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:23; Lk. 9:49; Lk. 9:57; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 9:61; Lk. 18:22; Lk. 18:28; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 22:10; Lk. 22:39; Lk. 22:54; Lk. 23:27; Jn. 1:37; Jn. 1:38; Jn. 1:40; Jn. 1:43; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 10:4; Jn. 10:5; Jn. 10:27; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 12:26; Jn. 13:36; Jn. 13:37; Jn. 18:15; Jn. 20:6; Jn. 21:19; Jn. 21:20; Jn. 21:22; Acts 12:8; Acts 12:9; Acts 13:43; Acts 21:36; 1 Co. 10:4; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 14:4; Rev. 14:8; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 19:14

QUESTION - [What does it mean to truly follow Christ?](#)

ANSWER - In the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), Jesus' command to "follow me" appears repeatedly (e.g., Matthew 8:22; 9:9, Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27; John 1:43). In many cases, Jesus was calling the twelve men who would become His disciples (Matthew 10:3–4). But other times, He was speaking to anyone who wanted what He had to offer (John 3:16; Mark 8:34).

In Matthew 10:34–39, Jesus stated clearly what it means to follow Him. He said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."

Jesus' bringing a "sword" and turning family members against each other can seem a little harsh after words like "whosoever believes on Him shall not perish" (John 3:16). But Jesus never softened the truth, and the truth is that following Him leads to difficult choices. Sometimes turning back may seem very appealing. When Jesus' teaching went from the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–11) to the coming cross, many who had followed him turned away (John 6:66). Even the disciples decided that following Jesus was too difficult the night He was arrested. Every one of them deserted Him (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50). On that night, following Christ meant possible arrest and execution. Rather than risk his own life, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus three times (Matthew 26:69–75).

To truly follow Christ means He has become everything to us. Everyone follows something: friends, popular culture, family, selfish desires, or God. We can only follow one thing at a time (Matthew 6:24). God states we are to have no other gods before Him (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7; Mark 12:30). To truly follow Christ means we do not follow anything else. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." There is no such thing as a "halfway disciple." As the disciples demonstrated, no one can follow Christ by the strength of his own willpower. The Pharisees were good examples of those who were trying to obey God in their own strength. Their self-effort led only to arrogance and distortion of the whole purpose of God's Law (Luke 11:39; Matthew 23:24).

Jesus gave His disciples the secret to faithfully following Him, but they did not recognize it at the time. He said, "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing" (John 6:63). And "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them" (verse 65). The disciples had walked with Jesus for three years, learning, observing, and participating in His miracles. Yet, even they could not follow Him faithfully in their own strength. They needed a Helper.

Jesus promised many times that, once He had ascended to the Father, He would send a "Helper" to them—the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26). In fact, He told them that it was for their good that He was going away so that the Holy Spirit could come (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit indwells the heart of every believer (Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:16; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20). Jesus warned His followers that they were not to begin testifying of Him "until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). When the Holy Spirit came upon those first believers at Pentecost, they suddenly had all the power they needed to follow Christ, even to the death, if needed (Acts 2:1–4; 4:31; 7:59-60).

Following Jesus means striving to be like Him. He always obeyed His Father, so that's what we strive to do (John 8:29; 15:10). To truly follow Christ means to make Him the Boss. That's what it means to make Jesus Lord of our lives (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5). Every decision and dream is filtered through His Word with the goal of glorifying Him in everything (1 Corinthians 10:31). We are not saved by the things we do for Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9) but by what He has done for us. Because of His grace, we want to please Him in everything. All this is accomplished as we allow the Holy Spirit to have complete control of every area of our lives (Ephesians 5:18). He explains the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 2:14), empowers us with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11), comforts us (John 14:16), and guides us (John 14:26). To follow Christ means we apply the truths we learn from His Word and live as if Jesus walked beside us in person. GotQuestions.org

Related Resource:

- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "Take up your cross and follow Me"? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What does it mean to "count the cost" \(Luke 14:28\)? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [If I convert to Christianity, my family will disown me, and I will be persecuted. Should I follow Jesus? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life" \(John 14:6\)? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

QUESTION - [What is the difference between a Christian and a disciple?](#)

ANSWER - The terms *disciple* and *Christian* are related but not synonymous. The Greek term for "disciple" in the New Testament is *mathetes*, which basically means "student" or "learner." But a disciple is also a "follower," someone who adheres completely to the teachings of another, making them his rule of life and conduct. The Pharisees prided themselves in being disciples of Moses (John 9:28). Jesus' followers were called "disciples" long before they were ever called "Christians." Their discipleship began with Jesus' call and required them to exercise their will to follow Him (Matthew 9:9).

Jesus was quite explicit about the cost of following Him. Discipleship requires a totally committed life: "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). Sacrifice is expected: "Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'" (Matthew 16:24).

Not all of Jesus' followers were able to make such a commitment. There were many who left Jesus after a while. "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him" (John 6:66).

Jesus used the term *disciple* but never *Christian*. The first instance of the word *Christian* is found in the book of Acts: "The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Most Bible scholars agree that it is unlikely that the believers themselves thought up the name "Christians." The early church had other names for themselves, such as "disciples" (Acts 13:52; 20:1; 21:4) and "saints" (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1; Ephesians 1:1) and "brothers" (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Peter 3:8).

The name "Christian," meaning "belonging to Christ," appears to have been invented by those outside of the church. It was most likely meant as a derogatory term. Only two other times does the word appear in the New Testament (Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). The idea that the term *Christian* was originally a pejorative finds some support in 1 Peter 4:16: "However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name."

Biblically speaking, a Christian is a disciple of Christ. A Christian is someone who has placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12). A Christian has been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3). A Christian "belongs to Christ" and is daily being transformed into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

A true Christian (and not one [in name only](#)) will have to be a disciple of Christ as well. That is, he has [counted the cost](#) and has totally committed his life to following Jesus. He accepts the call to sacrifice and follows wherever the Lord leads. The Christian disciple completely adheres to the

teaching of Jesus, makes Christ his number-one priority, and lives accordingly. He is actively involved in making other Christian disciples (Matthew 28:19–20+).

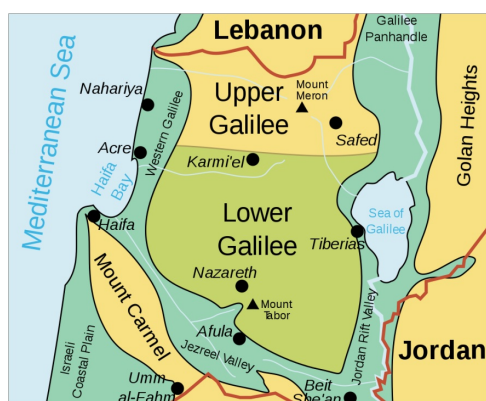
A true Christian disciple is a believer in Christ and possesses new life through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Because he loves Christ, a Christian will also be an obedient disciple (John 14:15). Paul describes the reality of being a Christian disciple: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). GotQuestions.org

Related Resources:

- Classic book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer - [The Cost of Discipleship](#)
- [What is cheap grace? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is Christian discipleship? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is making disciples important? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Matthew 4:23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

- **Jesus:** Mt 9:35 Mk 6:6 Joh 7:1 Ac 10:38
- **teaching:** Mt 12:9 13:54 Ps 74:8 Mk 1:21,39 6:2 Lu 4:15,16,44 13:10 Ac 9:20,13,14-43 18:4
- **the gospel:** Mt 13:19 24:14 Mk 1:14 Lu 4:17,18 8:1 20:1 Ro 10:15
- **healing:** Mt 8:16,17 10:7,8 11:5 15:30,31 Ps 103:3 Mk 1:32-34 3:10 Lu 4:40,41 5:17 6:17 7:22 9:11 10:9 Ac 5:15,16
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



JESUS ON MISSION

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching ([didasko](#) in present tense) in their synagogues ([sunagoge](#)) and proclaiming ([kerusso](#) in present tense) the Gospel ([euaggelion](#)) of the kingdom, and healing ([therapeuo](#) in present tense) every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people - Recall he began teaching in a synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth (Lk 4:16-18+) and His first proclamation so enraged the Jews (who He had grown up with) that they sought to kill Him (Lk 4:28-29+). Clearly nothing would deter Him from His mission, to the Jews first and also the Greeks (Gentiles). The **Gospel of the Kingdom**, was the good news to the Jews as to how they might enter into the Kingdom they so desired to enter (cf Jn 3:1-3+ where "see" is equivalent to "enter"). He was **teaching** ([didasko](#) in present tense) so that the truth might change the way His hearers thought and with a renewed mind they might walk in a new way. Notice the order of His mission - teaching, proclaiming, healing. Healing was the least importance, for it was only for the body, whereas the teaching and proclaiming were for the mind and the heart. Healing authenticated the importance and the veracity of His **teaching** and **proclaiming**. One would have thought the miracles would have gotten the attention of the Jews and all Israel would have been saved, but of course they were not. This shows us that miracles do not save anyone! Except one great miracle, the greatest miracle of all, the new birth by grace through faith! (Eph 2:8-9+). For more on Kingdom see Peter's massive treatise on The Theocratic Kingdom.

The writers of the New Testament adapted the term Gospel as God's glorious message of salvation for lost otherwise hopeless, helpless sinners. [Euaggelion](#) is found in several combination phrases, each describing the gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

1. the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23+, Mt 9:35+, Mt 24:14+)

2. the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1+) because it centers in Christ
3. the gospel of God (Mk 1:14+, Ro 15:16+, 2Co 11:7+, 1Th 2:2+, 1Th 2:8,9+, 1Pe 4:17+) because it originates with God and was not invented by man
4. the gospel of the kingdom of God (Lu 16:16+)
5. the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+, Ro 1:1+),
6. the gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9+)
7. the gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+, 2Co 2:12+, 2Co 9:13+, 2Co 10:14+, Gal 1:7+, Phil 1:27+, 1Th 3:2+)
8. the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4+)
9. the gospel of your salvation (Eph 1:14+)
10. the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+)
11. the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8+)
12. the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11+)
13. In Ro 16:25, 26+ Paul called it **"my Gospel"** indicating that the special emphasis he gave the gospel in his ministry.
14. **An eternal gospel** - Rev 14:6+ (Some writers such as C I Scofield interpret this as a "different gospel" than the other "gospels" mentioned above but I think such a distinction is incorrect and is poorly substantiated).

For a rewarding study, study the preceding references in context making notation of the truth you observe about the gospel. If you would like a special blessing, take an afternoon to go through all 76 uses of **euaggelion** in context making a list of what you learn about the gospel. The Spirit of God will enlighten your heart and encourage your spirit in a very special way...and you'll want to share the "good news" with someone because of your "discoveries"!

Euaggelion - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:13; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 1:14; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 13:10; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 16:15; Acts 15:7; Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:1; Rom. 1:9; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 10:16; Rom. 11:28; Rom. 15:16; Rom. 15:19; Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 9:23; 1 Co. 15:1; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:7; Gal. 1:6; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 1:11; Gal. 2:2; Gal. 2:5; Gal. 2:7; Gal. 2:14; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 3:6; Eph. 6:15; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:12; Phil. 1:16; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:22; Phil. 4:3; Phil. 4:15; Col. 1:5; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; Phlm. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 14:6

Matthew 4:24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

- **the news:** Mt 9:26,31 Mt 14:1 Jos 6:27 1Ki 4:31 10:1 1Ch 14:17 Mk 1:28 Lu 4:14 5:15
- **Syria:** 2Sa 8:6 Lu 2:2 Ac 15:23,41
- **all who were ill:** Mt 4:23 8:14,15 9:35 Ex 15:26
- **demoniacs:** Mt 9:32 12:22 15:22 17:18 Mk 5:2-18 Lu 4:33-35 8:27-37 Ac 10:38
- **epileptics:** Mt 17:15
- **paralytics:** Mt 8:6,13 9:2-8
- [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

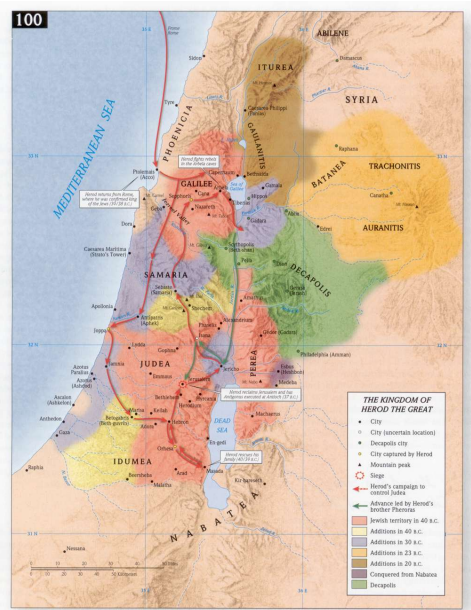
NEWS SPREADS TO GENTILE LANDS

The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them - Who is they? In context, this refers to Syrians, who would be Gentiles! While this text does not say specifically He taught and proclaimed the Gospel, it is difficult to imagine that as Jesus healed their bodies, He did not speak of how their souls could be healed.

Matthew 4:25 Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

- **followed:** Mt 5:1 8:1 12:15 19:2 Mk 3:7 6:2 Lu 6:17,19
- **Decapolis:** Mk 5:20 7:31

■ [Matthew 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Herod's Kingdom - click to enlarge
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Large crowds followed ([akoloutheo](#)) Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan (refers to east of Jordan) - Note the verb **followed ([akoloutheo](#))**, the same verb used in Mt 4:22. But, oh what a difference context makes in accurate interpretation! In Mt 4:22 they counted the cost, but in Mt 4:25 the word means they were simply walking after Him, but without any indication that they had counted the cost of truly following Him. And of course most of the large crowd never truly accepted Jesus as their [Messiah, the Anointed One](#) (Jn 1:11-13+) and thus they were not true disciples who endured to the end (Mt 24:13). For example, in John 6 after some "difficult" teaching about bread of life, etc, John records, that "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." (Jn 6:66).