

Episode #714 Matthew 4 Part 1-The Temptation of the Lord

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. Having identified Himself with the submissive company in Israel by John’s baptism, the Lord now heads into the wilderness for the next qualification of His ministry: the temptation by Satan.

III. The Temptation in the Wilderness

A. Matthew 4:1. Who was “the devil”?

1. The devil is not a human being. All people have different levels of talents. Some with genius ability decide to use it against God, like Robert G. Ingersoll. The same is true of heavenly beings.
2. Satan was not the human-looking race of heavenly beings we call angels, but a cherub, Ezekiel 28:11-19. Particularly talented, anointed by God to cover. I believe he was made to guard God’s glory, and yet turned the considerable ability God gave him against God.
3. He is not in any way the evil counterpart of God, but a created being, limited.
4. Satan = the enemy. Devil = accuser, a New Testament name only.

B. Verse 2. Forty is the number of probation: forty days of rain in the flood, forty years wandering in the wilderness, forty days with His disciples between His resurrection and His ascension. Forty days and forty nights marks out 24 hour days. He was tempted this entire time, Mark 1:13.

C. Verse 3. Perhaps he heard He is the Son of God at His baptism, Matthew 3:17. This temptation has to do with the lust of the flesh, I John 2:16.

D. Verse 4. It is written in Deuteronomy 8:3. Even today we should not try to live on only food, but treat God’s Word as necessary to life. In God’s Kingdom this will be mandatory on all who live on earth.

E. Verse 5. The taking up implies authority, sometimes constraint. The “holy city” is clearly Jerusalem, five times in the Old Testament, Matthew 27:53, and three times in Revelation, all of Jerusalem. The “pinnacle” is a wing or tip. The “temple” is the Greek *hieron*, the holy district, not the central building.

F. Verse 6. It is written in Psalm 91:11-12, but the devil misquotes it twice. See the King James Version of this verse. He leaves out, “in all your ways,” not wanting to remind the Lord what His ways should be. He adds “at any time,” which is not there in Hebrew, making it sound like He could do any frivolous thing He likes and God would do this. The devil used the Septuagint, that adds this! Faulty translations can be used by the enemy. This temptation had to do with the pride of life, I John 2:16.

IV. Conclusion: How exactly did Satan misquote Scripture? How was it important, and how did it twist Scripture to try to get Christ to sin? We will discuss this next time. Satan got our first parents Adam and Eve to fall to his temptations. So far the Lord has stood up to one. Will He stand up to the others?