

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XVIII. The Validation Of Messiah's Moral Right To Be King
(Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. Though God the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus Christ at His baptism to empower Him for His earthly ministry (cf. Isaiah 11:1-2 with Matthew 3:16), He needed to be tempted by Satan to demonstrate His moral sinlessness and hence His right to be Israel's righteous King and Savior before entering into His ministry.
- B. Thus, He was led by the Holy Spirit right after His baptism in the Jordan River out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1-2a. We view this event for our insight and application:

II. The Validation Of Messiah's Moral Right To Be King, Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.

- A. Christ's temptation was threefold. He was tempted to yield to the **lust of the flesh** by turning the stones into bread to meet his needs of great hunger in violation of God's leading for Him then to be hungry (Matthew 4:1-3). He was also tempted to yield to the **lust of the eyes** by throwing Himself down from the temple pinnacle in front of worshipers and impressing them to acclaim Him as Messiah instead of performing His ministry in fulfillment of Scripture (Matthew 4:6; J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 102). Jesus was then tempted to yield to **the pride of this life** in bowing to Satan to gain rule of the world by avoiding the public shame of the cross for which God had sent Him into the world (Matthew 4:8-9). These were the lusts Satan used to tempt Eve to sin in the Fall in Genesis 3:6 and that are named in 1 John 2:16.
- B. Since these lusts are the lusts of the world (1 John 2:16), when Satan tempts, he uses the lusts of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of this earthly life, the lusts of the world, to try to influence people to sin against God.
- C. In each case, Jesus met Satan's temptation by citing Scripture. Similarly, we believers today overcome the Evil One when we are spiritually strong by relying on the Holy Spirit like Jesus did (cf. 2 Timothy 2:1 with 1:8-18) and the Word of God abides in us for use in countering Satan with God's Word, 1 John 2:14b.
- D. In each case, Jesus quoted from the proper contexts of Scripture to counter Satan's temptations:
 - 1. When tempted to turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger after the Holy Spirit had led him into the wilderness to be hungry, Jesus cited Deuteronomy 8:3 to assert that man was not to live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God, Matthew 4:1-4.
 - 2. When tempted to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to persuade the temple worshippers to accept Him as Messiah, Jesus cited Deuteronomy 6:16 that forbade Hebrews from putting the Lord to the test, Matthew 4:5-7. Satan had cited Psalm 91:11-12 KJV to claim that God would protect Him from harm lest He dash His foot against a stone, but Satan had left out the phrase, "in all thy ways" in Psalm 91:11b, the ways of the Father's assigned will for Jesus. Satan thus wanted Jesus to test the Father by going in a way that the Father had not assigned Him in jumping off of the temple pinnacle.
 - 3. When tempted to bow to Satan to gain rule over the world by avoiding the cross, Jesus cited Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20 that in their contexts forbade the Hebrew people from bowing to any other god but the Lord, and that included Satan, Matthew 4:8-10.
 - 4. Deuteronomy was the book that Hebrews like Jesus who were living in the Promised Land in the dispensation of the Law were to use for governing their lives. (Ibid.) Jesus thus used the proper book in its historical context and interpreted it in its literary context to counter Satan's temptations!
- E. Since Satan was defeated in his attempts to get Jesus to sin, Satan left Him, and God's angels came and ministered to Jesus, providing much-needed food and encouragement, cf. 1 Kings 19:5-8 with Matthew 4:11.

Lesson: *Jesus was driven by God the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for approval as to His moral qualifications to be Israel's Savior and Sovereign. Jesus overcame Satan's efforts to use the lusts of the flesh, of the eyes and the pride of this life by citing applicable Scripture in its proper historical and literary contexts, and God then ministered to Jesus after Satan was defeated and left Him.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice that our Savior is proven to be sinless in overcoming Satan's temptations. (2) May we follow Jesus' example in overcoming temptations to sin: (a) may we rely on the Holy Spirit for the power (b) to cite applicable Scripture in its correct historical and literary contexts (c) and not to act independently of the Lord's leading, but carefully to FOLLOW the Lord's leading like Jesus did in WAITING for GOD to direct WHEN and HOW He should satisfy His hunger! (3) We also need to read Scripture so that we have it in our memories, that the Holy Spirit can bring it to our remembrance when we face temptation, John 14:26.*