

Gospels class 11: The Temptation and Testing in the Wilderness
Scott Ashley Sept. 8, 2012

Good morning/afternoon everyone,

Today we're going to talk about a spiritual battle. In this battle the stakes couldn't be any higher. It is a battle over—to be blunt—*our salvation*. Because if Jesus of Nazareth failed in this battle, if He gave in to Satan's temptations and sinned, *we would have no Savior*. God's plan would've been thwarted, and we would be left with no sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins. We would all be dead in our sins.

It is also a battle for *ultimate control*. Because in what we'll cover today, we have the ruler and god of this world, Satan the devil, doing battle against the One who has come to overturn and overthrow Satan as ruler so that He can return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and banish Satan so he can no longer deceive mankind and lead human beings into sin and suffering and slavery to him. So again, the stakes *could not be higher*.

What we see in this story is Satan again trying to thwart God's plan. We saw it earlier when Satan tried to use Herod to kill the infant Jesus when Herod killed the baby boys in Bethlehem. And we'll see it again later in Christ's ministry when Satan tries to have Jesus murdered before His time. So this is not the first time, nor will it be the last time.

The time setting is also important here because, as when Satan tried to have Jesus killed as an infant, Satan tries to end Jesus Christ's ministry before it ever has time to get started. He does not *want* this message to go out. He does not *want* Jesus to call disciples. He does not *want* the story and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth to be recorded and passed down to all mankind. He does not *want* Jesus to be successful in His mission and purpose. So he's determined to short-circuit it before it can begin to get off the ground.

And that's where we'll pick up the story, and **like archaeologists we'll dig down** through the layers and see what's here for us to learn. I think that's a good analogy for us to use because we're not just looking at what's on the surface, but digging down deeper to explore and learn about the rest of the story that you don't see on the surface.

Let's set the stage for this. The events we'll read about take place in the Judean desert or **"wilderness" as it's called in the Gospels**. I've been in it, and it's one of the most desolate and inhospitable places you'll ever see. It makes some of our desert places like Utah or Arizona or parts of California **look lush by comparison**. It's very hot, very dry, and at the same time very humid because much of it is below sea level in the Jordan Valley. All in all, it's a pretty miserable and dangerous place where you can die quickly in a number of ways **if you're not careful**. So this is the setting for our story.

I'll start with Mark's account in Mark 1:12-13 at the bottom of page 10 of the Harmony of the Gospels. As I mentioned last time, Mark is a Gospel of few details. It's all action and no talk, as we see here. And I start here just because Mark includes one other detail about the setting that Matthew and Luke leave out.

Mark 1:13

12 Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

13 And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Mark adds that there were “wild beasts” there in this desert wilderness as well. In earlier times, we read from the Hebrew Scriptures, we know there were lions and bears roaming this area. They seem to have been driven out of the area by now because we no longer see them mentioned, but there are still very dangerous creatures here—creatures like **scorpions** that are endemic to the desert. There are also **desert jackals**, a kind of wild dog like our wolves or coyotes, roaming in packs that can take down much larger animals or human beings, especially someone who is all alone. And then there are the **desert vipers** that we talked about last time in discussing John the baptizer.

So again, there are a number of ways that someone can easily die out here—from heat, from exposure, from accidents, from bandits, from encountering these snakes and scorpions and jackals, and from thirst or starvation. So why does Jesus go there? Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us that the Holy Spirit *led* Jesus to go to this environment. Mark, being the writer of action, even says it *drove* Him to go there. But why?

Because in that environment, you know one thing for sure. You know that *you have to rely on God to survive*. Because if you don’t have God’s help, especially if you’re fasting 40 days and nights, *you’re going to die*. That’s all there is to it. You have to rely on God to survive. Without Him, you’re dead. So while physically He may have been incredibly weak, spiritually He was very strong because He was totally reliant on God during this time. **Luke 4:1** says that He was “**filled with the Holy Spirit,**” using a word that means filled to the brim, filled to overflowing, permeated with, lacking nothing. And he would certainly need all of that in the coming days, as we’ll see.

So continuing the story in **Matthew 4:1**—

Matthew 4:1-11

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

This word “tempted” can also mean “testing” or “put to the test to prove” something. That’s why I’ve called this “The Temptation and Testing in the Wilderness.” Because it’s Satan doing the tempting, and it’s Jesus who is being tested. Both of these concepts are at work here in this story.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

Let’s notice several things here. First, this wasn’t *just* a 40-day fast. This was an all-out spiritual struggle in which the stakes are enormous. Fasting without food or water for 40 days and nights is impossible for us without God’s help. But there was much more to the ordeal than just the fasting. It was an enormous struggle against temptation also.

We tend to read this the way Matthew words it and assume that Jesus had fasted 40 days and nights and then after this, Satan hits Him with these three temptations. And Jesus, being spiritually strong, shoots down those temptations all in row. But is that the way it happened? Notice the way **Luke 4:1-2** words it:

Luke 4:1-2

1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

What does this say? This indicates that the temptation took place not at the end, but *over the duration of the 40 days*. In other words, it wasn't 40 days of fasting followed by maybe a few hours of temptation; it was 40 days of going without food or water in a miserable environment, being tempted by Satan throughout that time. I think that is a more likely explanation of what took place. After all, probably any of us could have one really good spiritually strong day when we could turn down three temptations one right after another. But how many of us could turn down *40 days* of temptations like this? Not many. Or not *any*.

One brief side note here. People accept that this clearly means 40 days and 40 nights here. But when Matthew elsewhere says that Jesus would be in the grave three days and three nights, they think that means only a day and a half. So the next time somebody tries to explain it that way to you, just say, "So you're saying that Jesus fasted for only 20 days?" and see what they say. They obviously have no answer for that. So this is a good passage to remember when it comes to the three days and three nights controversy.

Let's notice something else here. How many days did Jesus fast? He didn't fast 20 days, or 30 days, or 39 days, or 41 days. He fasted *40 days*—that exact number, no more and no less. Remember that we've talked about several different kinds of *remez*, or hints or clues or looks back. There are spoken *remez*, written *remez*, and action *remez*, or *remez* that are acted out. What is Jesus doing by fasting for exactly 40 days and 40 nights? He's doing a *remez*. He's sending a message. What is the message? Anyone? Who else fasted for 40 days and nights in the wilderness?

Deuteronomy 9:9 (This is Moses speaking)

9 "When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.

So Jesus fasts for 40 days and nights like Moses. What message is He sending by doing that? What does He want people to think? *He is the second Moses*.

Deuteronomy 18:17-18 (Again this is Moses speaking, telling the people what God had told them)

17 And the LORD said to me: ...

18 "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."

So when Jesus fasts for 40 days like Moses, what message is He sending? He's telling people that *He is that Prophet like Moses*. That's the *remez*. That's the message He's sending. The 40 days of fasting wasn't an arbitrary number. It was deliberate, to send a specific message.

But there was someone else well known in Israel who fasted for 40 days and nights. Who was that? Let's turn to **1 Kings 19:1-8**.

1 Kings 19:1-8

1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

3 And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."

6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."

8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food *forty days and forty nights* as far as Horeb [Mount Sinai], the mountain of God.

So we see that Elijah also fasted for 40 days and nights. So when Jesus fasts for 40 days, He's doing a double *remez*. What's the second message He's sending? He's telling people that *not only is He is that Prophet like Moses*, but also that *He is a great prophet like Elijah*. That's the message. It's a dual *remez*. Again, the 40 days of fasting wasn't an arbitrary number. It was deliberate, to send the specific message that He is a prophet like Moses and Elijah.

But notice something else here. *Where does Jesus choose to go* when He fasts for 40 days? He doesn't do it there near the Jordan River. He doesn't do it in Jerusalem. He doesn't do it in Galilee at Nazareth or Capernaum. He could've fasted *anywhere*. But He goes *into the wilderness* to send a specific message. What does He want people to be reminded of when He goes to the wilderness and fasts for 40 days—again, not 39 and not 41, but 40? He's sending yet another message by His actions. What's the message? If you're an Israelite of that time, what do you think of when you hear the number 40 and the wilderness? *Jesus wants you to think of Israel wandering for 40 years in the wilderness*.

Do you think that's a stretch? Well, when Jesus responds to Satan, each time where does He quote from? Which book of the Bible? He quotes from *Deuteronomy*. What's the book of Deuteronomy about? It's about the lessons Israel learned—or didn't learn—in their 40 years in the wilderness. What specifically does he quote from Deuteronomy? He quotes specifically from the lessons the Israelites were supposed to have learned in the wilderness. A Jew reads this account and says, "Why of course! He's quoting the lessons from Deuteronomy when the Israelites were tested in the desert!" Let's notice

Deuteronomy 8:2-3.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

2 "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way *these forty years in the wilderness*, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

3 "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

So why does He want them to think of the Israelites in the wilderness? What's the message? There are a **number of reasons, but I'll list a few** that came to mind:

- God led Israel into the desert to be tested for 40 years. God led Jesus into the desert to be tested for 40 days.
- Israel *failed* their test. Jesus *passed* His.
- Israel failed for *lack of faith*. Jesus passed His *because of faith*.
- Israel failed to *trust* God. Jesus *completely trusted* God.
- Israel was a faithless nation/people. Jesus is building a new nation/people *based on faith*.

I might also point out that Jesus Himself, as well as the Gospel writers, as well as other New Testament writers, continually tie Jesus into the Israelites' 40-year journey in the wilderness. It was the defining event in the nation's history, and it tells us a great deal about Jesus' roles in building a new spiritual nation. **Let's list some of these quickly**, then we'll show that from Scripture.

- He would be a Prophet like Moses
- He would be our High Priest
- He would be the Light of the world (menorah, pillar of fire)
- He would be like the Bronze serpent, which saved people when they looked to it.
- He would be the Rock from which living water flowed
- He would be the true Passover lamb
- He would be the fulfillment of the Sacrificial system
- He would be the true Manna from heaven

He would be a Prophet like Moses

Deuteronomy 18:17-18

17 And the LORD said to me: ...

18 "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."

John 6:14; 7:40

"Truly this is the Prophet."

He would be our High Priest

Hebrews 4:14

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

He would be the Light of the world (menorah, pillar of fire)

John 1:9

9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

He would be like the Bronze serpent, which saved people when they looked to it

John 3:14

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up

He would be the Rock from which living water flowed

1 Corinthians 10:4

4 For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

He would be the true Passover Lamb

John 1:29

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

He would be the fulfillment of the Sacrificial system

Hebrews 10:11-14

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

He would be the true Manna from heaven

John 6:31-33

31 “Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32 Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

33 “For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

So this is all wrapped up the symbolism of Jesus of Nazareth fasting for 40 days in the wilderness. And there may be a few more that I didn’t think of. Again, He could’ve fasted for *any number of days*, but He fasted specifically for 40 days to send a specific message. And He could’ve gone *anywhere He wanted* to fast for that 40 days, but He chose the desert wilderness to send a specific message. And we’ll see still other examples of this as we go through the Gospels. He does things like this again and again and again—and if you don’t know the text, you can’t play. You miss the message.

So after that detour, let’s go back and pick up the story in **Matthew 4:3**.

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

Satan knows Jesus is the Son of God. After all, that’s the whole point of him being there to tempt Him. And Jesus knows He’s the Son of God. So Satan is just trying to get under Jesus’ skin, to needle Him here. So he says, **“If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”**

And if there’s one thing this wilderness has plenty of, it’s stones. Stones and gravel and not much else. It’s hard to find even a blade of grass in this area. This is what it looks like close up. How would you like to spend 40 days fasting in this area?

What does this temptation have to do with? Basically with self-preservation in this case. Satan essentially says, “You have to eat. Surely God doesn’t want you to starve. All you need to do is use your power to turn some of these rocks to bread.” And this is one of the ways Satan will tempt and test us. Maybe we’ll be put in a position where we’re told we’ll lose our job if we take off for the Feast, or if we refuse to work on the Sabbath. And we won’t be able to put food on the table. And surely God wouldn’t want us to starve,

would He? That’s the kind of rationalization Satan loves to use on people. And you deal with temptations like that by remembering Scripture and God’s promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us. You fight temptation with Scripture, which is what Jesus did here.

4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

So Jesus gives a response, as He does all three times, from Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 8:3

3 So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

This parallels the first of the tests that Israel faced in the desert. They went out in the desert and soon ran out of food and were hungry, and God provided. The point is that you can be hungry, even in a place as desolate and uninviting and barren as this miserable desert, but none of that matters to God. He *can and did* provide food for all of the Israelites for 40 years. The more important thing is to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God—that you be obedient and look to Him in faith to supply your need. Obeying God is more important than being sure your belly is always full.

Continuing now in **verse 5 of Matthew 4**—

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

Satan is here quoting **Psalm 91:11-12**. But let’s compare the two and see exactly what it says.

Psalm 91:11-12

11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

12 In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Notice what Satan leaves out—**“to keep you in all your ways.”**

Satan leaves out the part that the angels will watch over you *to keep you in the right way of God as you are following that way*. That’s what Satan leaves out—the part about following God’s ways! No wonder he leaves that part out. He selectively misquotes Scripture—somewhat ironically, just after Jesus has said man shall live by *every* word of God. It’s an interesting juxtaposition there.

Now let’s visualize this episode a little better by considering the archaeology and setting being discussed here. **Just inside the back cover** of your Harmony of the Gospels you’ll find this illustration of the Temple Mount as it was in Jesus’ day. There are three main theories about what is meant by the phrase “pinnacle of the temple” where Satan set Jesus.

One is that it’s talking about the top of the temple itself, which is in the middle of the big rectangular Temple Mount on your diagram. It looks tiny there, but the temple was actually about 150 feet high, or the height of a 15-story building. You can see the teeny little people in your illustration drawn to scale. They look like little dots. So that’s one possibility, that Satan set Jesus there on top of the temple.

Another idea is that “pinnacle of the temple” is referring to the corner of the Temple Mount closest to you in the illustration. For a long time that was the most popular idea because that corner of the Temple mount drops off into the Kidron Valley, and the drop is about 300 feet—twice as high as the actual temple itself. And thus, by virtue of that great height, scholars thought this was what is referred to as “the pinnacle of the temple.”

And then about 20 years ago archaeologists were excavating around this other corner of the Temple Mount in left of your illustration, and they found something fascinating. They **found an odd-shaped stone** that was clearly part of something that had a waist-high wall. And it had a Hebrew inscription on it that read, “the place of trumpeting for...” and the rest was broken off. Josephus describes how there was a place atop the Temple mount where every evening a priest would blow a trumpet to announce the beginning and ending of the Sabbath and Holy Days. Apparently this is the stone that marks that spot, and the full inscription originally read, “the place of trumpeting for the priest,” or “the place of trumpeting for announcing the Sabbath” or something similar. And this is what it would’ve looked like when the priest was there blowing the trumpet.

In Jesus’ day **this is what that corner of the Temple Mount** looked like from ground level. It was well over 100 feet high, maybe 120 to 130 feet—the height of a 12- or 13-story building. And this would be the logical place to blow a trumpet to announce the Sabbath because this corner face toward most of the city of Jerusalem. And when the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D., they broke apart and tossed over the edge all of the upper part of this structure, including this corner where the inscription was, and it was found 2,000 years later buried in the rubble on this street, which you can visit today.

The reason I mention this is that now most scholars think this was probably what would’ve been called “the pinnacle of the temple” in Jesus’ day because it was the most prominent part of the temple complex visible from nearly anywhere in Jerusalem. There’s no way to know for sure, but personally I think that makes the most sense. So to visualize this, you have Satan and Jesus up here at this corner, overlooking the whole city of Jerusalem, and Satan tells Jesus, **“If You are the Son of God, jump, because God says He will have His angels protect you.”**

So Satan misuses Scripture to try to convince Jesus that the Father would divinely protect Him even if He took a stupid chance with His life by jumping off. And Jesus responds in

Matthew 4:7—

7 Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”

Here He is quoting from **Deuteronomy 6:16—**

Deuteronomy 6:16

16 You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.

What happened at Massah? That’s where the Israelites were in the desert camped at a place where there was no water, and they said to Moses, “Why did you bring us out into the desert to die of thirst?” They were questioning whether God was really there or not. This was another of the great lessons of the story of the Exodus. And God responded by telling Moses to strike the rock and He would show He was really there by providing water from the rock. So Jesus is pointing anybody reading this story—and even pointing Satan himself—to the Exodus story and a rebellious and unfaithful people testing God when *God didn’t need to be tested*. Jesus’ point is that God *is* there and *is* faithful,

regardless of whether He's intervening at that particular moment or not. God *is* there all the time, and that's one of the great lessons of faith that Israel didn't seem to grasp but that Jesus clearly understood and that *we* need to understand. And you don't put God to the test by doing something stupid and expecting Him to bail you out.

Continuing in **verse 8 of Matthew 4**—

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

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

So what is Satan doing now to tempt Jesus? Basically, he's offering a shortcut. Satan knows prophecy, he knows that Jesus is going to come again as a conquering King and that rulership of the whole world will be given to Him. But there's just this one little catch—He has to be beaten, maimed, scourged, mocked, tortured and crucified and to die first. So Satan offers Jesus a way around that so He doesn't have to go through that. He says, "All the kingdoms of the world are yours *if you just bow down and worship me*." How bad can that be?"

Let's first ask if this was a legitimate offer. Could Satan indeed offer all this to Jesus if He would bow down and worship him? Let's look at several scriptures.

John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11

Jesus calls Satan "*the ruler of this world.*"

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 whose minds *the god of this age* has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Revelation 12:9

9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, *who deceives the whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

1 John 5:19

19 . . . the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

So we see that Satan is the ruler of this world, that he is the god of this age, he deceives the whole world, and the whole world is under his sway. So it certainly seems that it is Satan's to give, at least to the extent that God allows. And Jesus doesn't dispute that it is Satan's to give at that time, which is another indication.

And of course, one of the most powerful things Satan has to tempt people with is power and greed. There's a saying that's sad but true—If you want to know what a person is really like, give him power. Power destroys a lot of people, and not just those in the world. In all my years in the Church I've seen people do all kinds of things to either get or maintain power. I've seen them lie, cheat, steal, slander, compromise their beliefs, compromise everything they've ever taught, you name it, they've done it—all to either get or hold onto power. It's a very dangerous and seductive thing. And that's why God is never going to give eternal life to someone who doesn't know how to use power for the

good and benefit of others rather than for personal gain. So just be aware of that—power and greed are two of the most destructive temptations known to man.

So Jesus responds in **Matthew 4:10**—

Matthew 4:10-11

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

So Jesus again responds from **Deuteronomy 6:13**—

Deuteronomy 6:13

13 You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him . . .

And the context of this verse is also one of the great lessons of the Exodus story, because after all the Israelites had gone through, God tells them He’s bringing them into the Promised Land where He’ll give them everything they want and need—cities they didn’t build, houses full of good things, wells they didn’t dig, vineyards and orchards they didn’t plant.

It’s a parallel to the “all the kingdoms of the world” that Satan offered to Jesus. “Here, I’ll give you all the things that you want—all you have to do is bow down and worship me.” And God tells the Israelites, “When you’ve come into the Promised Land and I give you all the things that you want, don’t get fat and happy and think that you did it all yourself and for sure don’t forget your God and go chasing off after other gods to worship them.”

So Jesus tells Satan, “Get out of here! I’m going to worship the true God, and Him alone!” No matter what we’re tempted with, this is what we have to do—worship and serve the true God, and no other.

A few quick scriptures to look at here—

James 4:7

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

This is a great summary of the story we see played out here. Satan tempts, Jesus wholeheartedly submits to God and doesn’t give in, and in the end Satan is forced to flee. The key to resisting temptation and Satan is to submit to God, following Jesus Christ’s perfect example.

Another verse that ties in well here—

Matthew 16:26

26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

These are words from later on in Jesus’ ministry. Do you suppose He was thinking back to this temptation? I think He probably was. He was offered the whole world and turned it down—because *to have gotten everything, it would’ve cost Him everything*. And there’s no way it was worth it.

Another passage to look at is **1 John 2:15-17**—

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides [or *lives*] forever.

That’s the most valuable possession of all—eternal life in the Kingdom and family of God. Nothing else comes remotely close.

And then the story closes in **Matthew 4:11**—

Matthew 4:11

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Was this truly a temptation? **Hebrews 4:15-16** tells us—

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

But we also have our answer in **Matthew 4:11**. This was so physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually draining that when it was over, angels came to minister to Jesus of Nazareth. No doubt to bring Him food and water, but to strengthen and restore Him back to peak condition. He had been through a gigantic spiritual battle and emerged victorious. You might think of one other occasion when something similar happened, that when He was suffering the agony of Gethsemane on the night before He was crucified, an angel came from God to strengthen Him.

Luke 22:41-43

41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed,

42 saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

The stakes were enormously high in both instances, one at the beginning and one at the end of His ministry. But looking to God, and humbly submitting to Him, He set a perfect example of faithful obedience.

We’ll close with one final scripture, **Hebrews 12:1-2**.

Hebrews 12:1-2

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

This is talking about the crucifixion, but it applies equally as well to what we covered today in the temptation and testing. Because had He failed that first test, there never would’ve been the other. But what I want to focus on is His *motivation* in both tests. What was it that motivated Him? This tells us it was “the joy that was set before Him.” The joy of what?

Think about it. Why did He do all this? Why did He surrender His divinity and come to earth in the first place? Why give that up? Why go from God to a man of dust? Why endure the things He did? Why go through the suffering that He did—not just at the end, but also at the beginning and at other times during His ministry? Why do it? As we see here, it was “for the joy that was set before Him.” What joy? The joy of bringing many children to glory in the Kingdom and family of God. *He did it all for us.*