

The Mind of Christ Class

May 15, 2019

We are in the “Temptations of Jesus” **Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13**

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you,

and they will lift you up in their hands,

so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Mark 1:12-13

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you

to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,

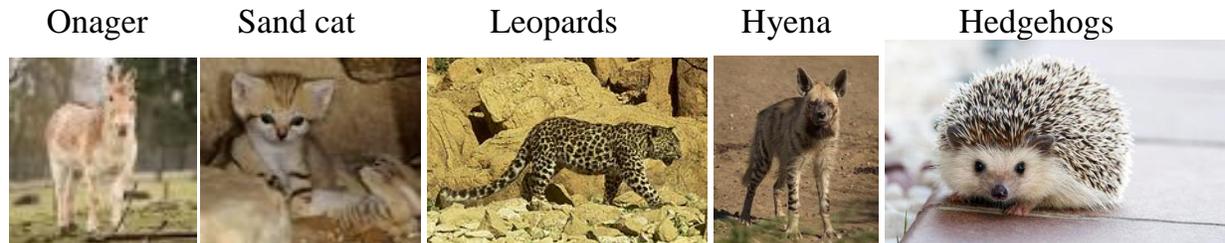
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Last week we talked about Jesus being led (or driven) into the wilderness. Mark, alone, mentions Jesus as being with the wild beasts. What do we make of this? When you go out into the wilderness or go out into the woods, or go out wherever, there are critters. I did a little bit of research on what kind of wild beasts are in the wilderness in Israel. Here is what I came up with. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_of_Israel

There are venomous snakes, other dangerous snakes, lions (back then), Arabian Oryx (like an antelope), Onager (the Asiatic wild ass or donkey), Ostrich, Wolves, Fox, Sand Cats, Leopards, striped Hyenas (most active at night), Hedgehogs, Rodents, and Fruit Bats. These may be some of the wild beasts he was out in the wilderness with.



I don't know if that makes you squeamish about camping out, but ...

Brian: The sand cats are so cute thought.

Rod: Look at those cute cats. But they have big feet. Don't try to baptize one.

But Jesus was East, out into the wilderness Just as Adam was cast out of the Garden. The wilderness was kind of a 'cursed' garden. Adam was given authority over all the animals. Jesus is with the wild beasts (those not subject to man – not domesticated. That's why they were called wild). Do any of these beasts dare attack Jesus? Now this is just speculation, but, just as Daniel was protected by angels who closed the mouths of the lions, did Jesus' ministering angels protect Him from the wild beasts?

Brenda: At the cross, Jesus said that he could call a legion of angels to help him in Matthew 26:53.

Rod: Yes. I think in **Psalm 22:12-21**, Jesus on the cross is being spoken of as surrounded by wild beasts.

¹² Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.

¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet.

¹⁷ All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.

¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

¹⁹ But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

²⁰ Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.

²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Isaiah 43:19-21 suggests that the church is where the wild beasts will honor Jesus. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

²⁰ The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen,

²¹ the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Isaiah 35:8-9 speaks of “the highway of holiness in which no ravenous beast can go” Since there are no beasts on the highway of holiness, there is only singing and everlasting joy.

Isaiah 11:6-11

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.

⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest.

⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean.

Amos 5:19 “It will be as though a man fled from a lion, only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.”

We remember David, when he was out protecting the sheep in the wilderness he slew a bear and a lion. David is a type of Christ. These are just connections with all of the symbolism, but what is the practical aspect of Jesus being in the wilderness with the wild beasts? It must be mentioned for some reason. So He’s sleeping out in the open at night in the wilderness. He is exposed to the weather and to the critters... the snakes, the mammals, and the bugs for forty days and nights.

I remember when I was on that Sabbatical ... I had a six week Sabbatical. I spent one night camped out in Amicola State Park in northern Georgia by myself. I was in a tent. There was this guy who came along as I was getting ready to go to bed. He came up where the Appalachian Trail comes up in the park. He stumbled up. He looked like he was in some distress; that he was diabetic and needed something to eat. So I pulled out some things to give him and he seemed to feel better after he ate a little bit.

He said, “I hadn’t had anything to eat except the rattlesnake I killed on the trail. I cooked him and ate him.” That made me feel a lot better about sleeping up there that night. {nervous giggles}.

Jean: At least one was gone. That's one less snake you had to worry about.

Rod: Yes, there was one less wild beast out there. Although I was a little afraid of the guy himself because he looked like ... if anybody just kills a rattlesnake and eats it on the trail; he might be rougher than the snake. So I had one of those nights where I was a little bit nervous because there was hardly anybody else in the park. There was one guy who was a caretaker in the park who looked down from a house trailer or something like that but – you know. There's nothing *o ...t* there. There were some bathrooms you could go to and they set the trash cans up in a way that kept the bears out of them. So...I'm like, "Okay. Here we are, Jesus ... me and the wild beasts here in Amicola State Park."

So, just the mere physical discomfort of being there ... how did Jesus handle this for forty days and forty nights? Was He fearful? Did a snake slither across His feet while He slept? Did a scorpion bite Him? How about sand fleas? Could he hear sounds in the night? Was He able to identify the animals ... He made them. He knew what they sounded like. Did Jesus have any fear at all while He was out there sleeping in the wilderness?

As He became hungrier and weaker, did His mood change? Does your mood change when you get hungry? I wonder if Jesus' mood changed if He got hungry. Did He hallucinate? I guess that's possible. If you get hungry enough you might start seeing things like Big Macs. Did He have to struggle harder to hang on during those forty days and forty nights? Did Satan work in the shadows watching for a vulnerable point of attack, because when you are weak, you can also be more vulnerable spiritually? When you're feeling pretty good and everything is going fairly well you're alert and stay on your toes. When you're not feeling well, you may be under spiritual attack as well.

Did Jesus spend long hours praying? Did He sing? Did He study nature while He was out there? Did he check on some of the critters He had made? He was there 57,600 minutes! (I don't know why I thought of doing that.) Can you imagine 57,600 minutes alone? No T. V. No radio. No telephone.

Did He talk to Himself? Was it anything like "Castaways"?

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castaways_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castaways_(TV_series))

It chronicles the lives of 12 individuals as they try to survive on a number of islands in Indonesia. Unlike other reality shows, participants on Castaways may not be initially aware that there are other "Castaways" nearby. Moreover, the participants can leave only by waiting for a rescue team at the end of the show or by quitting. Each castaway has one piece of luggage. They all arrive alone and with their or someone else's luggage washed up on shore with them. Everyone is required to have a journal in their luggage where they write about themselves, thus allowing those who find it to learn about them.

3.45,000,000 seconds alone. Did He lay awake counting the stars, calling them one-by-one by name, remembering what it was like at creation? How would I do? I don't think I would do very well ... forty days and forty nights in the wilderness with no food - me and the critters.

Mark indicates during this forty day period, Jesus was being tempted by Satan, the accuser. So from Hebrew, to Greek, to English, and other languages transliterated, it's an ancient name for an ancient enemy. There are many unknowns regarding this person, this angel that we know as Satan, but regarding the mind of Christ, I wonder if this was Jesus' first personal encounter with him. I don't think it's 'likely' to be His first personal encounter, but this was a very personal encounter.

Brian: All the demons knew who he was, right?

Rod: Yes, they knew who he was.

Did Jesus do battle with him in His pre-incarnate state? Maybe before Jesus became a man He had a personal battle with Satan. Had they ever talked? Remember in the book of **Job 1:6** *One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.* We know nothing in Scripture to answer all of these questions, but we know that Jesus had knowledge of him. But did He have **experience** with him? Jesus had known temptation in the flesh before this experience, yet without sin, of course. Was Satan any match for Jesus? Did Jesus fast forty days in the wilderness to make it a fair fight? The salvation of the world, the will of God and the integrity of God was at stake in the contest.

It says He was tempted. Peirazo “πειραζω”. This word has a range of meanings. It means to be tested in regard to an endeavor; to be scrutinized, to be enticed, to be disciplined, to assay (like you do assay of metal to determine what the metal is), to examine, to prove, to tempt, to try. It can be related to the words trial, experience, and is often used in a good sense to ascertain character, views or feelings of someone. Matthew 22:35-6 in the questioning of the lawyers says, *“One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

But in many cases, the intent is called, ‘assayer’. One of the attempts of temptation is to cause someone to fail. The temptation in the hands of Satan is to failure. Trials and testing in the hands of God are for the purpose of proving what we are made of in order for us to succeed. Galatians 6:1 says, *“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But **watch yourselves**, or you also may **be tempted**.”* James 1:13-14, *“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”* Rev. 2:10 says, *“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.”*

1 Cor. 7:5 indicates that situations may create greater opportunities to sin: *“Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”* What is tested here is self-control. In 1 Thess. 3:5 Paul fears that the tempter might have tempted them in some way that their labor was in vain. A person who falls for temptation can nullify their previous labor. Wipe it out.

Whatever gains that they had made can be wiped out if you succumb to a temptation. If that happens, basically you have to start over. And Of course, we can start over because God is gracious and He will forgive us. It's like the prodigal son who **can** come home.

1 Cor. 10:13 says, “**But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.**”

All of these are teachings from Scripture about temptation. We can only imagine how all this applied specifically to Christ and His temptation.

So if we could identify the struggle in Jesus' mind regarding the temptation, we would know what it is like, and how Jesus thought during this period of intense temptation, and how practically wonderful it would be to know the mind of the Lord.

When I think about Jesus going through these forty days and forty nights, I need to understand, ‘what is His thought process in this.’ If someone could lay that out in great, detail, that would be wonderful, but we only have so much information.

The last thing that Mark mentions is that the angels were ministering to Him. So angels figure prominently in the Jesus Story thus far. The word *angel* means, “one sent” or “a messenger”. Of course, the Father sent them. How many were there? We do not know if only two or three angels came, or there were hundreds or thousands who were with Him in the wilderness. Did the Father hand-pick the best, or send Michael the archangel, or Gabriel? Did Satan bring his demons (fallen angels) with him for back-up? Was there fighting going on? Were there fights going on in the background of these temptations? This would have been an interesting scene in which to pull back the curtain and being able to see what was going on during this time with the angels of God and the fallen angels, of Satan if there were any . . . and maybe the battles that were ensuing during this time.

They were ministering to Him. What does that mean? They were rendering service. They were tending to Him. They were serving, they were waiting on Him, and they were assisting Him supplying the necessities of life. Was ‘being there’ enough to help Him through this? What did they do practically? What did they actually ‘*do*’ to minister to Him?

It says He was fasting so they weren't serving Him food. Did they talk to Him? Did He have conversations at night with the angels? This reference does raise this issue: Jesus needed to be ministered to. He was a dependant person. You only minister to those who *need* to be ministered to. He could not ... did not ... go it alone. I assume He could see and could communicate with His angels. Did they protect Him from the wild beasts as they did for Daniel in the Lion's den?

The mind of Christ is relational. It is not sealed in a box. It is dynamic. It communicates. It corresponds. It allows for giving and receiving. Jesus had true vulnerabilities ... could we say, “weaknesses” because of being in a body? He had needs and He needed others both other-worldly and this worldly ... People of the other world and this world.

He had His Father, the Holy Spirit, angels, his disciples, women who followed along with Him. He had John the Baptist to minister *to* Him and *with* Him. He did not deem this a ‘weakness’ or ‘out of place’ to admit His need, to accept the help. He accepted it. ★ Remember how I taught that one of the *key understandings* of Jesus’ mind, I believe, is His ability to love and to be loved. That made that perfect balance – that blend of being able to love other people and to receive love Himself made Him a balanced person.

Could He have said to the angels, “What are you all doing here? I got this! I don’t need you. Why don’t you go back to Heaven? Go help some of those people out there. They need you.” He was not so macho that He had to try to do this work on His own. He was surrounded and gained from others. This is a piece of the mind of Christ. Lord, help me to have this mind.

Brian: In Matthew it says that it was after the devil left; that was when the angels came. Mark doesn’t tell us when – at what point.

Rod: Right. We don’t know exactly when they interjected.

Jean: There are so many times that we’re told not to be afraid. We’re told that over and over again. I don’t think Jesus was afraid.

Rod: Right. Many times when angels came and encountered human beings, one of the first things they told them was ‘don’t be afraid’. But if I saw an angel, with a sword ...

Matthew uses the term devil instead of Satan (diabolos - διαβολος). It also means ‘accuser’ or ‘slanderer’. It is actually two words. It means ‘through’ and ‘throw’. It means ‘to throw something through’, slander.

Luke also says Devil. Both **Luke** and **Matthew** mention He ate nothing, or fasted for forty days and forty nights. He became hungry. Fasted is the Greek word ‘nesteusos’ (νηστευσας) – to abstain from food religiously, so it’s not just a diet. Strictly, fasting is a religious practice.

It is interesting that both Matthew and Luke indicate that it was not until the end of the forty days and forty nights that He became hungry. **Matthew** says afterward, he hungered (first aorist, past tense, simple action seems to make it clear that he became hungry *after* the forty days of fasting!) Does this mean He felt no hunger on day twenty-five? I believe it means that He reached His **greatest** state of hunger after forty days of fasting. **Luke** says, after these days had ended, (or complete entirely, to fulfill, to accomplish), Jesus fasted the entire forty days and forty nights, and **then** the temptations directly by Satan began. I believe that the temptations didn’t happen until He was at His most vulnerable spot – not during those forty days but at the end of those forty days.

Does this mean that there were not natural or fleshly temptations before that time – the kind that originate in the mind or desire? It was the more direct, satanic temptations came at the end of the forty days and forty nights.

What endurance, and perseverance and determination and discipline to devote himself to this spiritual retreat for this long without food. It *doesn't* say He went without water. There was loss of weight. I don't know how much weight you lose in forty days. I imagine you'd lose quite a bit of body weight, muscle mass and all. The toll on His body would have been remarkable.

For instance, Gandhi fasted for six days in September of 1932 for equal rights for the untouchables. In 1933 he did a twenty-one day fast for this cause. There is much available about the physical effects of fasting, especially for forty days.

{https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fasts_undertaken_by_Mahatma_Gandhi}

I've read where, particularly in places like India, in places like Korea and other certain kinds of churches, there are people who *regularly* fast for forty days. I say regularly meaning that they plan a forty day fast in order to be like Jesus. I've never personally known somebody who has done that for forty days.

Ron: I did a forty day fast once, but it was under the supervision of a doctor and he had me drink juices up to 600 calories a day for forty days. I think I remember how delicious that first meal was. It was eggs and a little bit of toast and it was so, so good.

Rod: I would imagine that you kind of had to eat little by little to get yourself back on food.

Ron: Yes, I did.

So now we DO know somebody who fasted forty days and nights. The discipline of fasting is expected in the New Testament actually. Matthew 6 says **when** you fast... It has a real spiritual purpose. I would recommend a book by John Piper called "*A Hunger for God*" if you want to understand some of the spiritual dimensions behind fasting. He goes a little bit into the how to do it and how not to do it, but it's mostly about the spiritual aspects of what fasting is ... the purpose of fasting.

So, if Jesus "*needed*" to fast, what was in his mind on this? I put "needed" in parenthesis because, "why did He do it if he didn't **need** to"? And why did he **need** to? I understand that this was the beginning of His ministry; He's going to start after the fast is over, but why did he "**need**" to?

Mathew also calls Him "the tempter", talking about Satan now. So we have three names now in this context here: He's called Satan, the devil and the tempter. And as he enters, I've noticed a couple of differences between *Matthew* and *Luke*.

First, Matthew says, "And approaching" in the Greek. Tell, or order, or command {the stones} to become bread. I would have to go back to the context here to understand why I wrote this in my journal. But there are some subtle differences between Matthew and Luke and the language that they used. Matthew does use the plural of stones and loaves, and Luke uses the singular stone or loaf. I don't see the significances in that, but there are differences in the text. Not contradictions ... just differences.

But it says “approaching”, “to come and go”, “to draw near”. This is Satan approaching near to Him. Did Satan watch the ordeal of Jesus from a distance? Did he lurk in the shadows? Did he tail Jesus waiting for His weakest moment looking for just the right time to strike like a snake or a lion? Was Jesus aware of Satan’s presence before he passed? Was the watcher being watched?

Second, Matthew uses a stronger phrase for Satan’s temptation. He uses “to tell in order”, a force or command. In other words, when Satan tempted Him to turn the stones into bread, he “commanded” Him to turn those stones into bread. It’s a very strong word.

So Satan knew Jesus could turn a stone into a loaf of bread. He knew that. It wasn’t a question of whether He could do it. He knew that it must have some power, force or intention, so notice carefully - “in order that” is a statement of purpose.

Third, the significance of Matthew using the plural while Luke uses the singular is not clear. Practically, what difference does it make? But for accuracy’s sake, was it just a quote, and was it intended to be an exact quote? In other words, I just struggle sometimes with the consistency of the reports as to what actually happened. Again, it doesn’t mean they’re contradictory, but why would one writer say one thing and another say something else?

The opportunity for the first temptation is physical need ... hunger. One of our most basic desires is eating. We **must** eat. What is the real issue here? Is it just “not doing anything Satan said to do because Satan **said** it?” In other words, what is the essence of the temptation here? Was the essence of the temptation that ‘Satan told me to do it so I can’t do anything that Satan tells me to do so I just won’t do it?’ Was it because the ‘command’ of Satan was attached to it? “If you are God’s son” may be the phrase that got Jesus. “If you are God’s son ...” Was it because Jesus was not ready to break the fast and His commitment was not complete, so He didn’t turn the stone to bread? Was it because Jesus did not want to use His power on earth for ‘personal’ comfort? Was it simply I’m not going to work a miracle because I’m uncomfortable? I know that I think I would have been tempted if I were out there sleeping to turn one of those stones into my pillow. I think I would have slept a little better.

Brian: It seems like the issue with Jesus was He refused to do it just to prove a point or because somebody just said so. He only seemed to do them for the glory of God and somehow in the timing of God. So, to do a miracle for one’s own need would be to deny God’s power to take care of Him or to circumvent that. So that’s why I always thought He didn’t ... or it wasn’t to the glory of God, and it would be ‘not trusting God’ which is really at the heart of many of our sins.

Carole: I think when somebody says, “If you believe this” or “if you think” they’re almost **daring** you ... they’re tempting you: go head, do something on your own. And the whole purpose, from my studies over the years, of the temptations, was to get Jesus to act independently of God – and He would not do it without God’s permission.

Rod: Okay. Those are some of the things that we have to struggle with here about what the essence of the temptation was.

Brenda: Jesus wasn't being oppositionally defiant. And people who try to, like with little kids, "if you do that one more time you step right over the line. They are being oppositionally defiant. But they can be easily manipulated by other people when they get in that mode. Usually they don't realize that they can be easily manipulated by **you** doing the opposite of what they are **expecting** you to do. When you do that, you do the opposite. You don't buy into that...you don't answer baited questions. If you refuse to answer a baited question, you take away their power.

Rod: Well, in regard to Jesus 'not doing something for his own comfort', He **did** allow the angels to minister to Him. That may have been something of a comfort to him, although I don't know if that required Him to do a miracle with God sending the angels there **for** Him.

What was in Jesus' mind when He thought why He must resist this temptation? What was going on in his mind when he said, 'I have to resist this temptation – I must not turn these stones into bread'? What **made** it a temptation for Jesus?

The phrase, "If you are the Son of God" – How offensive this phrase must have been to Jesus. He must have been tempted just to prove this to Satan and later to people. Was there any relationship more 'dear' to Jesus than the one with His Father? So, to say, "***If you are the Son of God***" it **certainly** is a "baited" question. It is poking Him in a very sore spot.

Carole: If somebody said to me, "If you're a Christian, you would do so 'such and such'" I would be so tempted to do it right on the spot ... but now I'll think about it more.

Rod: That's good

Later at the cross, in Matthew 27:42-43 we read, "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now **if he wants {if He takes pleasure in Him-NASB}**, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Luke reports in 23:35, "He saved others; let Him save Himself **if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.**" ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, ..."

So Jesus is getting the same kinds of things on the cross.

Jean: In my mind, I always think about why He had the temptation. I think it was to show the Devil that He wasn't going to give in He quoted Scriptures every time he tempted Him. He was going to stay faithful to God even though He was suffering. I think Jesus was there so that the devil could have a shot at him and lose, and God will know that He's still being obedient to Me no matter how bad off He is.

Sandy: It seems to me that Jesus, knowing God, would have total trust, and He still knows who **He** is, and I would guess He had total confidence. He didn't **need** to go to the wilderness. **He** knew who He was.

Carole: But we know from last week that He didn't go into the wilderness. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. It wasn't His idea. He was brought, or thrown into the wilderness.

Rod: Yes.

Jean: Another Scripture says that He learned obedience from the things He suffered.

So, in Luke 23:37 it says, "**If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!**" It's that, "If you are". And here's what I want you to do "to prove that's who you are." ...**If** you are...

Surely Satan knew who Jesus was. He wasn't literally asking Him if he really was the Son of God and if you do this I'll know for **sure** that you are. He **knew** He was. But He was setting up tests or signs by which Jesus could prove it. Jesus, in the course of His ministry *did* prove it. (**John 20:30-31**). [Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.](#) ³¹ [But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.](#)

The insincerity of Satan and those at the cross was evident. These people were not looking for evidence to believe. They simply wished to mock, and that is one of the things that Jesus never played in to. People who were insincere and really weren't looking for truth, they were just mockers, He gave them no place.

Jesus was physically weak in the desert, and at the cross. The most natural human instinct would be to think, "I'll show you", and reach over into the God-side of his nature and do something truly Divine with power to prove His identity. The issue has always been 'who is Jesus'. The voice of the Father at Jesus' baptism confirmed Jesus' identity as the Son of God and loved by Him. Was Satan there to hear these words and now using them as an occasion to tempt Jesus?

Would it be like us, saying, "We're a child of God" and someone responding, "If you are **really** a child of God, then call on Him to feed us. Surely 'your Father' would not want to see you go hungry. It's like setting up a false test ... watching someone to fail it only to say, "See. God really is not your Father and you're not His son.

But Jesus was not falling for these tricks. He knew who He was and He knew who His Father was. He was secure in His relationship with His Father. No doubts, perfect peace, contentment, He was sure throughout His life and in His death and in His resurrection of His Father's love. This was His protection from the assault of the devil, and His knowing His Father's word which we get into as well. The point is everything that Jesus knew was secure in the relationship with His Father and protected Him from the temptations.

There is a key here for us:

★ The more secure we are in our relationship with God, the more we know ‘who we are’, the more we protect ourselves from temptation. I don’t have anything to prove.

Brian: That is exactly like what Jesus said when He was washing the disciple’s feet. He showed that true humility because He knew who He was and where He was going. He could do that.

Rod: Absolutely. And Jesus had this confidence – this God confidence. I don’t even want to say self confidence; it was God confidence throughout His life. Again, he didn’t have to play the games. He didn’t **need** something external to Himself in order to make Himself something. HE WAS WHO HE WAS. And when you find people who know who they are, they’re above reproach. You can’t bribe them. You can’t sway them by saying, “I’ll do this for you if you do this for me.” They’re not into deals, and games.

So, Matthew, in questioning Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, there are only three in the Deity – and only one Son of God. So could there be a mistaken identity? I mean, there is nobody else who is THE Son of God. We are called sons of God through faith, but there is no one else who is THE Son of God and Satan knew this. The devils believe and tremble – James 2:19. Stones to bread – It’s an easy move for Jesus. His first public miracle was similar to that when he turned water into wine. But Jesus was no exhibitionist or some self-centered miracle worker.

Other than Jesus being extremely hungry, what was the temptation? Was it the command of Satan? Satan commanded the Son of God to command the stones – would this make Jesus a lower rank to Satan? What if it had been merely a request; not a command? Now Jesus’ own mother asked Him to turn water into wine ‘before His time’. And later Satan took Him to the Holy City and had Him stand on the Pinnacle of the Temple. He also took Him to a high mountain, and it says that Jesus complied with that. He didn’t fail to go with him. Did Satan command Him, “Come with me”? How did Satan get Him up there? I don’t know. But He went to the Pinnacle of the Temple and to the high mountain with Satan. Satan persuaded Him somehow, at least, to go that far.

So I think the answer is found in the reply. Jesus’ reply is to conclude for oneself how far to comply. He is going to draw a conclusion for Himself. He is going to respond. The nature of the temptation is found in His response. These temptations and the three responses all begin with the words, “It is written”. So Jesus appeals to the authority of Scripture. It’s a crucial question in understanding the mind of Christ is how did Jesus come to connect certain Scriptures to certain circumstances? If we are going to understand the Mind of Christ, how did He come to apply the three Scriptures that He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy? How did he come to apply **those** scriptures to **this** circumstance?

You may say, ‘well, it’s Jesus, okay.’ But what I’m getting at here is that if I am going to have the Mind of Christ, I am going to have to apply Scriptures to **MY** circumstances. And I am going to have to apply the **right** Scriptures to the **right** circumstances if I am going to have the mind of Christ.

Ruth: Since Jesus is the **Word**, He would know all the words given to Moses on the mountain: the 10 commandments, the structure of the tabernacle, the sacrifice laws, the vestments of the priests, and the whole of the Law of Moses. He would know how to properly use them in every situation. *So maybe His forty days and forty nights that He spent fasting* was the time for the ‘**earthly Jesus**’ to think about the words that Moses collected in ‘his’ fast.

This was the beginning of His ministry. The Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. He fasted for 40 days like Moses did when he received the law. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit had designed a plan to redeem man from his own sinful self-centered willfulness. They all knew that Jesus, as a man, could be tempted away from that plan. He might want to take an easier route than the one planned, he might want to eat just a little to help his earthly body be helped from the pain of hunger.

But I think this was his chance to work through these plans in his prayerful time of fasting and remember his words and renew his commitment to the word he had given and the plans they had made so he could stand against the wiles of the devil as a man

It brought both covenants together in the beginning, and his experience of having given the words to Moses, and seeing that they had an effect on people, would then make it possible for Jesus to say to Satan, “you can’t use this trick on me. I know what these words are supposed to do.”

Rod: That’s good reasoning to put all those things together. Yes, very good...very good.

So Jesus came to connect certain scriptures to certain circumstances. But quoting the Bible can be a dangerous thing, **making** whatever quotes **prove** your point. That’s what ‘we do’ sometimes. We pull Scripture out to prove **our** point instead of trying to **understand** the point of the Scripture to prove us, or to test **us**. But Jesus did not do this.

We’ve run out of time. We’ll stop here and pick up next week.