

40-04-06-Christ's Answer to the First Temptation

Lent, fasting, Satan, temptation, bread, spiritual life, Communion

Mat 4:3-4

We live out our true humanity by depending on life's true Source.

INTRODUCTION:

–**Mat 4:3-4** (NIV), *The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”* Jesus

answered Satan by stating a fundamental human principle: **HOM.idea.**

–Christ's temptations were real. Some say He couldn't have yielded to them. If so—if *His divinity* rescued *His humanity*—then these weren't authentic temptations, like ours! Jesus wouldn't have been one of us, but a superhuman, invalidating the Incarnation's nature and purpose, which are the basis of *Christ's priestly ministry*—**Heb 4:15**. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

–Because Jesus could have failed, as the first humans did, our salvation depended on His passing *this* test, and every other test on His way to the Cross. Everything Adam & Eve lost, when tempted by Satan, Jesus came to win back—**Luke 19:10**, “...the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” This meant defeating the deceptions that had brought about the loss—**1 John 3:8b**. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. The defeat began here in the desert, not achieved by a superhuman Savior, but by the eternal Word of God becoming a human, like us.

I. Satan Tempts Humans to Be on Their Own

- A. While Satan might not have understood all that God was up to in the Incarnation, he did know humans and their weaknesses.
 1. Who he saw in front of him was not the glorious Being of Light Who had created him, but a simple carpenter, *weak from fasting*.
 2. Satan knew that these *animal-like creatures*, in God's image, had been succumbing to his temptations since the beginning. (If God *really had become one of them*, He was now able to be tempted.)
- B. What had been the devil's original temptation in Eden?
 1. Satan had led humans *to disregard God's warnings* about eating a *spiritually deadly fruit*. (He said it wouldn't kill them, but give them open-eyed enlightenment, making them *like God*.)

2. Satan knew “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” would make humans *morally independent from God*. (They would be able to chose what’s *right* and *wrong* or “good and evil” on their own, by *internal* “knowledge” rather than depending on God for guidance.)

TRANS: God alone, by His nature, is *independent* in knowing “good and evil.” Morally *dependent* beings, by becoming *independent of God*, die spiritually. That’s why God reacted in **Gen 3:22**. And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” That fruit killed Adam & Eve spiritually. God didn’t want them to “live forever” in that *spiritually disconnected* state, but *to be saved* and to **live out their true humanity by depending on life’s true Source.**

II. Satan Tempts Us to Doubt Who We Really Are

- A. Jesus learned His identity through the Holy Spirit. (At His baptism the *Father’s voice* and the *Holy Spirit’s descent* confirmed this.)
1. Satan—using the Father’s declaration, “This is my Son”—turned it around into a challenge: “*If you are God’s Son, prove it!*”
 2. Satan tempted Jesus to doubt His identity, just as he’d done with Eve, who *already* had God’s “likeness”—**Gen 3:5**, “...when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil.”
- B. Satan chose logic as a *point of proof*: “A real God-Man could satisfy hunger supernaturally, so ‘*tell these stones to become bread.*’”
1. Satan’s temptations in *the Garden* and *the desert* both focused on eating. (The big difference was that Eve was *surrounded by food*, while Jesus had none and was *aching with hunger*.)
 2. But the temptation in both situations, was to *act independently of God’s direction*. (For Christ, this would mean abandoning His divine mission of *being a real human*, fully dependent on God.)

TRANS: Under the Spirit’s leading, Jesus would later fill nets with fish, turn water to wine, feed thousands from some loaves of bread and a few fish. That wouldn’t prove He was the God-Man. It would *show* that, in becoming human, God learned how to hear God’s voice, to obey God’s will, and to rely on God’s power. God in human flesh really learned how to live out His true humanity by depending on life’s true Source. And that’s what He calls us to, when He says, “Follow Me.”

III. Christ’s Answer Reaffirmed Humanity’s True Nature—Mat 4:4**.**
Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

- A. This ended round one, because Satan knew that all created beings, *angelic* or *earthly*, received their “*life from the mouth of God.*”
1. But in our case, life came intimately “*from the mouth of God*”—**Gen 2:7**, the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.
 2. God’s *written Word* came in a similar way as *spiritual nurture* for human souls – **2 Tim 3:16**, All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...
 3. That same *Breath of God* [Holy Spirit] incarnated *the living Word*, as the angel told Joseph—**Mat 1:20a**, ...do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
- B. Christ was identifying His life, and this *Spirit-led testing*, with His humanity by answering Satan from **Deut 8:2-3**. Remember how the LORD your **God led you** all the way **in the desert** these **forty years**, to humble you and **to test you** in order **to know what was in your heart**, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, **causing you to hunger** and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that **man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD**. (These parallels are *so obvious!*)
1. This was a real test! (By *foresight*, God knew Jesus would pass it, but, to be foreseen in eternity, it had to really happen in time.)
 2. When “the Word [God’s Son] became flesh,” He brought salvation by never forsaking His mission of *being a real human Savior* and of *providing us with His promise* in **John 6:51**, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”
 3. Christ’s key to victory, each step on His way to the Cross, **was not** in using *superhuman power*, but in choosing to listen to and trust in and follow out “*every word that comes from the mouth of God.*”

CONCLUSION:

—That is the key to our spiritual victory in life: to *trust* and *obey* God’s Word. **We live out our true humanity by depending on life’s true Source**. Jesus showed us how to do this, and He told us, “Follow Me.”