

"9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; 11 and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." 12 Immediately the Spirit *impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him." Mark 1:9-13, NAS95.

Jesus submits to a baptism of repentance, not to repent but by obedience to identify with those who need to repent for he will represent them before God as he takes their sin upon himself. He takes on the servant role as we have already noted with Scripture.

All through Scripture there is an inseparable element between the Messiah and His people. So, Jesus' ministry begins by establishing this truth.

The next part of this baptism event is the descending of the Spirit from heaven and resting upon Jesus.

The descent of the Spirit links him with the Old Testament hope integral to the age of salvation, the New covenant era proclaims him to be both Messiah (Psalm 2:7)

"7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" Psalms 2:7, NAS95.

and the Suffering Servant (Isa. 42:1) - a tension that continues throughout Mark's narrative where OT Scriptures are quoted (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1, cf. 63:10 - 64:1).

Why we would say a tension? Israel as a whole was not looking for a suffering servant. They were looking for a warrior king.

Jesus baptism has these two elements, the actual baptism and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental feature of all the narratives is that on the occasion of his baptism Jesus is anointed with the Spirit (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). It is this anointing with the Spirit that inaugurates the ministry of Jesus which is characterized in three gospels by the power of the Spirit of the new age (Matt. 12:18, 28; Luke 4:18; 11:20; cf. Acts 10:38).

The anointing by the Spirit is the initial act of fulfillment (Luke 4:18, citing Isa. 61:1-2) which characterizes the whole story of Jesus and the subsequent story of the early

church. This fulfillment motif is seen at two points. First, in all three of the Synoptic Gospels the temptation experience in the desert immediately follows the anointing of the Spirit; indeed Jesus is led by the Spirit (Mark: driven by the Spirit; Luke: led in the Spirit) into the desert. In the framework of these gospel narratives, the Spirit of the new age is confronted by the spirit who dominates the present.

Jesus' conquest in the desert as we will study next week, becomes the pattern for the rest of the Gospels as they report the power of Jesus to heal the sick and cast out demons. The presence of the Spirit of the new age raises the specter of the "unpardonable sin" against the Spirit, namely the sin of ascribing to the power of this age the healing work of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:28; Luke 12:10).

The link between Jesus' anointing with the Spirit and the fulfillment motif is to be noted also in the fact that Jesus inaugurates his ministry immediately after his baptism and the temptation. "Time is fulfilled: the kingdom of God is before you; repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15; cf. Matt. 4:17). Jesus declares the demise of the old and the initial thrust of the new. The promise of prophets is offered and people are invited to enter. From this point on, the burden of the word and work of Jesus is to invite, to initiate newness, to portray the freedom created by the Spirit, as well as to speak judgment upon the old system ruled by law, whose only fruit is oppression and death.

This significance of Jesus' anointing by the Spirit at his baptism is further noted in the words by which Jesus confirmed John the Baptist. No one is greater than John, yet anyone in the kingdom is greater. He is the final figure who concludes the old and introduces the new. He is the forerunner (Matt. 11:11-14). The anointing of Jesus at his baptism is the specific midpoint, not in numbers of years of human history but in redemptive history; it is the beginning of final fulfillment.

Let's not forget that the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus is not the promised baptism in the Spirit, for Jesus himself is the one who shall baptize. The experience of the Spirit at the baptism of Jesus is a bestowal that establishes the messianic character of his ministry. This is noted in the voice from heaven, "You are my Son, my beloved" (or

"chosen").

The Triune Godhead is the river Jordan: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. A whole new way of relating to God is about to be ushered in based on Jesus' identifying with those who will be His.

Special significance is to be seen in the fact that Jesus submitted to the baptism of John, which was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John has called a sinful and self-righteous people to turn quickly before an impending judgment descends. "Already the ax is laid to the root of the tree." Matthew's narrative focuses on the issue, for in it the Baptist attempts to protest the inappropriateness of Jesus coming to be baptized. The baptism of Jesus marks his solidarity as the messianic servant with his people. He takes upon himself by this religious act their condition and their predicament. He becomes their representative. Coming to them and speaking to them he takes his place with them. Incarnation is not only coming to earth but also assuming the burden of life in the flesh. He not only speaks to them but will also speak for them in prayer. The significance of the baptism of Jesus is set forth in stark terms by Paul: "He who knew no sin became sin for us in order that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Cor. 5:21).

It is with reference to this act of solidarity and identification that we see again the significance of the temptations in the desert, for there he experiences in an intense way the predicament of the human condition. He resists the fundamental temptation to use his power, a temptation thrown at him even in his last hour (Matt. 27:40, 42.) in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In his baptism he prepares himself for death, the ultimate expression of non-power for mankind, for the people with whom he identifies, and makes the identification complete.

Jesus' baptism has an ultimate purpose. It is to direct our attention to him as the God-man, the servant, the righteous one who came to save his people from their sin, whenever they may live and wherever they may live, in the world. It is one of two preparatory steps for Christ to begin his three-year ministry in a sense as a marked man.

It will be the beginning of praise and punishment, hallelujahs and hatred, sympathy and scorn, love and hate, healing and misery, death and life, judgment and glory.

Praise God for such a Savior.

Lets get the bigger picture of the temptation.

"1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" 5 Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand 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 WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL 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 glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him." Matthew 4:1-11, NAS95.

To us 'Temptation' suggests a purely negative experience; but this was a divinely intended preparation for Jesus' mission. The word more commonly means 'test', and this is a better translation here.

The focus is on Jesus' recently declared status as Son of God in our text of Mark. What are its implications for his relationship with his Father?

The three tests examine aspects of that relationship, and the ways in which a misuse of that status could, humanly speaking ruin Jesus' ministry. He must be ready to accept privation in fulfilling his God-given task without 'pulling rank' (2-4) as it were; He had to trust his Father's care without the need to test it by forcing God's hand (5-7); and to reject the 'short cut' to the fulfilment of his mission which would be achieved at the cost of compromising his loyalty to his Father (9-13).

Each suggestion is rebutted by a text of Scripture, all of which come from Dt. 6-8.

That passage relates Israel's experience of testing in the desert ('as a man disciplines his son', Dt. 8:5; *cf.* 8:2), and the texts quoted focus on the lessons Israel should have learned by that experience. Now a new 'son of God', the true vine, the true Israel is being prepared for his role, and the same principles of obedience, imperfectly learned by Israel, must be the basis of the ministry of Jesus, the 'new Israel'.

Jesus Overcomes Israel's Tests

The three texts from Deuteronomy (6:13, 16; 8:3) cited here in Matthew (4:4, 7, 10) were commands God gave to Israel when he tested Israel for forty years in the wilderness. Unlike Israel of old, Jesus as Israel's representative (1:1; 2:15) passes the tests.

"1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Matthew 4:1, NAS95.

v.1 *The devil* was the agent and tempted Jesus to misuse his position; but his hostile purpose was put to the service of God's testing of his Son. Satan is in the end a servant of God.

4:1. One of the most common recitations of God's acts in the Old Testament was that he "led" his people in the wilderness (see especially Is 63:14), where they were tested. Although the Old Testament only rarely mentions the devil, his activity as tempter (*cf.* Job 1-2) had come into focus much more by Jesus' day. The surprising point here for most Jewish readers would not have been that the devil was providing temptation, but that he was doing it in person.

"2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry." Matthew 4:2, NAS95.

v.2 Jesus' *fasting* and *hunger* show that the Son of God was not free from real human suffering. 4:2. Moses also fasted forty day and nights; This is an excellent picture of Jesus may as a new Moses, the new lawgiver of the Sermon on the Mount (see Mt 5:1-2). Israel also was in the wilderness forty years (see the introduction to this section).

"3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."" Matthew 4:3, NAS95.

4:3. The ancients attributed this sort of feat to magicians, who claimed to be able to

transform themselves into animals and to transform other substances, like stones into bread. Many Jewish people were also hoping for a new exodus led by a new Moses—complete with new manna, or bread from heaven. The devil wants to conform Jesus to the contemporary expectations of those waiting for the conquering Messiah.

"4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"" Matthew 4:4, NAS95.

4:4. The devil challenges or seeks to define Jesus' sonship (4:3), against God's Word as is in our text in Mark 1:11 and other Gospels. But Jesus would have known the context of Deuteronomy 8:3, which he cites: he can depend on God's provision of manna in the wilderness because God is Jesus' Father as God was Israel's (Deut 8:5).

"6 and *said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"" Matthew 4:6, NAS95.

v.6 The devil's quotation from Ps. 91:11-12 was quite accurate (and no doubt, if tested, would have proved reliable), but even a correct quotation of Scripture can be misapplied. 4:5-6. "The holy city" was a standard title for Jerusalem. The devil takes Jesus to a part of the temple that overlooked a deep valley; a fall from there would have meant certain death. Later rabbis acknowledged that the devil and demons could handle Scripture expertly. Here the devil cites Psalm 91:11-12 out of context; 91:10 makes clear that God's angelic protection (cf. Mk 1:13) is for events that befall his servants, not an excuse to seek out such dangers. The devil phrases his temptation in standard Jewish wisdom language (Wisdom of Solomon 2:18).

"7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"" Matthew 4:7, NAS95.

4:7. Jesus cites Deuteronomy 6:16, which refers to how the Israelites had tested God at Massah and Meribah by refusing to accept that God was among them until he wrought a sign for them (Ex 17:7).

"8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;" Matthew 4:8, NAS95. "9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.""" Matthew 4:9, NAS95.

v.8 Contrast Mt. 28:18, where, by the path of obedience, Jesus has received all authority not only on earth but also in heaven!

4:8-9. This realm did not technically belong to the devil (see Dan 4:32), who owned human hearts only as a usurper. The best the devil could do would be to make Jesus the political, military sort of Messiah most Jewish people who expected a Messiah were

anticipating.

"10 Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him." Matthew 4:10, 11, NAS95.

4:10-11. Deuteronomy 6:13, which Jesus cites, prohibits idolatry (see Deut 6:14), a commandment anyone who worshiped the devil would obviously violate.

As much he was tempted as the New Israel he also had to be tempted as the New Adam. It was necessary for the Christ to defeat Satan as the New Adam or the last Adam as in 1 Cor 15:45.

It was necessary for the Christ to identify with His people as we mentioned last week but here specifically in their sufferings. It was necessary for the Christ to be an example to His own for He came to save His people from their sin Mt.1:21. It was necessary to demonstrate that God's Lamb, though He was greatly tempted, would remain without spot or blemish. If he were not put the test then he would not be able to take our sin upon himself and be treated as if he were a sinner.

The letter to the Hebrew's, significantly points to the importance of Jesus' identification with His people.

Heb. 2:18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Heb 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb 5:7-10 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. (8) Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. (9) And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, (10) being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

As one of us Christ knew temptation and suffering. Many ask why?

The answer is God intended it for him because he intended it for us.

Christ completely identifies with our temptations and suffering and by the power of him

through his Holy Spirit we are able to endure just as he did. We will not do it perfectly.

We are not the God-man, but we are God's people, born of him and kept by him for him and his glory. All of His purposes for us will be accomplished.

In closing I would like to share some thoughts from my dear brother Moe Bergeron

“As we close I want to encourage you in Christ with two contrasting thoughts: ¶The first Adam succumbed to Satan, wiles and ultimately rebelled against God in a friendly environment. Adam's home was a Paradise. A cultivated garden. He surrendered under the best of conditions. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, won His victory over Satan and temptation while in a most hostile environment. This victory over Satan was but a glimpse of what was to come. And here is yet another promise to take and embrace: Mat 12:18-21 "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. (19) He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; (20) a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; (21) and in his name the Gentiles will hope." Amen.”

Brethren, Jesus completed two steps before engaging in his public ministry that would culminate in His ascension to heaven. He came and was baptized by John and impelled by the spirit of God to enter the wilderness and be tempted. In both he showed his complete identification with those who would be his people through the ages, both Jew and Gentile as one new people in Christ.