

The Temptations of Christ: Matthew 4. 1-11.

INTRODUCTION

One feature sets the narrative of our Lord's temptations apart from most others in the gospels.¹ Because there were no human witnesses, it could have come only from either the Lord Jesus Himself or directly from the Holy Spirit.²

Verse 1

All three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) record our Lord's temptations in the wilderness.³ And all three make it clear that it was the Holy Spirit who was responsible for the Saviour's being in the place of temptation:

- (i) *Matthew* tells us that Jesus was 'led up' by the Spirit into the wilderness;
- (ii) *Luke* tells us that He was 'led' by the Spirit 'in' (not as the King James Version, 'into') the wilderness⁴; and
- (iii) *Mark* tells us, rather more vividly, that He was 'driven out' ('thrust forth') by the Spirit into the wilderness.⁵

The role of the Holy Spirit at this point ('Jesus was led up by the Spirit') is all the more striking because it is recorded between other expressions which describe our Lord's movements, neither of which make any such reference: 'Jesus came from Galilee to John',⁶ and 'when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee'.⁷

Clearly, it was *God's* will that the Lord Jesus should be tried and tempted, for this is said to be the express intention of the Holy Spirit; Jesus was, Matthew makes clear, 'led up of the Spirit ... to be tempted of the devil'.

It was *God's* purpose that our Lord should be tested⁸ in this way that He should be *demonstrated* to be holy and sinless. 'The purpose of the Spirit could only be that our Lord should be proved ... that His perfection of holiness should be thereby displayed'.⁹ The Spirit's aim was to accredit Jesus; the devil's aim was to discredit Jesus.

'Led up of the Spirit ... tempted of the devil': 'By this phrasing, Matthew warns against two common errors—blaming God for temptation and crediting the devil with power to act independently of God. In the New Testament, God is always so dissociated from evil that He is never directly responsible for tempting humans.¹⁰ Yet the devil is never portrayed as an enemy equal with but opposite to God; he always remains bound by what God permits'.¹¹

The point established by each of the gospel writers is that the Lord Jesus did not deliberately expose Himself to the devil's attack. In this, as in all else, He has left us the perfect example, altogether consistent with the prayer which He later taught His disciples: 'do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one'.¹²

Verse 2

Mark tells us that 'He (the Lord Jesus) was in the wilderness forty days,¹³ tempted by Satan'¹⁴, and Luke that 'Jesus ... was continually being led¹⁵ by the Spirit in the wilderness, for forty days being tempted by the devil',¹⁶ the implication being that *the devil's temptations lasted throughout the forty days of our Lord's fasting*, and that the Holy Spirit has focused our attention on the last three (and doubtless greatest and crowning) temptations at the close of the period.

TEMPTATION NUMBER 1

Verse 3

Now, at the close of the forty days, the tempter's¹⁷ opening shot was, 'If you are the Son¹⁸ of God, command that these stones become bread'.¹⁹

'If you are the Son of God': as if the tempter said, 'God's ordinary creatures may suffer, they cannot help it; but if Thou art His Son, it is ... unnecessary'.²⁰ Certainly, it would have been no temptation for anyone else to turn stones to bread.

We know that the devil and his agents were *well aware* of our Lord's status as the Son of God. We have but to recall the confession of the demons: 'the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God"'.²¹

Oh yes, the devil knew that He was the Son of God alright, and, what is more, he knew that our Lord Himself was fully conscious of it also, partly because (i) much earlier, our Lord had referred to it Himself, 'Why did you seek me?', He had asked Mary and Joseph some 18 years before, 'Did you not know that I must be about *my Father's* business?'²² and partly because (ii) it had recently been confirmed by God Himself, when, at Jesus' baptism, 'suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved *Son*, in whom I am well pleased'.²³

Satan did not intend to cast doubt on our Lord's divine Sonship, but rather to use it as a springboard for his first two temptations. He was not tempting Jesus to *doubt* His divine Sonship, but to *presume on* it. The temptations did not call in question whether He *was* the Messiah; they raised the question of *what kind* of Messiah He would be.²⁴

Let me paraphrase what I understand to be the devil's line of attack.

'If ('since', that is²⁵) you are the Son of God, as declared by that voice from heaven at your baptism some six weeks ago,²⁶ command that these stones may become bread. Indeed, speaking of baptism, I seem to remember that rather strange Baptizer man once saying to the Jews, "Do not think to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father; for I say to you, that God is able of *these stones* to raise up children to Abraham."²⁷

'Now, surely, with the power with which you have just been anointed [and *we* can recall the words of the apostle Peter, that Jesus had been 'anointed ... with the Holy Spirit and with power'²⁸], you are able easily to make stones into bread, and so to satisfy your own hunger.

'And you are hungry, aren't you? What can possibly be wrong in exercising your *God-given* power to make bread? I am not asking you to steal it! Perish the thought!

'Nor am I suggesting for one minute that you spread some lavish and extravagant banquet for yourself, and that, as some self-indulgent rich man (ahem!), you feast sumptuously every day.²⁹ No, indeed!

'Surely you can't believe that God would want *you* (*His Son*) to starve to death. I mean, who is there, dare I say, 'who, if *his son* asks for *bread*, will give him a *stone*'?³⁰ Ahem, again!

'After all, you have a *very* important mission to accomplish, don't you? And you are never going to accomplish that if you take no action, and thereby allow yourself to starve to death. What, the Messiah of Israel to perish of hunger in a desert? Why, it's unthinkable!

As you and I know, otherwise civilized peoples have been guilty of many gross and inhuman acts when faced with extreme hunger. We have only to think of the poor starving mother in the days of Elisha, who, in the time of a famine caused by the Syrian siege, agreed to boil and to eat her own son.³¹

And our Lord, Himself a man, felt hunger as keenly as any other. And the Judean desert offered no vegetation to provide Him with any nourishment. There wasn't so much as a barren fig-tree (as there would be, when, three years later, He 'hungered' while entering Jerusalem³²) from which He could at least have taken and eaten the leaves. There was nothing ... *nothing*, that is, apart from the innumerable round flat stones of the desert, resembling, both in form and in size, the pancake-like bread which the common people of His day all ate.

To some extent, Satan's initial focus on what was or was not available to be eaten was, of course, a rerun of the tactic he had deployed so successfully in the Garden in Eden. Might, he may well have wondered, he be able to shake the Saviour's trust in God's goodness and providing care, as, long ago, he had so effectively shaken Eve's.³³

It has been pointed out that 'such a temptation, if it were to have any meaning, could only be made under certain conditions. Manifestly the person to whom it was addressed must, on the one hand, have been so constituted that He could feel a want of food, which at that moment could not be gratified in any ordinary way; and again, He must have been one who was supposed to possess the power of satisfying that want in an extraordinary and miraculous manner'.³⁴

And it was with the full assurance that the Lord Jesus did indeed 'possess the power of satisfying that want in an extraordinary and miraculous manner', that the devil laid out his stall. As has been noted, 'The devil's aim is to break Jesus' perfect trust in his Father's good care and thereby alter the course of salvation-history'.³⁵

Verse 4

We will find that, in responding to each of the three temptations, our Lord resisted and overcame the devil with a well-chosen text of scripture.³⁶ I find it interesting that, in each case, He drew His arrow from the same quiver, from the book of Deuteronomy.

There are, of course, *five* books to the Law of Moses. But, just as young David, a thousand years before, had used only *one* of the five smooth stones which he had available when doing battle with his formidable foe, the Philistine champion,³⁷ so the Lord Jesus used *only one* of the five books in His conflict with a far more formidable foe.

And we should perhaps note that (unlike the woman in the Garden) at no point did the Saviour enter into any argument or discussion with the tempter. For Him, God's word was final.³⁸ 'It is written' ('it stands written'³⁹) was His first and His last word.⁴⁰

I note that, on three later occasions, Jewish leaders 'tested/tempted' Jesus by asking Him questions.⁴¹ Consistent with His practice now in resisting the devil, in each case He answered by alluding to or by quoting the words of scripture.

As we consider our passage today, we can be confident that the Lord Jesus could have related the words of David to Himself: 'Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against you'.⁴²

His first quotation, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God'⁴³ was, as you would expect, ideally suited to the occasion.

Let us digress for a moment to remind ourselves of the early experiences of the people of Israel.

We know, for instance, that:

(i) they had been taken down into Egypt by a man named Joseph, who cared for them there;⁴⁴

(ii) following the death of many children, the nation (spoken of by God explicitly as His 'son') had been 'called' by God *out of Egypt*;⁴⁵

(iii) they had been *baptized* ('to Moses in the cloud and in the sea', as the apostle Paul expresses it);⁴⁶ and

(iv) they had been *led by God into a wilderness* where they had remained for a period of *forty* something or other,⁴⁷ during which time, they both *hungered* and were '*proved*' (were 'tried')'.⁴⁸

I hardly need tell you that, in the early chapters of his Gospel, Matthew has been tracing the way in which our Lord Jesus, Israel's Messiah, has been treading in detail the very same road which they had, right up to His present *wilderness* experience.⁴⁹

Hence, the direct relevance of our Lord's quotations from Deuteronomy, the 'Book of the *Wilderness*'.⁵⁰

He, the Lord Jesus, was the true, the ideal Israel, the perfect fulfilment of all that Israel should have been. But where they failed, He was faithful; 'where Israel of old stumbled and fell, Christ the new Israel stood firm'.⁵¹

The source of his first quotation reads, 'He (the Lord) caused you to hunger, and fed you with manna ... that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God'.⁵²

By appealing to this verse, the Lord Jesus pointed out that one of the great lessons which Israel had been taught in the wilderness was that the sustaining of life depends altogether on *God* ... who can, if He will, provide nourishment by the power of His own creative word,

without relying on ordinary and common means, just as He had done for the nation of old in the case of the manna.

That is, the very context of our Lord's quotation demonstrated that God (i) had first allowed His people Israel to hunger, and (ii) had then supplied them with food for forty years in a miraculous manner.⁵³ This was all part of a divinely-planned educational process, that His people might thereafter acknowledge their dependence on Him for their sustenance.

So, in effect, our Lord's reply to Satan was:

'Yes, granted, I have the power to do what you propose, but for me to use that power would imply impatience and lack of faith in God. It would be lack of faith in Him who can, by the mere word of His mouth, provide for the sustenance of life (mine included, if He will) in an *extraordinary* manner, when, as here in this wilderness, the *ordinary* means of supply are lacking'.

It was then, our Lord was explaining, not that *which went into His* mouth which was of supreme importance, but that *which came out of God's!*

His Father's word was of far greater importance to Him than bread, and He had received no word from His Father about making stones into bread! So, 'No', He replied in effect, 'I am content to stay hungry and to await my Father's time. I trust God. I will look upward for the meeting of my needs, and not downward'.

Jesus made it clear that, although He could do without bread for a long time, He could not do without obedience to God for any time.

We ought perhaps note that our Lord's quotation speaks of 'man'; '*Man* shall not ...'.

Satan had opened with, 'If you are *the Son of God*'. And I suspect that Jesus may well have been saying to him, 'I do indeed acknowledge that I *am* the Son of God, but I must point out that, as One now 'found in fashion as a man',⁵⁴ I am subject to, and am dependent upon, God'.⁵⁵

And it is thrilling for us to remember that the One who refused to use His power to satisfy His own hunger will, according to accounts given later in this same Gospel, use that very power to feed two separate multitudes who otherwise would have gone hungry, albeit for a short period.⁵⁶ Yes, indeed, Peter, as you told Cornelius, the One 'anointed with the Holy Spirit and power ...went about (not satisfying and gratifying Himself, but) doing good'.⁵⁷

It has been well said, 'I never found Christ doing a single thing for Himself ... There was not one act in all Christ's life done to serve or to please Himself'.⁵⁸

TEMPTATION NUMBER 2

Verses 5 and 6

Following the order of the temptations as recorded by Matthew⁵⁹, the devil then took Him into the holy city,⁶⁰ and stood Him on the pinnacle (the wing) of the Temple.⁶¹ Truly, 'it is remarkable that the Lord allowed Himself to be (i) taken into the city and (ii) set on the pinnacle [by the devil]; what a contrast with verse 1 where He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness'.⁶²

Our Lord had just openly asserted His faith and trust in God. In response to this, the devil seems to say:

'All right ...then prove it. You don't want to turn stones into bread; well, never mind. Perhaps I have been looking at 'stones' the wrong way. Let me have another go.

'So, you rely on God and His word, do you? Now, isn't that nice!

'Well, I can tell you that *His word* assures you can safely cast yourself down from here.

'For (and I know you really like these first words) "*It is written*, He shall give His angels charge concerning you, and on their hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you strike your foot against a stone".⁶³

I am sure you realise that the Psalm from which those words are taken⁶⁴ more or less opens with the words, 'I will say of the Lord ... my God, in Him I will trust'.⁶⁵

'Well, if you trust God so fully, then you will have no qualms about throwing yourself down from here, for you have His specific promise to preserve you.

'Let me put it this way: if you won't use your own power to perform a miracle for yourself, at least demonstrate your faith in God's power to perform one for you.⁶⁶ Go on, **cast yourself down**'.⁶⁷

Satan is certainly versatile. For, having failed on one front, he immediately attempts to outflank the Saviour and attack Him from the rear. You have to give it to him, when fighting, his footwork is superb!

And I note that he comes carrying his Bible under his arm!⁶⁸

The devil knew the text of Psalm 91 very well. And, speaking personally, I see nothing particularly significant in the fact that he omitted the clause 'to keep you in all your ways'.⁶⁹ After all, it was not at all relevant to his purpose. And most certainly the omitted clause is *not* speaking about God's ways (as I have seen it quoted), but about the 'ways' of the believer.

But if the devil knew *the text*, our Lord knew *the context* from which the devil had chosen his quotation!⁷⁰ And that context exposes something of Satan's audacity in quoting from Psalm 91 of all places.

Note the following.

1. In the *earlier* section of the Psalm.

(i) 'The Most High ... shall deliver you from *the snare* of the fowler (one who sets a trap to catch a prey)'.⁷¹ I note that the apostle Paul uses the same word as the Greek Old Testament does there when he requires the overseer in the local assembly to 'have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and *the snare* of the devil'.⁷²

(ii) '*His truth* shall be your shield'.⁷³ And we all know whose word is *truth*!⁷⁴

(iii) 'You shall not be afraid ... of *the arrow* that flies by day'.⁷⁵ I note that the apostle Paul uses the same word as the Greek Old Testament does there when he speaks of the believer's 'taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery arrows (translated as 'darts' in the King James Version and the ESV) of the Evil One'.⁷⁶

2. But *even more* significant is the verse immediately *following* the passage which the devil cited. This reads, 'You shall tread upon (i) *the lion* and (ii) *adder* (or 'cobra'): the young lion and (iii) *the dragon* you shall trample under feet'.⁷⁷ Here, we can say, Messiah is promised victory over (i) the lion (the 'fierce lion' as the word is⁷⁸), (ii) the serpent and (iii) the dragon ... treading and trampling each of them underfoot.

And I regard it a profound cheek for the devil (known to us well from scripture as (i) the prowling *lion*,⁷⁹ (ii) the ancient *serpent*,⁸⁰ and (iii) the great *dragon*⁸¹ to raid Psalm 91 of all scriptures for flaming arrows to aim at God's Messiah.

Satan's second line of attack was to tempt the Saviour to act as if God were there to serve and obey Him, rather than the other way around. In effect, the devil was prompting Him to force God's hand to do for Him what He had earlier refused to do for Himself; namely, to make Him the object of supernatural care.

But this ploy didn't work either.

Verse 7

'It is written again', our Lord responded, 'you shall not tempt⁸² the Lord your God'.

Let me attempt a paraphrase of His rejoinder.

'The promises to which you refer indeed hold true, but no one is entitled to misapply God's word so as to create unnecessary danger for himself. For that would be to put God Himself to the test.

'That would not be a case of trusting God, but of tempting God. And there is a whole world of difference between faith and folly.

'While in no way disputing the validity of God's promise, I tell you that a second text of Scripture must qualify and balance the one you have just quoted to me. It is written again, you shall not tempt the Lord your God'.

And, once more, the context of our Lord's quotation is all-important. For He deliberately selected a text which warned others⁸³ against making the same mistake as Israel once had.⁸⁴

In full, the Lord's chosen verse reads, 'you shall not tempt the Lord your God, *as you tempted Him in Massah*'.⁸⁵

'Massah' was a place of many names. Although now known as 'Massah' (meaning 'Temptation') and 'Meribah' (meaning 'Contention'), because of what took place there, it had earlier been known as 'Rephidim'. This was the place where, when without water, the people of Israel had complained against Moses, and had '*tempted* the Lord, by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"'⁸⁶

The Saviour knew that God had not forgotten the people's unbelief and rebellion there. He knew that, at some point between the days of Moses and the time of His temptations, God had exhorted His people, 'Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work'.⁸⁷

And our Lord knew that, if it had been a case of tempting God for Israel (God's 'son'⁸⁸) to demand miraculous confirmation of His care back then, it would be a case of tempting God for Him (God's 'Son') to demand the same now. And it was enough for Him that (whatever spin the devil might put on the verses which he had quoted at Him) Scripture clearly and unequivocally commanded, 'you shall not tempt the Lord your God'.

So that, if our Lord's response to the first temptation rested on God's gracious provision of food for the children of Israel in the wilderness (which it did; namely, the manna⁸⁹), His response to the second rested on God's gracious provision of water for them in the wilderness.⁹⁰ For it had been, when Israel had been without water and had tempted God at Massah that God had graciously brought water for them out of the smitten rock.⁹¹

At a practical level, I learn from the second temptation that it was not the knowledge of scripture which distinguished our Lord from our arch-foe. For Satan was equally able to say, 'It is written', and to quote the biblical text *very* accurately.

The fundamental difference between Jesus and the devil lay in that our Lord, not only knew Scripture, but also He obeyed it! His victory didn't consist in knowing that God's Law forbade anyone tempting Him; His victory consisted in submitting to that Law, and in refusing to tempt Him.

Again, I learn that I should apply the teaching of scripture to myself personally. For I note that, *in one sense*, it was our Lord who misquoted (who deliberately misquoted) the text of scripture. In its original language, the verb 'tempt' in Deuteronomy 6 verse 16 was in the plural; a fact clearly shown by the King James Version rendering, 'ye shall not tempt the Lord your God'. But the Lord Jesus quoted it in the singular: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God'. The Saviour knew that, whatever was addressed to all collectively, was addressed to each and every one individually ... and that it was therefore addressed to Him!

And so it was that the One who, at the first temptation, refused to doubt God and His word, at the second, refused to presume on God and His word!

But it may well be that the second temptation was more directly related to the nature of our Lord's Messiahship than had been the first.

I understand that the first great event of the Temple day was the offering of the morning sacrifice, which took place as the first streaks of sunlight appeared. From the top of a high tower in the Temple, several hundred feet above the Kidron Valley,⁹² a priest would sound the blast of a trumpet when the sun first came into sight, as a signal for the service to begin in the Temple court below.⁹³ At that moment, the court would be thronged with a multitude of expectant worshippers, all with their eyes fastened on the top of the tower as they awaited the signal.

As an aside, I was interested to read that, during excavations in Jerusalem following the Six Day War of 1967 (when Israel regained control of some of old Jerusalem), one archaeologist, by name Benjamin Mazar, found a block from the parapet of the south-western corner of the Temple, which carried the inscription, 'the place of the blowing' (the blowing of the trumpet, that is).⁹⁴

And, although I have no way of being certain, I should not be surprised if it was at the very time of the morning sacrifice that the devil suggested to our Lord that He should cast Himself down, in full view of a captive audience.⁹⁵

Otherwise, why would the devil take Him to the Temple of all places? 'A precipice in the wilderness would have sufficed for the mere temptation to throw Himself down; the carefully chosen place indicates that the idea was also to exhibit Himself in public'.⁹⁶

And it is hardly irrelevant that the prophet Malachi had foretold some 400 years before that 'the Lord' would 'suddenly come to His Temple'?⁹⁷

Alfred Edersheim, a Jewish convert and an eminent Biblical scholar, noted that, among the Jews:

'the placing of Messiah on the pinnacle of the Temple ...is said to mark the hour of deliverance, of Messianic proclamation, and of Gentile voluntary submission. "Our Rabbis give this tradition: In the hour when King Messiah comes, He stands upon the roof of the Sanctuary, and proclaims to Israel, saying, You poor (suffering), the time of your redemption draws nigh ... In that hour will the Holy One, blessed be His name, make the Light of the Messiah and of Israel to shine forth ... all shall come and fall on their faces before Messiah and before Israel, and say, We will be servants to Him and to Israel".⁹⁸

Surely, nobody in the Temple court at the time of the second temptation could possibly have mistaken so obvious (and, indeed, so sensational) a fulfilment.

If this interpretation is correct, we can be sure that, following such a stunt – such a miraculous descent – Jesus would have been instantly acclaimed as Israel's Messiah, rather than as Nazareth's carpenter (which is all He *had* been to date⁹⁹), and would have immediately secured a great following for Himself.¹⁰⁰ And then, had it proved necessary, they would have 'come to take Him by force to make Him king', which almost happened on a later occasion, after He had miraculously fed a multitude of 'about five thousand men, besides women and children'.¹⁰¹

But, decidedly no! Our Lord had no intention of dazzling the worshippers at Jerusalem into following Him by some spectacular 'leap of faith'. Indeed, as the Gospels make clear, the Saviour consistently refused to perform *any* miracle simply for display and exhibition.

And so, just as He will later in a Garden,¹⁰² so now, in a wilderness, Jesus resists any temptation to rely on some form of angelic intervention and help.

TEMPTATION NUMBER 3

Verses 8 and 9

This brings us to Satan's third and final temptation, when he transported the Lord Jesus up into 'a very high mountain'.¹⁰³ Each temptation, I note, was staged at a higher elevation than the one before:

- (i) First, our Lord had been 'led up' from the Jordan into the wilderness.¹⁰⁴
- (ii) He had then been 'set' on the wing of the Temple,¹⁰⁵ several hundred feet above the valley below.
- (iii) Now, He is transported to 'a very high mountain'.¹⁰⁶

I note in passing that, whereas, at the outset, Satan had approached Jesus with a temptation which depended on the circumstances in which he found Him, in the case of the two subsequent temptations the settings were of his own making. That is, although the devil certainly didn't arrange and organize the location for the initial event, on the occasion of each later temptation, he transported the Lord Jesus to the place of his choice.

Specifically, although the Lord had been '*led up*' by the Spirit into the wilderness,¹⁰⁷ it was the devil who '*led*' Him '*up*'¹⁰⁸ into the high mountain, where 'he showed Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a moment of time'.

The expressions, 'all the kingdoms', and 'in a moment of time', suggest that, by using some of his extensive and (frankly) fearful occult powers, the Overlord of evil presented the Lord Jesus with some kind of image of kingdoms which included kingdoms not even present then.

I imagine the devil saying, 'There, [Snap!!] do you see them?' and then adding (as Luke records his words), 'all this authority will I give you, and the glory (the magnificence, that is) of them: for that is delivered to me; and to whomever I will I give it. If you therefore worship before me, all shall be yours'.¹⁰⁹

It would be difficult for anybody to miss the repeated 'I' and 'me', the more so because previously Satan had been most careful to avoid any reference to himself at all.¹¹⁰

At this point, in desperation, the devil discards his mask entirely, and, in one daring bid, he openly draws attention to himself with his three-fold 'I' and his repeated 'me'. But then I guess that, for the tempter, having been utterly foiled and frustrated thus far, it was now or never!

His claim that the authority over the world's kingdoms had been '*delivered*' to him was certainly stretching the point.

And yet, for all that, it *was* a genuine offer.¹¹¹

And I say this because we read concerning Satan's 'Superman' of the end times ('the beast' which came up out of the sea¹¹² and out of the abyss¹¹³) that 'the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority', and that 'all the earth ... worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast'.¹¹⁴

Again I imagine that I hear the devil declaring to the Lord Jesus:

'At your baptism, God *did* say, "You are my ... Son", didn't He?¹¹⁵ And you know where those words came from, don't you? Yes, from the second Psalm ... verse 7 to be precise.¹¹⁶

'And what does God say in the *very next verse*? "Ask of me, and I will give you the heathen for your inheritance".¹¹⁷ Yes, nice. But, as you well know, a whole lot of water is to pass under the bridge before *that* is ever going to happen. Because, between now and then, you will have to face the cross (pardon the disgusting word) with all its shame and suffering. How very distressing for you!

'But, look, it really doesn't *have* to be that way. Frankly, I can offer you an easy short-cut to world dominion. For, if God says, '*I will give you the heathen for your inheritance*' (hmm, some day!), I say, 'all these things *I will give you*',¹¹⁸ and, what is more, I will give them to you now!

'You really don't have to wait for God to 'set' you (as His king), 'upon' His 'holy hill of Zion'.¹¹⁹ *This* high mountain here will do very nicely!

'Think of it: the kingdom without the cross! Why not cut short the story, skip the painful parts, and jump straight to the last chapter?

'Let me put it too you bluntly. If I cannot persuade you (i) to look down at the stones,¹²⁰ or (ii) to cast yourself down from the Temple's wing,¹²¹ let me persuade you to fall down before me?¹²²

'What about it? Go on, **worship me!**

And, when I hear the terms of Satan's offer ('All these things I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me'¹²³) I am reminded of the wise men who came from the East, of whom it is said that 'when they had come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him'.¹²⁴ What irony! that the One who Himself is worthy to be worshipped (not only by wise men but by all¹²⁵) is here encouraged to *worship* someone else.

So it was that the devil offered the Lord Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (destined to be given to Him by God, though only in God's time, and only following the suffering of the cross) in exchange for His homage.

Can you imagine it? *The usurper blatantly offering to sell the kingdom to its rightful heir.*

But the devil knew that, if Jesus accepted the offer, though He might then *have the kingdom*, the devil would then *have Him*.

Verse 10

But, as Satan had now removed his disguise, in His reply, Jesus (i) first named him, and (ii) then rebuffed and dismissed him with the words of Deuteronomy 6 (this time, from verse 13), 'Go (Be gone) ... For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve"'.¹²⁵

Over the centuries, Satan has successfully baited countless multitudes of men with earthly ambition, but his golden hook utterly failed with Jesus! As Mr Darby is reported as having said during a lecture on Hebrews 11, 'Moses refused the treasures in Egypt; Christ refused the whole world'.¹²⁶

Our Lord didn't need to be told that, in God's purpose, Golgotha lay between Him and the dominion of the earth. He knew well that God's way would certainly prove by far the more costly route. But it was the way He was resolved to go, in undeviating obedience to His Father's will.

THE SEQUEL

Verse 11

Luke points out, at this juncture, that the devil had 'ended all the temptation'; literally, that he 'had finished every temptation'.¹²⁷ *Satan had exhausted all his ammunition.* He had pulled out all the stops.

The devil had held back *nothing*, and it had availed him *nothing*. Truly, as our Lord claimed at the close of John 14, the 'ruler of this world' had *nothing* in Him,¹²⁸ an idiom¹²⁹ signifying that the devil had no legal claim on Him. There was nothing in the Lord Jesus which the devil could claim as belonging to his domain and kingdom, nothing which fell under his power or jurisdiction.

And Luke further notes that, having 'finished every temptation', the devil 'departed from'¹³⁰ our Lord 'for a time' ('for a season'),¹³¹ with the ominous implication that all was *not* over ... that his withdrawal was only temporary ... that he would be coming back!

And it is difficult not to associate this expression with its sinister overtones, in part at least,¹³² with the words which our Lord addressed to those who later came to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, 'This is your hour, and *the power of darkness*'.¹³³

Nor is it difficult to detect a connection between our Lord's wilderness temptations and His prayers in that Garden. For, in the wilderness, the one common thread which ran through each of the three temptations was the issue of whose *will* Jesus would do—God's will or His own:

- (i) Would He wait on His Father's time and good pleasure regarding His food?
- (ii) Would He, in the most spectacular manner, 'suddenly come to his Temple',¹³⁴ and constrain Israel to receive Him then, or would He meekly await His Father's timing and purpose for Him?
- (iii) Would He seek to obtain the kingdoms of the world by improper means, or would He pursue His road to the glory via the cross in obedience to His Father's will and command?¹³⁵

In summary, would the Saviour rest in dependence on God's will, or would He insist on doing His own?

And it was, of course, that very issue which later resurfaced (with a vengeance) in Gethsemane, when, once more, three times He chose His Father's will in preference to His own, saying then, 'not as *I* will, but as *you* will'.¹³⁶

At His baptism in the Jordan, it had been (as He explained to John the Baptist) fitting for Him to fulfil 'all' the righteous requirements of God's will.¹³⁷ Now, at His temptation in the wilderness, He had successfully resisted 'all' the enemy's attempts to deflect Him from that will. Not one of Satan's 'fiery (flaming) arrows'¹³⁸ had found any combustible material to ignite in Him. Glorious Saviour!

Exit the devil, enter the angels

Following the devil's departure, 'angels came', we are told, 'and ministered to Him'. Clearly, their 'ministry' consisted largely (if not entirely) in providing the Lord with food.¹³⁹

And so it is that:

- (i) the One who, during His first temptation, had flatly refused to relieve His hunger in an extraordinary way, Himself now has His hunger relieved in an extraordinary way by God; and
- (ii) the One who, during His second temptation, had flatly refused to put God and His word to the test in connection with the provision of angelic help, now receives angelic help unsought.

As is often pointed out, the Saviour was one of three who went without food for forty days and forty nights. Moses and Elijah¹⁴⁰ were the others (Moses having done so twice¹⁴¹).

Interestingly, the second of the two, Elijah, as our Lord, benefited from angelic ministry which supplied him with his necessary food (in his case, twice¹⁴²). At that time, Elijah was also in a 'wilderness'¹⁴³ where there were 'stones'.¹⁴⁴

But, in the case of Elijah, the angelic ministry was provided at the *beginning* of a forty-day period,¹⁴⁵ whereas, in the case of our Lord, it was provided at the *end* of a forty-day period.

' ... in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin', Heb. 4. 15.

Notes

¹ The same could be said, I suppose, of His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane, spoken when His disciples were asleep, Matt. 26. 40, 43, 45.

² The Lord may well have been alluding to His victory over the devil in the wilderness when later speaking (in the context of healing a demon-possessed man) of the binding of 'the strong man' prior to the plundering of his goods, Matt. 12. 29.

I take it that:

(i) when speaking of the one who overcame and bound the strong man, and plundered his house, Jesus was referring metaphorically to Himself,

(ii) the binding of 'the strong man' (clearly, 'the ruler of the demons', v. 24) took place historically in the devil's rout in the wilderness, and

(iii) having once bound 'the strong man' there, Jesus had then proceeded to spoil the strong man's 'house' by casting out the devil's agents ('demons'/unclean spirits') with His word.

It may well be significant that, following Mark's brief account of the Saviour's temptation by Satan, Mark 1. 12-13, the very first recorded miracle which He performed was that of healing a man possessed by an unclean spirit, vv. 23-26.

That is, if I may put it this way, our Lord wasted no time before commencing to plunder the strong man's house. Small wonder that those in the synagogue at the time were amazed that 'He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him', v. 27.

Not that the man in the synagogue of Mark 1 was the last to be expelled by Jesus, not by any means: Mark later records numerous further instances of demons which were exorcised by Him, Mark 3. 11; 5. 2, 8, 13; 7. 25-30; cf. Mark 6. 7. This was evidence, indeed, that the 'strong man' had been well and truly bound.

³ The importance of the account of the temptation of Jesus is evident from its position: in all three Synoptic Gospels it is recorded as happening after His baptism and immediately prior to His public ministry.

⁴ There is great emphasis in Luke's gospel upon the Holy Spirit's connection with the Lord Jesus. Between being anointed with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3. 22; 4. 18; Acts 10. 38) and Jesus returning to Galilee in His power (Luke 4. 14), here He was said to be full of the Spirit when led by the Spirit in the wilderness, Luke 4. 1. And our Lord's first recorded words after this experience are 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me', Luke 4. 18. Luke makes it clear that this continued even following His resurrection: 'after He had given commands through the Holy Spirit', Acts 1. 2.

⁵ Mark's account is often more vivid and graphic; compare Matt. 3. 16 and Luke 3. 21, both of which use the word 'open', with Mark 1. 10 which uses the word 'rent'.

⁶ Matt. 3. 13.

⁷ Matt. 4. 12.

⁸ The Greek verb for 'tempt' can be used in a positive sense, as when Jesus 'tests' His disciples, John 6. 6, as well as in a negative sense, as when the Pharisees try to entangle Jesus in His words, Matt. 22. 15-22. In Acts 15. 10 and 1 Cor. 10. 9 it is used of challenging the Lord. The word is best known for its use of the devil's tempting in order to cause sin; so that the devil can be called 'the tempter', Matt. 4. 3; 1 Thess. 3. 5.

The noun 'temptation' is used to describe trials sent by God or encountered while serving Him, Luke 22. 28; Acts 20. 9. But it is also used of trials or tests that can or do lead to sin, Matt. 6. 13//Luke 11. 4; Matt. 26. 41//Mark 14. 38; Luke 22. 40, and of trials which cause a follower of Jesus to fall away or apostatise, Luke 8. 13.

⁹ H. C. Hewlett, '*The Glories of our Lord*', page 68.

¹⁰ James 1. 13.

¹¹ Craig L. Blomberg, '*Matthew (The New American Commentary)*', on Matt. 4. 1-2.

¹² Matt. 6. 13; Luke 11. 4. And we note that in this very Gospel, not only is he spoken of in the temptation narrative as 'the devil', Matt. 4. 1, 5, 8, 11, 'the tempter', Matt. 4. 3, and 'Satan', Matt. 4. 10, and later as 'Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons', Matt. 12. 24, but also later again as '*the evil one*', Matt. 13. 19.

¹³ Interestingly, there was a period of 'forty days' before our Lord commenced His public ministry, Matt. 4. 1-17, and there was a period of 'forty days' before the Risen Lord commenced His heavenly ministry, Acts 1. 3-11.

¹⁴ Mark 1. 13.

¹⁵ The imperfect tense.

¹⁶ Luke 4. 1 *literally*.

¹⁷ Matt. 4. 3; cf. Paul's use of the same title in 1 Thess. 3. 5.

¹⁸ 'Son' is by its position emphatic in the Greek.

¹⁹ Luke has 'command *this stone* that it be made bread', Luke 4. 3, as if the Lord was pointing to one particular stone.

²⁰ J. A. Broadus, '*Commentary on Matthew*', page 63.

²¹ Mark 3. 11; cf. Matt. 8. 29; Luke 4. 41. 'The reason there is so much demon possession in the time period recorded by the Gospels is not (as is often assumed) that demon possession was commonplace then. In fact it was not. Rather, the land then was demon-invaded because the Saviour was marching to the victory promised in Genesis 3. 15. And all hell was let loose in order to withstand Him', Begg and Ferguson, '*Name Above All Names*', page 28.

²² Luke 2. 49.

²³ Matt. 3. 17.

²⁴ Jesus is not tempted to *doubt* His Sonship, but to *exercise* it in a manner contrary to the Servant model implied at His recent baptism, Matt. 3. 17 with Isa. 42. 1. At issue is the type of Son Jesus will be. Will He utilize His endowment with the Spirit in a selfish fashion, or will He humbly depend on His Father to meet His every need?

²⁵ Note the different word translated 'if' in Matt. 4. 9, where there is doubt and uncertainty. See John Heading, '*What the Bible Teaches: Matthew and Mark*', page 64.

²⁶ Matt. 3. 17. Following His baptism, Jesus was 'immediately' driven into the wilderness by the Spirit, Mark 1. 12, where He had spent the intervening forty days, Matt. 4. 2; Luke 4. 2.

²⁷ Matt. 3. 9. 'John had been talking about God's transforming rocks, but Jesus will not usurp the Father's prerogatives', Craig Keener, '*Matthew (IVP New Testament Commentary)*', on Matt. 4. 3.

²⁸ Acts 10. 38.

²⁹ See Luke 16. 19.

³⁰ Matt. 7. 9.

³¹ 2 Kings 6. 25-29.

³² Matt. 21. 18.

³³ Similarly Israel's rebellion in the wilderness was related to her demand for food, Psa. 78. 17-20.

³⁴ Carl Ullmann, '*The Sinlessness of Jesus*', page 203. (Accessed at ... <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ullmann/sinlessness.pdf>.)

³⁵ W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, '*The Gospel according to Saint Matthew (International Critical Commentary 1988: Volume 1)*', page 239.

³⁶ I note that our Lord reversed the order in which these texts appeared in the Law. The devil raised the issues of food, trust and worship. In one sense, this followed the order of (a) the body, (b) the soul (see Psa. 57. 1), and (c) the spirit (see John 4. 23). But God's order is spirit, soul and body, 1 Thess. 5. 23.

³⁷ 1 Sam. 17. 40, 49.

³⁸ Cf. Matt. 11. 10; 21. 13; 26. 24; 26. 31.

³⁹ The perfect tense. Later, on three occasions, Jewish leaders 'test/tempt' Jesus by asking him questions, Matt. 16. 1; 19. 3; and 22. 34–5. (A form of πειράζω is used in each instance.) In each case Jesus answers by alluding to or quoting scripture.

⁴⁰ The Lord made His only appeal to scripture, not (i) to His own authority (as He often did later when speaking to men, with His distinctive, 'I say to you', found about sixty times in Matthew's gospel alone), nor (ii) to His divine power (to banish the devil from His presence). Either of these courses would have been no help or encouragement to us when we are encounter temptation.

Consider the following illustration. 'I am told that Emperor Napoleon once went to a very skilful workman, and inquired of him if he could make a bullet-proof jacket or under garment, one that he himself would feel safe to wear as a protection against bullets. The workman assured him he could make just such a garment; one he would feel entirely safe to wear himself. The Emperor engaged him to make the article, requesting him to take time, and see that it was bullet-proof.

'The workman took much time and pains in its construction. The jacket was finished, and the Emperor notified that it was ready for him. Napoleon, after carefully examining it, asked the maker if he still felt sure a bullet could not pierce it. The workman said he was sure no bullet could penetrate it; that he himself would feel entirely safe with it on in a shower of bullets. The Emperor asked him to put it on, that he might examine it more fully. The maker put the jacket on himself, that the Emperor might see how finely it fitted and protected the body. After a careful examination of its make-up and apparent safety, Napoleon stepped back a few feet, and drew his pistol on the man, who cried out: "Don't try it on me!" But the Emperor said: "You told me it was perfectly safe", and fired. The armour proved itself bullet-proof.

'So Christ has made an armour that renders its wearer perfectly safe against all the fiery darts that may be hurled against it. Christ has tried it on. He was led out into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. For forty days and nights Satan tried to pierce this armour, but broke all his arrows on it. It could not be penetrated. It was thoroughly tested on Christ, that all who put it on might feel safe. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Let me say, then, to all who feel a little timid about the Christians armour, that it has been tested by our Captain and thousands of his soldiers, and has never yet been pierced by our enemy's bullets', A. B. Earle, *'Incidents Used... In His Meetings'*, 1888.

⁴¹ Matt. 16. 1; 19. 3; 22. 34–5; a form of πειράζω is used in each instance.

⁴² Psa. 119. 11.

⁴³ Quoted from Deut. 8. 3.

⁴⁴ Gen. 45. 9-46. 7; cf. Matt. 2. 18-15a.

⁴⁵ Exod. 1. 22; 12. 29; Exod. 4. 22-23; Hos. 11. 1; cf. Matt. 2. 15-17.

⁴⁶ 1 Cor. 10. 2; cf. Matt. 3. 13. The Lord's baptism in the Jordan stands as the counterpart of Israel's crossing of the Red Sea. Just as God led Israel out of Egypt and through the waters and into the wilderness, so does the Spirit of God lead Jesus into the wilderness after He is baptized.

⁴⁷ Deut. 8. 2; cf. Matt. 4. 1-2. ('Led ... in the wilderness', Luke 4. 1, translates the exact same Greek expression as is used in the Greek Old Testament rendering of Deut. 8. 2.)

⁴⁸ Deut. 8. 2-3; Matt. 4. 1-2. ('Led ... in the wilderness', Luke 4. 1, translates the exact same Greek expression as is used in the Greek Old Testament rendering of Deut. 8. 2.)

God adopted the policy of 'proving' Israel in the wilderness, but, sadly, they responded by 'proving' God Himself, Exod. 17. 7; 'Massah' means 'Tempting' or 'Proving'.

⁴⁹ If Jesus was the representative and Messiah of His people, He must be shown to have shared their experiences, and in particular to have had His wilderness journey and to have endured the temptations to which they fell, but Himself without sin.

⁵⁰ The 'wilderness' is mentioned no less than 23 times in Deuteronomy. The contents of the book were given by Moses at the time of Israel's second opportunity to gain possession of the Promised Land, having failed through unbelief some 38 years previously, Num. 13 and 14, and having therefore been compelled to wander through the wilderness.

⁵¹ M. D. Goulder, *'Midrash and Lection in Matthew'*, page 245.

⁵² Deut. 8. 3.

⁵³ 'The children of Israel did eat manna forty years', Exod. 16. 35.

⁵⁴ Phil. 2. 8.

⁵⁵ See, for example, John 5. 19, 30, 36 and John 12. 49.

⁵⁶ Matt. 14. 13-21; 15. 29-39.

⁵⁷ Acts 10. 38.

⁵⁸ J. N. Darby, '*The Accepted Man*', Collected Writings Volume 12, page 332.

⁵⁹ See the following suggestions for the different order in the first and third Gospels:

(1) 'Matthew and Luke present the second and third elements in the dialogue in a different order. Reasons for preferring each order can be suggested. Luke's order brings the series to a climax with the devil's subtlest ploy in that he in his turn offers a scriptural text in support of his proposal. Luke's special interest in Jerusalem may also have led him to prefer concluding the story there. In Matthew's account, however, the more subtle suggestions of the first two proposals are succeeded by a blatant challenge to God's authority when the devil "drops his disguise" ... and the central issue is brought into the open. Matthew's account thus ends on a more decisive note, which he will exploit at the end of his gospel with an allusion to his third temptation in Jesus' eventual claim to an authority greater than anything the devil could offer (Matt. 28. 18)', R. T. France, '*The Gospel of Matthew (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*', in the introduction to Matthew 4. 1-11.

(2) 'The order of the three temptations in Matthew chapter 4 seem to follow the sequence of events in Exodus: the provision of manna in the wilderness, chapter 16, the testing at Massah, chapter 17, and the worship of the golden calf, chapter 32. There is also a progression upwards from the wilderness to the Temple pinnacle to the 'very high mountain. And, again, Matthew has a tidy reverse order of the quotation of Scripture from Deuteronomy (Deut. 8. 3; 6. 16 and 6. 13. Also the two temptations which refer explicitly to our Lord's Sonship come together in Matthew. Luke's interest in Jerusalem and the Temple (Luke 2. 22, 25, 38, 41-45; 9. 31, 51-53; 13. 22, 34; 17.11; 18. 31; 19. 11, 18; 24. 49; Acts 1. 4; 3. 1; 6. 8-7. 60; 21. 17-22. 21) may suggest that he wanted to reach a climax there'; cf. G. H. Twelftree, '*Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (IVP)*', page 822.

⁶⁰ That is, of course, 'Jerusalem', Luke 4. 9. See the use of the expression 'holy city' to identify the city of Jerusalem, Neh. 11. 1; Isa. 48. 2; 52. 1; Dan 9. 24; Matt. 27. 53; Rev. 11. 2.

⁶¹ At the first, Satan approached Jesus with a temptation which relied on the circumstances in which he found Him, rather than, as in the case of the later temptations, upon situations of his own making. The devil didn't arrange and organise the initial event, but with the two later temptations, he transported the Lord Jesus to the places he chose.

⁶² John Heading, *op. cit.*, page 65.

⁶³ Psa. 91. 11-12.

⁶⁴ Psalm 91, which the Rabbis taught was a Messianic Psalm.

⁶⁵ Psa. 91. 2.

⁶⁶ 'If you will not prove it by a miracle of your own, prove it by impelling God to one', J. A. T. Robinson, '*The Temptations*' in '*Twelve New Testament Studies*', page 56.

⁶⁷ It is interesting to note the sequence in Luke's account: (i) 'He brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, If you are the Son of God, *throw yourself down* from here', Luke 4. 9, followed by, 'all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that *they might throw Him down over the cliff*', v. 29 (although a different Greek word).

⁶⁸ 'But what is this I see? Satan himself with a Bible under his arm, with a text in his mouth', Joseph Hall, '*Contemplations on the Historical Passages of the New Testament*', Book II, Contemplation III, page 431.

⁶⁹ 'The omission itself does not prove he handled the Scriptures deceitfully, since the quotation is well within the range of common New Testament citation patterns', D. A. Carson, *'Matthew (Expositor's Bible Commentary)'*, on Matt. 4. 5-7.

It has been claimed that, 'Satan had cleverly omitted the phrase "in all Thy ways" when he quoted from Psalm 91. When the child of God is in the will of God, the Father will protect him. He watches over those who are "in His ways"', Warren Wiersbe, *'The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament'*, page 17. But, speaking frankly, this is nonsense! Note Mr Wiersbe's erroneous use of capitals; the 'ways' in question are clearly those of the righteous, and not those of God.

⁷⁰ I have seen it said that 'if you take a "text" out of a "context", all you are left with is a "con"!

⁷¹ Psa. 91. 1, 3.

⁷² 1 Tim. 3. 7.

⁷³ Psa. 91. 4.

⁷⁴ John 17. 17. Note the reference to 'the Evil One' in verse 15.

⁷⁵ Psa. 91. 5.

⁷⁶ Eph. 6. 16.

⁷⁷ Psa. 91. 13.

⁷⁸ See the footnote to J. N. Darby's New Translation of Psa. 91. 13.

⁷⁹ 1 Pet. 5. 8.

⁸⁰ Rev. 12. 9, 15; 20. 2; cf. Gen. 3. 1, 2, 4, 13, 14; 2 Cor. 11. 3.

⁸¹ Rev. 12. 3, 9; cf. Rev. 12. 4, 7, 13, 16, 17; 13. 2, 4, 11; 16. 13; 20. 2.

⁸² Following the Greek Old Testament rendering of Deut. 6. 16. This is the intensive form of *πειράζω*; that is, 'to tempt thoroughly'.

⁸³ In context, the second generation of the nation of Israel.

⁸⁴ Deut. 6. 16.

⁸⁵ 'Massah' (meaning 'temptation') was also called 'Meribah' (meaning 'contention'), Exod. 17. 7. The quotation comes from Moses' warning for the Israelites not to repeat their sin at Massah, when they demanded water from the rock, Exod. 17. 1-7. And, if it was wrong for Israel the 'son of God' to demand miraculous confirmation of God's care, so it would be for Jesus the Son of God to demand the same.

⁸⁶ Exod. 17. 1-7.

⁸⁷ Psa. 95. 8-9; cf. Heb. 3. 8-19.

⁸⁸ See Note 45 above.

⁸⁹ 'He ...fed you with manna ... that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord', Deut. 8. 3.

⁹⁰ 'What happened at Massah was that Moses produced water from the rock. And Satan's suggestion to Jesus was to produce bread from 'this stone', J. A. T. Robinson, *op. cit.*, page 55.

⁹¹ Exod. 17. 6.

⁹² The Temple's outer portico (the flat-topped corner of Solomon's porch on the south-east corner of the Temple complex) overhung the Kidron Valley. Josephus described the effect of gazing down from the top of the portico: 'This portico deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun; for while the valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, this further vastly high elevation of the portico stood upon that height, insomuch that if any one looked down from the top of the battlements, or down both those altitudes, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth', Flavius Josephus, '*The Antiquities of the Jews*', Book 15, Chapter 11, Section 5. It is possible, however, that the reference is to 'the royal portico' of Herod on the south side; see Broadus, *op. cit.*, page 65.

⁹³ 'The priests ... blew three blasts on their silver trumpets, (i) summoning the Levites, (ii) and the 'representatives' of the people (the so-called 'stationary men') to their duties, (iii) and announcing to the city that the morning sacrifice was about to be offered', A. Edersheim, '*The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*', Chapter 8, 'The Second Lot'.

⁹⁴ 'Mazar found a block from the parapet of the south-western corner with the inscription, "for the place of the blowing (of the trumpet)"', E. Yamauchi, '*Archaeology and the Bible*', page 70. (Excavations during 1968-77 at Jerusalem.)

⁹⁵ 'Jesus stands on the lofty pinnacle of the Tower, or of the Temple-porch, presumably that on which every day a Priest was stationed to watch, as the pale morning light passed over the hills of Judaea far off to Hebron, to announce it as the signal for offering the morning sacrifice. If we might indulge our imagination, the moment chosen would be just as the Priest had quitted that station', A. Edersheim, '*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*', Book III, chapter I, page 303.

⁹⁶ J. A. Broadus, *op. cit.*, page 65.

⁹⁷ Mal. 3. 1.

⁹⁸ A. Edersheim, *op. cit.*, Book III, chapter I, page 293. Edersheim is quoting from 'Yalkut Shimoni', a 13th century haggadic compilation on the books of the Old Testament. His quote is from 'Isaiah 60:499'.

For the background to this 'compilation', see the 1906 'Jewish Encyclopedia: Yalkut'; accessible at ...

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/15057-yalkut>. Cf. the rabbinical saying in Pesiqta Rabbati, page 36. Although we cannot be certain that these sayings reflect expectations of Jesus' time.

⁹⁹ Mark 6. 3.

¹⁰⁰ For a contrary view, see W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *op. cit.*, page 241 (bottom paragraph): 'no spectators are mentioned, and if the royal colonnade is in view, the picture may be of Jesus standing over the Kedron Ravine alone, far from the court. There are moreover no texts in which the Messiah manifests himself by being hurtled from the temple'.

¹⁰¹ John 6. 15 with Matt. 14. 21.

¹⁰² Matt. 26. 53.

¹⁰³ Matt. 4. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Matt. 4. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Matt. 4. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Matt. 4. 8. This might have been Mount Tabor – which was less than five miles from Nazareth and 'from whose summit Jesus may well have looked on the world and its roads when He was a boy', William Barclay, '*The Mind of Jesus*', pages 43-44.

¹⁰⁷ Matt. 4. 1

¹⁰⁸ Luke 4. 5: the same Greek word as in Matt. 4. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Luke 4. 6.

¹¹⁰ Such, of course, had been the tactic which he had adopted with Eve back in the Garden; to draw no attention to himself. Indeed, not to mention himself at all. Then, the manoeuvre had worked brilliantly. But it had accomplished nothing with Jesus here in the wilderness. Hence the switch to the frontal attack.

¹¹¹ Cf. 'the whole world lies in the power of the evil one', 1 John 5. 19 ESV (perhaps signifying, 'in *the grip* of the Evil One', William Barclay).

¹¹² Rev. 13. 1.

¹¹³ Rev. 17. 8.

¹¹⁴ Rev. 13. 2-4.

¹¹⁵ Mark 1. 11.

¹¹⁶ On the face of it, the third temptation seems to break the previous pattern, in that the devil then makes no explicit mention of Jesus' Sonship. But, in one sense, the echo of Psalm 2 verse 7 ('You are my Son') serves to continue the theme.

¹¹⁷ Psa. 2. 8.

¹¹⁸ Matt. 4. 9.

¹¹⁹ Psa. 2. 6.

¹²⁰ Matt. 4. 3.

¹²¹ Matt. 4. 6.

¹²² Matt. 4. 9.

¹²³ Matt. 4. 9.

¹²⁴ Matt. 2. 11.

¹²⁵ Compare Heb. 1. 6.

¹²⁶ J. N. Darby, '*Notes from Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews*', Collected Writings, volume 27, page 359.

¹²⁷ Luke 4. 13. That is, he had covered the whole range of his temptations.

¹²⁸ John 14. 30.

¹²⁹ A Hebrew idiom.

¹³⁰ 'Interestingly, the Greek behind Matt. 3. 15 ("then [John] consented") and Matt. 4. 11 ("the devil left him") is identical. Though the verb *ἀφήσιν* is used in two different ways, the passages are parallel in that both John and the devil, wittingly or unwittingly, were trying to deter Jesus' appointed course, but failed', Craig Blomberg, *op. cit.*, page 86, footnote 82.

¹³¹ Translate 'for a time'; see James Barr, '*Biblical Words for Time*', pages 54-55. The phrase '*ἄχρι καιροῦ*' occurs elsewhere only in Acts 13. 11, also from the pen of Luke, and clearly means 'for a time', with no suggestion of 'until' anything. There is no suggestion of the word carrying the idea of 'an opportune time'. Note the use of the two words for 'time' together in Acts 3. 19 (*καιρος*), 21 (*χρόνως*).

¹³² Cf. also Matt. 16. 22-23.

¹³³ Luke 22. 53. Interestingly, in Luke's Gospel, the next recorded assault by the devil does not come until chapter 22 (in verse 31). Cf. 'the ruler of this world is coming', John 14. 30.

¹³⁴ Mal. 3. 1.

¹³⁵ John 10. 18; 14. 31; 'the sufferings of Christ, and the glories *to follow*', 1 Pet. 1. 11.

¹³⁶ Matt. 26. 39, 42, 44.

¹³⁷ Matt. 3. 15.

¹³⁸ Eph. 6. 16.

¹³⁹ Cf. Simon Peter's mother-in-law, of whom it is said that, after she was healed, 'she arose, and ministered to them', Matt. 8. 15. Also see Matt. 27. 55, and both Luke 10. 40 and John 12. 2 (where the same word is used to describe Martha's domestic service).

¹⁴⁰ 1 Kings 19. 8.

¹⁴¹ Deut. 9. 9, 18.

¹⁴² 1 Kings 19. 5-7.

¹⁴³ 1 Kings 19. 4; cf. Matt. 4. 1.

¹⁴⁴ 1 Kings 19. 6 ('baked on hot stones', JND, ESV); cf. Matt. 4. 3.

¹⁴⁵ 1 Kings 19. 8.