

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

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Abstract. Session 2 focuses on the nature, purpose, and implications of the temptations of Christ and includes a harmonization of parallel texts, a treatment of the significance of the kinds and number of temptations, and a correlation of the temptation of Christ to the rapture battle of the Body of Christ.

Introduction. Contrasting the ways that Israel failed to live up to the standard of righteousness desired by God for His chosen people, Messiah fulfilled and established that righteousness in her behalf. This we see specifically in the temptation when considered in light of Israel's history. In the temptation of Christ there is a vindication of the Word of God, with Christ deftly answering the enemy's perversions of scripture with the Truth, and this in stark contrast to the first man's failure to answer Satan's original perversion in the Garden. There is the vindication of the Last Adam, succeeding where the first Adam failed, and a vindication of true Israel, withstanding the test in the wilderness where the reprobate Israel fell. Finally we see a glimpse of the last great battle between the righteous chosen nation and the enemies of God.

I. Prologue to the Temptation: The Identification of Messiah at His Baptism

A. John the Baptist. The Messiah's herald was conceived, named and raised under such extraordinary circumstances and at such a time in history that "... fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. (Lu 1:65,66). So remarkable was this man that "... all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;" (Lu 2:15)

1. Set apart from birth to herald the coming of Messiah (Lu 1:13-17) and to prepare His ways (Lu 1:76f. Jn 1:23). John was raised as a Nazarite (from a Heb. word, meaning to separate, consecrate), i.e., he was under a vow to abstain from strong drink and to not cut his hair (Lu 1:15 cf. Nu 6:1-5ff).

2. Breaks the silence of heaven. John's prophecies mark the first recorded revelation from God since Malachi. That is not to say that the Lord did have dealings with Israel in the intertestament period, for He certainly continued to bless and graciously prod His elect toward righteousness and conformity to His Word. Mt. 11: 13 "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." And given the circumstances of John's birth and his upbringing as a Nazarite, it is safe to say that some people had their collective eye on him.

3. The spirit and power of Elijah. Jesus would later tell His disciples, (Mt. 11:14) "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias¹, which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The purpose of John's denial to the Pharisees about being Elijah to the Pharisees was twofold: (a) because they falsely believed (i.e., deluded themselves into a belief that) Elijah the Tishbite himself would return and (b) because they already had it in their minds to discredit him. Thus, John answered their question in the sense intended by them (Jn 1:21,22). Whereas in actuality, he was in the spirit and power of Elijah (i.e. not the Tishbite himself; note the hendiadys: in Elijah's truly powerful spirit), as scripture abundantly affirms (Mt 11:14-15 17:10-13 Mr 9:12,13 Lu 1:17). John Gill cites Talmud:

"before the coming of the son of David, יבא אליהו לבשר, 'Elias will come to bring the good news' of it." [Gloss. in T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 43. 2.]

¹Elias is the 17th century English transliteration of the Greek translation of the Hebrew name "Elijah."

Note, however, that the majority of things that characterized Elijah's ministry are not seen in the Baptist's ministry. "John did no miracle" (Jn 10:41). For examples consider the signs of the endless supply of meal and oil (1Ki 17:10-16), of the raising of the widow's dead son (1Ki 17:21,22), and of the calling fire down from heaven (1Ki 18:21-40). None of these things did John the Baptist, so in what sense did he come in the spirit of Elijah? What they shared in common were direct confrontations with the authorities du jour. Elijah directly confronted Ahab, who asked Elijah, "... Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. (1Ki 18:17,18)" Similarly, John the Baptist had direct confrontations with the Jewish authorities (priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem, Jn 1:19) and with Herod, the latter resulting in his imprisonment and eventual execution. He informs them that "... the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: (Lu 2:9), calls the Second Generation one of vipers (Mt 3:7) and warns them to flee from God's wrath. John is likewise a so-called "troubler of Israel" in the same spirit as was Elijah in his day.

4. John's baptism and making straight paths. John's Baptism was an outward ceremonial expression of inward repentance and humility and of hearts prepared to receive Messiah.

a. Baptism in the prophets. Note the expectation implied by the Pharisees' question, i.e., that the coming Messiah would baptize.

Jn 1:23 (cf. Isa 40:3ff.) "He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

Zec 13:1-6 "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness"

Eze 36:25-38 "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." (See also Isa 1:16 in context, esp. 16-20).

Despite these references in the prophets, there are those who view the baptism of John as something completely novel. For example, John Gill writes:

... since he denied that he was the Messiah, or Elias that was to come before the Messiah, according to the expectation of the Jews, or that prophet, or a prophet, they demand by what authority he introduced a new rite and ordinance among them, which they had never been used to; [Gill, on Jn 1:25]

However, given the above references from the prophets and the content of their questions to John, it is clear that the scribes, Pharisees, et al recognized the significance of this baptism rite as being Messianic, that is, having a Messianic character about it, that it was not something *new*, but rather foretold in the prophets. Moreover, John's baptism followed the model of initiating Gentile proselytes, implying that those who come to Messiah must put themselves in the humble place of the Gentile, acknowledging one's unworthiness before God. See below.

b. Baptism of proselytes

Despite what is read in the prophets, there is some dispute historically as to whether or not proselytes were required by rabbinical law to be baptized, it suffices to show that the practice and the controversy existed at the time of Christ.

"The baptism of John. We must first enquire about the significance of John's baptism against the background of

contemporary practices. Judaism probably practised proselyte baptism for the admission of Gentiles who wished to embrace Judaism, but the evidence for this in NT times is uncertain. According to the Mishnah this type of baptism was discussed among the Rabbis in the schools of Shammai and Hillel. In the Qumran community, daily lustrations [ceremonial purifications] appear to have been performed, but it is not clear if initiatory baptism was observed. Not only among the Jews was some form of baptism familiar, but also among the pagans, for it is known to have been practised in Egypt.

“John’s baptism would not, therefore, have been a complete innovation. In what sense then did it introduce a new element? There were several parallels between John’s baptism and Jewish proselyte baptism. They both had an application beyond Judaism. Indeed, Jewish people were called on by John to place themselves in a similar position as Gentiles. Both John’s baptism and proselyte baptism involved a voluntary step on the part of the candidates. Both also involved immersion. But John’s was unlike Jewish baptism in that it was designed for Jews, not to make them Jews, but to make them aware of the requirement of repentance.” [Guthrie, 717].

“Moreover from Rabbinic sources it is clear that the baptism of a proselyte was the occasion of his instruction. In b. Yebamoth 47a we read that after the presentation and examination of the candidate: ‘Then they are to instruct him in some of the lighter and weightier commandments ...’ So too in the extra-canonical *Gerim*, baptism involved instruction. ... For our immediate purpose, however, we point out that if, as seems likely, Christian baptism is probably closely related in origin to Jewish proselyte baptism, we should expect it to be the occasion of moral instruction like its counterpart in Judaism” [Davies, 121]

B. Jesus’s baptism: The anointing of the Messiah (“Anointed One”)

1. Fill to the full all righteousness. That Jesus came to fulfill prophecy is abundantly proven in the narratives of Christ’s life and Acts (Mt 1:22 2:15,17,23 4:14 5:17 8:17 12:17 13:35 21:4 26:56 27:9,35 Lu 24:44 Joh 12:38 Ac 3:18 13:27). Repeatedly, Matthew’s narrative claims, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ...”

- a. Messianic prophecy.** Isa 11:2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
- b. Messianic fulfillment.** Joh 1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

2. The voice out of heaven: Declaration and identification of Messiah (the “Anointed One”)

- a.** On the one hand, the voice of the Ancient of Days is affirming, documenting, and ratifying Jesus of Nazareth of the Messiah of Israel.
- b.** On the other hand, the voice of the Ancient of Days, in effect, has taunted Satan (cf. Job 1) and by identifying the Messiah, He re-declared war upon him (cf. Gen 3:15). Even if Satan has been privy to the true of identity of Jesus of Nazareth all along, he could hardly sit by and allow the Messiah of Israel to be so publically displayed and not have a shot at Him.
- c.** It then follows that the temptation should come immediately after the baptism and declaration/identification of Messiah.

II. Definition of “temptation.” Before examining and exegeting the narratives of Christ’s temptations, we do well to define some terms. The Greek word for temptation can have various meanings: a testing, trial, proving, experiment, or an enticement or snare. And the nature of the temptation, i.e. whether it denotes a thing good or bad, will vary widely and is always determined by its context.

A. Verb form: 3985 *πειραζω* peirazo {pi-rad'-zo} (from #3984); variously rendered in the AV as tempt (29), try (4), tempter (2), prove (1), assay (1), examine (1), go about (1); total occurrences: 39

As with the noun form of the word, the context of the various occurrences show that this word has meanings that variously describes actions such as experimenting, attempting, testing, proving, enticing, afflicting, rebelling, trying and tempting. **Occurrences:** Mt 4:1,3 16:1 19:3 22:18,35 Mr 1:13 8:11 10:2 12:15 Lu 4:2 11:16 20:23 Joh 6:6 8:4,6 Ac 5:9 15:10 16:7 24:6 1Co 7:5 10:9,13 2Co 13:5 Ga 6:1 1Th 3:5 Heb 2:18 3:9 4:15 11:17,37 Jas 1:13,14 Re 2:2,10 3:10

B. Noun form: 3986 *πειρασμος* peirasmos {pi-ras-mos'} (from #3985); variously rendered in the AV as temptation (19), temptations (1), try (1); total occurrences: 21

As with the verb form of the word, the context of the various occurrences show that this word has meanings that vary widely from an experiment, attempt, test or proof to an enticement, affliction, rebellion, trial and temptation. **Occurrences:** Mt 6:13 26:41 Mr 14:38 Lu 4:13 8:13 11:4 22:28,40,46 Ac 20:19 1Co 10:13 Ga 4:14 1Ti 6:9 Heb 3:8 Jas 1:2,12 1Pe 1:6 4:12 2Pe 2:9 Re 3:10

C. Temptation versus testing. For the sake of this discussion, we will distinguish *πειραζω/πειρασμος* in the bad sense from *πειραζω/πειρασμος* in the good sense by calling one “temptation” (bad sense) and “testing” (good sense). “Testing” differs from “tempting” primarily according to the intent behind the action. If it is intended to positively prove, document, strengthen, affirm, etc. then it may be regarded as testing in a good sense. However, if the intent is to entice and ensnare by exploiting one’s weaknesses, that is, to lure from within, then this may be regarded as tempting, that is, in the bad sense. Consider the following:

Mk 7:20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Thus we see the difference explained by that which defiles a man. Is the intent of the tempter to bring defilement, that is, to lure someone from his/her inner weaknesses and evil inclinations, or is the tester’s intent to bring about a positive proof, a documentation, a strengthening, etc.?

1. God cannot be tempted. James says “God cannot be tempted with evil,” (Jas 1:13), however, scripture says elsewhere God and Jesus are tempted (Ge 22:1 Ex 17:2 Nu 14:22 Ps 95:9 Mt 22:18 Mr 12:15 Lu 20:23 22:28 Ac 20:19 Ga 4:14 Heb 3:9).

Nu 14:22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

Mt 22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

Given the above vocabulary, we may now better understand the use of the term and the meaning of the passages in which we find it. Note that God cannot be tempted with evil because the evils which defile a man, which come out of man, are not within God.

2. God tempts no man. James goes on to write that God tempts no man (Jas 1:13), yet we read in Genesis 22, “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham ...” Again, given the above vocabulary, we may better understand the use and intent of the term as we find it in scripture. God does not tempt a man from within, exploiting his weaknesses. Rather, He tests from outside. See Jas 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (See also Heb. 3:7-9)

III. Exegesis and harmonization of the temptation accounts: Due to the similarities between Matthew's and Luke's accounts of the temptations of Christ in the wilderness, it is often assumed that the three temptations described in each are identical. However, the order of temptations in Matthew are different than those in Luke. Because of this, commentators and harmonizers are wont to say that one is correct while the other is wrong. By failing to employ the normative hermeneutic in their pursuit of scriptural truth, and by forcing unwarranted presuppositions upon the text, scholars have created difficulties by attempting to take events and circumstances that are similar and assume they must be identical. In so doing, violence is done upon the text not only by the manipulation of information to fit their preconceptions, but in the very assumption that portions of scripture are discrepant or somehow in error. Some commentators freely admit their belief that one of the humans authors must have described the temptations in the wrong order. E.g., John Gill writes:

The Evangelist Luke makes this to be the second temptation, which, with Matthew, is the third and last; and whose order seems to be more proper and natural than this, and to be the true and genuine one, which Luke neglects, though he does not contradict it: he relates matters of fact, without attending to the strict order of them; whereas Matthew strictly regards it, observing, that after the first temptation, "then the devil taketh him, &c." and that being finished, says, "again the devil taketh him, &c." and upon those words, "get thee hence", with what follows, remarks, that then the devil leaveth him: all which show, that his order is the most accurate, and to be followed. [Gill's *Expositor*, s.v. Lu 4:5]

A. Comparing the accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Mr 1:11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 12 And **immediately** the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. ["driveth" is *εκβαλλει*, a present-tense verb, active voice, indicative mood. Compare this to the "led" of Mt. 4:1, q.v.] 13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted ["being tempted," present passive participle] of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

In the Markan account, there is much less detail than supplied by Matthew and Luke. From this account we learn that Satan's assaults lasted the duration of the forty days and forty nights.

Table 1. Harmonization of Matthew and Luke

Luke 4

Immediately after His baptism:

1 And Jesus being full of ~~the~~ holy ghost [empowerment] returned from Jordan, and was led by **the** Spirit into the wilderness, [*ellipsis*: and was there in the wilderness ...]
2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

First temptation in Luke: A stone to food

3 And the devil said unto him, If [cond. of first class, **since**] thou be the Son of God, command this stone [singular] that it be made bread [*αρτος*, singular, food].
4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written ["it stands written"], That man shall not live by bread [food, singular] alone, but by every word of God. [Jesus quotes De 8:3]

Matthew 4

Immediately after His baptism:

1 Then was Jesus led (driven) up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ["led" is *ανηχθη*, an aorist-tense verb, passive voice, indicative mood. Compare this to Mk 1:12]
2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

First temptation in Matthew (fourth in the series): Stones to food

3 And when [after the "season" of Lu 4:13] the tempter came to him, he said, [*προσελθων αυτω ο πειραζων ειπεν*, "having come ..." i.e., not as one who had been there all along, cf. Lu 4:2, "Being forty days tempted of the devil"... "he who was tempting Him said ..."] If [cond. of first class, **since**] thou be the Son of God, command that these stones [plural] be made bread [*αρτοι*, plural, food].
4 But he answered and said, It is written ["it stands written," appeal to the written Word of God], Man shall not live by bread [food, singular] alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Second temptation in Luke: The kingdoms of the world

5 And the devil, *taking him up into an high mountain*, [disputed text] shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world [οικουμενης, habitable world, cf. Mt, κοσμου] in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, **All this power** [εξουσιαν, authority] will I give thee, **and the glory of them**: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If [cond. of third class] thou therefore wilt worship me [Luke does not say “falling down and”], all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Get thee behind me**, Satan: [Luke does not record it as, “Get thee hence,” or simply “Get!”, as in Mt. 4:10. Rather, it is υπαγε οπισω μου, i.e. “Get thee behind me.” Thus, Satan does not depart. Compare Mt 16:23, in which Peter not depart] for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Third temptation in Luke: Jumping off Temple

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If [cond. of first class, **since**] thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, **to keep thee**:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. [“at any time” is an addition. Satan omitted “to keep thee in all thy ways.” Ps 91:11,12, **but not v. 13, cf. Ge 3:15**]

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

The Devil’s departure

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. [The Devil here departs of his own accord, temporarily. He returns and attempts three similar temptations, but changes the order and the circumstances thereof].

Second temptation in Matthew (fifth in the series):

Jumping off Temple

5 Then [τοτε, at that time] the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: [Matthew does not say regarding the angels, “to keep thee” cf. Lu 4:10] and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. [Satan again adds and deletes from the scripture]

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. [Jesus quotes De 6:16]

Third temptation in Matthew (sixth in the series): The kingdoms of the world

8 **Again**, [παλιν, i.e. a second time] the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world [κοσμου, order], **and the glory of them**; [Satan offered the authority and glory in the Lukan account; here, Matthew says he shows Jesus the glory of the kingdoms of the kosmos]

9 And saith unto him, **All these things** [ταυτα παντα, these things all, not “all this power ... and glory” as in the Lukan account] will I give thee, if [cond. of third class] thou wilt **fall down and** worship me. [Satan goes beyond the offer to “worship me” as in Luke 4:7. Here he proposes that Jesus would, “falling down, worship me,” i.e., the ultimate attack of Satan upon the Second Person of the Triune Godhead. Jesus replies with a final rebuke and dismissal.]

Rebuke/dismissal of Satan

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence**, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. [De 6:13]“Get thee hence” is the single word υπαγη. Compared to “Get thee behind me,” this is simply, “Get!”]

The Devil’s departure

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. [Having been dismissed by Jesus, the Devil leaves, thus ending the temptations. The arrival of the angels marks the conclusion of the temptation period. They likely brought food to Jesus. Compare this to the ministry of the angel to Elijah, 1Ki 19:5-8]

B. Summary remarks regarding the harmonization. For the full forty-day period, minus an indeterminate “season” (Lu 4:13), Jesus experienced continual assaults from Satan’s in the form of various temptations. Of the many temptations Jesus endured during these forty days, the we have only six temptations recorded in the gospels.

IV. Meanings and purposes in Christ’s temptations.

A. Three areas of temptation. The Last Adam is tempted as the first (Cf. 1Co 15:45-47) Notice that Satan’s fundamental tactics have not changed from the foundation of the world. It is significant to note that while Eve was the one directly approached by Lucifer, whereas Jesus met a direct attack by the Enemy. Furthermore, Adam stood idly by watching the experiment, and in effect, aligned himself with the tempter. After Eve did eat, she “gave also unto her husband **with her.**” Hence, 1Ti 2 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. The three areas of temptation are as follows:

Table 2: Three temptations compared

| <u>Ge 3:16</u> | <u>1Jn 2:16</u> | <u>Jesus’s temptations</u> |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| And when the woman saw | For all that is in the world, | The world is Satan’s domain |
| 1. that the tree was good for food, | 1. the lust of the flesh, | 1. Food to satisfy fleshly hunger |
| 2. that it was pleasant to the eyes, | 2. and the lust of the eyes, | 2. Glory of the world’s kingdoms |
| 3. and a tree to be desired to make one wise, | 3. and the pride of life, | 3. Authority, power, and fame |
| she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. | is not of the Father, but is of the world. | |

B. Comparisons, contrasts in Biblical history

1. Significance of “forty”: In scripture, the number forty denotes testing or probation.

Ex 34:28 And he [Moses] was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

1Ki 19:8 And he [Elijah] arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. (see also Nu 14:34)

Consider also, the forty days and forty nights of rain that flooded the earth, forty years of Israel wandering in the wilderness.

2. Comparing Moses with Messiah. Moses spent forty days and nights without food in preparation of presenting the Law to Israel. Jesus spent forty day and nights without food in preparation of presenting Himself as the culmination and fulfillment of that Law (and not the cessation of it). Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

3. Wilderness and the Garden. The first temptation happened in a beautiful Garden in paradise; Jesus’s temptations were launched against Him in the wilderness.

4. Divine provision and hunger. Israel was fed daily with manna, yet rebelled against their Provider; Messiah hungered, yet obeyed the Father.

C. Theological considerations regarding Messiah's temptations

- 1. The temptation draws attention to Jesus's condition as God and man.** This tension is hinted at in a comparison of the temptation accounts. Matthew and Luke say Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Mark says He was driven by the Holy Spirit. Further, there is the very fact of His temptations, Satan's attempt to entice the Lord through the human frailty of hunger.
- 2. Conflicting kingdoms.** As Jesus came to present and to establish His Kingdom, he would have to confront and overthrow the kingdom of the adversary. Messiah is operating behind enemy lines, and is planning a coup.
- 3. Fear in the demonic realm.** It is noteworthy, and seen later in the gospel records, that demons cry out but do not henceforth attempt to tempt, test, attack or influence Jesus in any way. At the dismissal of Satan, it would appear that fear came upon the demonic realm. Having defeated the chief among the reprobate angels, deference would henceforth be shown to Jesus. Before Jesus was presented to Israel at John's baptism, there may still have been questions and uncertainties about the identity of Messiah, as indicated by the questions put to John by those sent from Jerusalem. After the anointing of Messiah at His baptism, there is no longer any doubt as to His identity, and word travels quickly. We may surmise that the news of Satan's failed assaults upon Jesus of Nazareth spread quickly as well, evidenced by the extreme reactions of the demons to Jesus's presence time and again.

V. Dispensational considerations and the rapture battle of the Body of Christ. There are implications of Christ's temptations with respect to each household of God's elect. We have already discussed Christ's success as the Last Adam, vindicating the Word of God and deflecting Satan's lies. As Israel's Messiah, the success of Jesus of Nazareth in the temptation answers to Israel's failure to uphold and live by the Word of God. It is also a precursor to Israel's final victory over and vanquishing of Satan and his kingdom. For the Body of Christ, the temptation is a lesson and example that points to the future rapture battle. We now turn to this last topic.

A. The Rapture Battle (1Thess 4:13-18 1Co 15:51-58)

The rapture is that event in which Christ returns for His Body, the elect of this present dispensation, to jointly sit with Him on the Father's throne. At the Rapture each member of the Body of Christ receives a new glorified body of the same glory as Christ (Rom 8:16-21; 1 Cor 15:40,53,54). The rapture takes place prior to the Day of the Lord (1Thess 5:1-11) and precedes the inauguration of the Third Generation of Israel. This day of battle is also called the day of fire (1 Cor 3:13) connecting the rapture-battle with the judgment seat of Christ (see below).

- 1. Christ's earthly ministry** was immediately preceded by a battle with Satan. So it will be with the Body of Christ, whose ministry over the created order will be preceded by a battle with Satan's realm.
- 2. Just as Christ** answered Satan's attacks with the Word of God, so the Body of Christ will wield the Sword of the Spirit, wearing the full armor of God, in that final battle with Satan and his minion on our way to the Third Heaven.
- 3. Whereas Jesus's temptation experience** prepared Him for His earthly ministry, the Body of Christ's earthly temptations and struggles prepare us for our heavenly ministry.
- 4. Throughout Christ's earthly ministry,** He was faced with opposition by human agents influenced and driven by the demonic realm. Similarly, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph 6:12).

B. Practical considerations regarding temptations.

1. Daily temptation in the Kingdom dispensation (Third Generation). Third generation Israel's motivation and encouragement to remain faithful and to endure temptation.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Jas 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. ... 12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

2Pe 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

2. Daily temptation in the Body dispensation

Paul's stern warnings are to hold fast to his Gospel, to learn from Israel's scriptures, and to trust Jesus's promise to preserve us and to bring to completion the good work He has begun in us.

2Co 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

1Co 10:9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Ga 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

1Th 3:5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

1Ti 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

2. Warfare against Satan in the Body dispensation

Present warfare

• Against all angels opposing Paul's gospel (Gal 1:8-12)

• Designated "the **days** (plural) are evil (plural)

• Body posture is defensive; it is to stand, i.e. to defend in demonic territory against demonic attack.

Ascension/rapture battle

• Against Satan and all angels opposing Paul's gospel

• Designated the **day** (singular) the **wicked** (singular)

• Body posture is offensive; it is to anti-stand, i.e., attack Satan and his demons in order to possess Body territory (that is, to take our Hope) on the Throne of God in the Third heaven.

VI. Conclusions and summary.

In the temptation of Christ we are shown not only His preparation for His earthly ministry to the nation of Israel, but also a vindication of the Word of God, the pinnacle example of the wielding of truth against lies, the success of righteousness over evil, and Man as God's supreme creation standing against rebel angels. The temptation established the Son's right to return to the heavenlies in His humanity. In Christ's victory over temptation from the Enemy, the Body of Christ sees that its Head will not be defeated in a personal challenge. Furthermore, we see a precursor to the ultimate conflict between the Body of Christ and the demon horde. As the Body of Christ we see in Jesus a Model, looking ahead to the rapture battle in which we will follow Christ's example by wielding the Sword of the Spirit. In the ultimate temptation, we will follow Paul as He followed Christ in vindicating the Mystery Gospel.

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