

TEMPTATION IS SUBTLER THAN WE CAN FATHOM, AND THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IS GREATER THAN WE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO APPRECIATE.

Deuteronomy 6:1-25; Matthew 3:13-4:11

Theme of Matthew: “Behold your King is coming to you” (Zech.9:9 with Matt.21:4-5)

INTRODUCTION: THE INCARNATION AND THE TEMPTATION

Incarnation – the word *incarnation* is a Latin word meaning “en-flesh-ment”. In Christianity, it is when God the Son became a man (John 1:14). As the Son of God, Jesus has always been God. Yet, a little over 2,000 years ago, the Son of God, remaining God, became what He was not – a MAN.

- ✓ Since September, the preaching and teaching from the first four chapters of Matthew has been rooted in the Incarnation.
- ✓ The temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4 has as much to do with the Incarnation as does Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem and being placed in a manger.
- ✓ Matthew 4 is part of the “Christmas Story” – even though you won’t hear any songs about it this season, or see pictures of it on Hallmark Christmas Cards.

I. IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD...THROW YOURSELF DOWN (Matthew 4:5-7//Luke 4:9-12; cf. Matthew 26:52-54)

*For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways.
They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.
Psalm 91:11-12*

A. In the second temptation, Satan is challenging Jesus to prove that He trusts God and is willing to live according to what is written.

1. Satan is appealing to Christ’s single-minded obedience to the Word of God.
2. What better place for Satan to tempt Jesus than in the holy city on the pinnacle of the temple!

B. The subtlety of Satan’s temptation is staggering. He is the father of lies, and this second temptation is perhaps his “greatest” of all time lies.

1. As with many of Satan’s lies, there is a grain of half-truth. That half truth is, “He [God] will command His angels concerning You” (Matthew 4:6 with Psalm 91:11).
2. It was true that God commanded His angels concerning Jesus!
 - a. “angels came and began to minister to Him” (Matthew 4:11).
 - b. It was through the angel of the Lord that Joseph learned that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit and that Joseph was to marry her (Matthew 1:20).
 - c. It was through the angel of the Lord that Joseph learned that he was to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt to flee from Herod (Matthew 2:13-14).
 - d. An angel ministered to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).
 - e. Angels are God’s ministers to His people (Hebrews 1:14).
3. It is not by accident that Satan gives a quotation about **angels!** (Revelation 12:4,7-9).

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22).

C. The second temptation was not a matter of *trusting* but of *testing* (**Matthew 4:7 with Deuteronomy 6:16**).

*“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.
Deuteronomy 6:16*

II. ALL THESE I WILL GIVE YOU IF YOU FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP ME

(Matthew 4:8-10//Luke 4:5-8; cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor.4:4)

- A. The third temptation *appears* to be the *easiest* of all three temptations. Yet, it is probably the most difficult because Satan offers to crown Jesus King over the Kingdoms, without the cross. (cf. Matthew 28:18-20)

“No sin is small for it is against an infinite God.”

- B. Never for a moment was there a doubt in the mind of our Savior Whom He would serve. Never was there an instant when Jesus wavered from doing the will of His Father. Never was there a moment when He questioned His love for His people and whether He would forgo the cross and leave us to perish (Hebrews 12:2).

“I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession (Psalm 2:7-8).

*“You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.
(Deuteronomy 6:13)*

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Pray that God would not lead you into temptation and that He would deliver you from the evil one.

What is the Incarnation? How is the temptation of Jesus rooted in the Incarnation and part of the “Christmas Story”?

What were the three temptations Satan spoke to Jesus?

Would you given in to one, two, or all three of Satan’s temptations? Why or why not?

What was the subtlety of the second temptation? Was there any truth to this second temptation?

Why is it that a person’s greatest strength is often their greatest weakness.

Where does Satan quote from when he says, “It is written?” Why is the surrounding context important?

Give some examples of how we sometimes put God to the test.

Why wasn’t the third temptation the “easiest?”

From which book and chapters of the Bible did Jesus answer Satan?