

Mark 1:12-13

The Temptation of Christ

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Introduction

In all three Synoptic Gospels, the account of Jesus' temptation directly follows His baptism. The two events stand in stark contrast. Having received the royal accolades of heaven, Jesus immediately faced the fierce assaults of hell. His coronation by the Spirit and confirmation from the Father are followed straightaway by His confrontation with the devil.

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Mark 1:12-13

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

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The Temptation of a King

Mark 1:11

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

In this and the following sections, Mark declares the authority of the King. In this section we see Jesus' authority over evil and temptation. We will also compare it with the other gospels to see the nature of temptation, and some helps in how to handle temptation in our own lives.

All believers are and will be tempted, but we are not bound by sin. We must make the choice to submit to God and not to evil. Martin Luther stated that temptation comes from three sources – the world, our own flesh, and the Devil (including his evil forces).

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The Temptation of a King

Mark 1:11

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

Notice that it was the Holy Spirit that drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted. The term “drove” means “impelled or compelled”.

This reveals that Jesus was totally submitted to the Holy Spirit's leading.

It must be noted that God never tempts anyone (James 1:13), however He does allow them to be tested (Genesis 3; Job; and Christ).

So why did Jesus go to the wilderness to be tempted?

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The Temptation of a King

Demonstrated Jesus' True Humanity

Mark 1:11

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

Mark does not tell us why Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan himself. Theologians are divided over whether Jesus was able to sin. As God, He would not have been able to sin. However, was Jesus' Human nature able to sin?

The temptations, particularly those involving physical needs and the allure of power, highlighted Jesus's genuine human nature. He experienced hunger, potential for earthly glory, and the pressure to prove his divine sonship, just as humans do. Yet Jesus did not give into these temptations and remained sinless.

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The Temptation of a King

Exemplified Jesus' Obedience

Mark 1:11

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

By resisting each temptation, Jesus exemplified perfect obedience to God's will, setting an example for believers on how to resist sin and remain steadfast in their faith.

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The Temptation of a King

Jesus' Overcoming the Fall

Mark 1:11

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

The temptations mirrored the temptations that Adam and Eve faced in the Garden of Eden, where they succumbed to sin. Jesus's victory over Satan in the wilderness reversed the effects of the fall and paved the way for humanity's redemption.

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

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The Temptation of a King

Jesus' Provided a Model for Believer

Mark 1:11

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

The temptations of Jesus offer a template for how believers should approach their own struggles with temptation, emphasizing reliance on God's word and resisting the allure of sin.

Jesus is able to Sympathize with Human Weakness

As Hebrews 4:15 states, because Jesus was tempted in all things as we are, He can sympathize with our weaknesses and serve as our intercessor.

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The Temptation of a King

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And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

As mentioned, there is a comparison contrast between Adam and Jesus (2nd Adam). Adam's temptation took place in the lush and beautiful Garden of Eden. All his needs were met there by God, yet when faced by Satan, He was deceived to believe that God was holding back and chose to rebel against God's authority and sin entered the world.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness (a picture of the aftermath of sin). It was dry, hot, and devoid of provision. The other Gospels tell us that Jesus went without eating for 40 days. He must have been tired, weak, and hungry. Yet in the face of want, when He was tempted by Satan, He resisted and chose the trust in the Father's provision which was yet unseen.

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The Temptation of a King

Mark 1:11

And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

The wilderness is described as a place “with the wild beasts”. This emphasizes the reality that Jesus was completely isolated from human care. Such untamed animals may have included leopards, foxes, jackals, and wild pigs. The wilderness would have been a very dangerous place.

Jesus displayed a complete trust in God to protect Him until He had completed His mission. Jesus faced angry multitudes that wanted to kill Him, storms that threatened to capsize a boat and drown Him, death and the grave which threatened to hold Him, and here in the wilderness which threatened to destroy Him. In each instance the Father was faithful in protecting the Son.

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The Temptation of a King

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And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

After successfully resisting 40 days of temptation, angels came and ministered to Him. The word “ministered” indicates that these angels provided Jesus with food. But the angels also ministered to Him by their very presence, which served as confirmation that the Father who sent them was still well pleased with His Son.

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The Lessons From The King

There are several lessons we can take away from our passage.

1. **Temptation often comes after great victory.**
2. **Temptation is used by the Spirit.** If we were never tested, we would not recognize our weaknesses and need for dependence upon God.
3. **Temptation often comes when we are in a wilderness experience.** When we are tired, hungry, upset, or discouraged we are vulnerable to temptation and failure.
4. **Temptation is either directly or indirectly from evil forces of Satan** and his workers, the fallen world in which we live, and our own fallen nature.
5. **Temptation is met and overcome through reliance upon God** for His leading and wisdom through His Word, and the reliance upon the Spirit for Power.

FOCUS DETERMINES REALITY!

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So What ...

When we look at the other Gospels, we see that Jesus overcame by total surrender upon the Father and by quoting Scripture.

We need to remember that as Christians, Satan has no power over us that we do not give Him. It is always a test of whether we trust in God's promises more than the things he offers us (physical and emotional)

Jesus quoted Scripture, but Satan is not afraid of Scripture – he knows it and loves to twist it and cause the believer to doubt. However, when one yields in obedience to God's Word and determines not to sin, then Satan (used generically for all his followers) realizes he has lost the battle and will flee.

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

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