



The Testing of Jesus in the Wilderness

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

Sermon Series: *Matthew*

Topic: Temptation, Testing, Devil, Wilderness

Introduction

As we follow Matthew's account of the unfolding story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, today we move into chapter 4 and an episode of testing that Jesus endured in the wilderness.

Before we begin, we need to be reminded of the context. Immediately before this, in chapter 3, Matthew told us of the baptism of Jesus. Even though baptism was a sign of repentance from sin, Jesus—having no sin from which to repent¹—had nevertheless been baptized. He did this *"to fulfill all righteous"* (Mt. 3:15), which means that baptism was necessary to fulfill God's righteous plan for his life, that included identifying with sinners and being revealed to John as God's chosen messiah. Much more was happening in Jesus' baptism in the Jordan than a simple dunk in the water. It turned out to be Jesus' coronation service. The new king of the coming kingdom of heaven was being crowned, and with the Holy Spirit rather with a golden wreath. Immediately after his baptism, when Jesus came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like dove, and God Father spoke out loud from heaven saying,

Matthew 3:17 (ESV) "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

On that day, God publicly declared Jesus of Nazareth to be His Son and anointed him with His own Holy Spirit. This was the sign God had given to John by which God had promised to John to reveal who His messiah was to be. Jesus of Nazareth is now known as the Son of God² and he is the anointed one who would baptize in the Holy Spirit.³

This declaration is important because it derives from two earlier quotes from God which he spoke about his messiah. The first, *"This is my beloved Son,"* comes from Psalm 2:7 and is connected⁴ with God's promise to David to raise up one of David's sons who would forever

¹ Matthew 3:13-15.

² John 1:34.

³ John 1:31.

⁴ Hebrews 1:5.

reign upon the throne of Israel (2 Sam. 7:14). The second phrase, "...with whom I am well pleased," comes from Isaiah 42:1, where God's messiah is described as a "suffering servant" upon whom the LORD will place a divine anointing of His Holy Spirit to empower him to accomplish all His will. Thus, God is saying that the descendant son of David who would be raised up to redeem God's people would be anointed with the Holy Spirit so that he could fulfill God's plan for his life *through suffering*. The chosen Son and anointed king would also be like a humble servant who walk through much suffering in his life.

At the baptism of Jesus, God publicly declared that Jesus of Nazareth was His chosen Son and behind that declaration stood hundreds of years of the fulfillment of God's prophetic word.

- God's Messiah would be a son of David. Jesus is a son of David.
- Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
- Messiah would be born of a virgin. Jesus was conceived in the womb of a virgin, Mary.
- Messiah would be called out of Egypt. Jesus was called out of Egypt.
- Messiah would be despised deeply, like all Nazarenes. Jesus grew up in Nazareth.
- Messiah would be preceded by a messenger preaching repentance in the wilderness. Jesus was preceded by John who preached repentance in the wilderness.
- Messiah would be anointed with God's Holy Spirit. Jesus has just been visibly anointed with God's Holy Spirit before John's eyes.
- Messiah would be a suffering servant. Will we see Jesus suffer? If he suffers, will he suffer faithfully? Or will he—like Israel—complain, doubt, condemn, and abandon God during suffering?

The one whom God had chosen was now no longer a secret. God had spoken out loud from heaven that His chosen messiah had arrived and Jesus of Nazareth was his name.

And all of heaven and earth heard this proclamation. Among them was the devil.

Led into the Wilderness (v.1-2)

After being baptized, it was now the time for testing.

Matthew 4:1-2 (ESV) ¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Led by the Spirit

The first observation we can make is that Jesus was "*led by the Spirit.*" This next phase in God's plan for Jesus' life happened as a result of the leadership of the *Holy Spirit*. The Spirit of God takes the initiative here. *He* leads Jesus and no one else. This is not Jesus deciding what to do next, but rather the Spirit of God guiding Jesus where He wants him to go. What

happens next, was the will of God. This was part of God's plan for Jesus. The Spirit of God is in control here. Jesus has just now been anointed by the Holy Spirit as a sign of God's divine favor and that same Holy Spirit who anointed him, is the one who now leads Jesus onward.

Into the Wilderness

Where does the Holy Spirit lead Jesus? He led him "*up into the wilderness.*" Why is he led out into the wilderness? Is this just an accident? Or a simply a geographic peculiarity of the Holy Spirit? Were the sunsets more splendid from the wilderness?

If you recall, John the baptist did not start preaching in the wilderness for no reason. John's preaching in the wilderness was no accident, thus we can assume that Jesus' presence in the wilderness is also no accident. John *preached in the wilderness as fulfillment of God's word* spoken through Isaiah ("...a voice crying out in the wilderness" Is. 40:3). Thus, there is a reason and purpose for why the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. The purpose must be to fulfill some aspect of God's plan for His Son.

We have noted before how there are aspects of Jesus' life that follow the footsteps of the nation of Israel (who is also portrayed as God's son⁵). For example, Just as Israel spent time in Egypt and then came out, so Jesus spent time in Egypt and then come out. Just as the king of Egypt tried to destroy Israel by commanding the baby boys to be murdered, so king Herod tried to destroy Jesus by commanding baby boys in Bethlehem to be murdered. Just as God led Israel into the wilderness after being—in a manner of speaking—baptized in the Red Sea⁶, so Jesus, after his baptism, is now led by God led into the wilderness.

Why the wilderness?

You will recall that it was in the wilderness that God established his covenant relationship with Israel. To them and them alone He promised lifelong love and faithfulness. He said, "***You shall be my treasured possession among all the peoples of the earth,***" to which they responded, "***All that you say, we will do.***"⁷ In the wilderness, God said to the nation of Israel, "will you marry me," and they said, "I do." The Ten Commandments are the wedding vows between Yahweh and his people. In the wilderness, they agreed to love and worship no other God, but Yahweh alone. They pledged their loyalty, love, and faithfulness to him. After they heard God speak to them the Ten Commandments, Moses said to them,

Exodus 20:20 (ESV) "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, so that you may not sin."

⁵ Exodus 4:22; Deut. 1:31; Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 31:9.

⁶ 1 Cor. 10:1-2.

⁷ Exodus 19:5-6, 8.

The time in the wilderness was a time of *testing* that was aimed at filling Israel with fear, awe, wonder-inspired worship, and a holy love that would keep them from sin. After saying this⁸, Moses went up on the mountain with God to receive from Him all His instructions (for their new life and house together (Ex. 25-32) and he was with God “*forty days and nights*” (Ex. 24:18). What happened in the camp while Moses was gone?

Forty Days

On the fortieth day after Moses went up into the mountain with God, the people had grown impatient, because they had not seen Moses for a month and 10 days. They couldn't see God and they couldn't see Moses. They decided that they preferred to have a god they could see (Ex. 32) rather than one they could not see. So they talked Aaron into creating a golden calf for them to worship. He made one and set it before them. And they proclaimed, “*This is your god that brought you up out of Egypt!*”⁹ Then they all fell down before it and worshiped that as their god. In the wilderness, they promised their faithfulness to God, and in the wilderness they broke their vows to Him within *forty days*.

Summary

If Israel broke her vows on the fortieth day in the wilderness, then Israel's messiah must keep those vows on the fortieth day in the wilderness. If messiah was to redeem faithless Israel, then he must do so in the wilderness. If Israel's faithfulness was *lost* in the wilderness, then Israel's faithfulness must be *found* in the wilderness. If Jesus is messiah, then he must obey where Israel disobeyed. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit *into the wilderness* to keep the promises to God that His nation made in the wilderness, but failed to keep. God tested¹⁰ Israel in the wilderness, but they failed the test. If Jesus is the Son of God, then he too must be tested in the wilderness.

This helps us understand an aspect of this sentence which at first might be confusing, namely did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus into temptation *to sin*?

Tempted by the Devil

The fact that our translations say, “*Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil,*” can be seen as troubling or confusing. In English the word ‘tempted’ almost universally has a negative connotation, as in “tempting to do evil.” However, the word translated ‘tempted’ (*peirazō* πειράζω) can also rightly be translated as “tested.” The word means “to put to the test,”¹¹ and can be used in either a positive or a negative sense depending upon the context and the designs of the one giving the test. Most of the time the

⁸ And receiving some other instructions about how they were to live (Ex. 21-23), there was a kind of wedding celebration dinner for Moses, Aaron & his sons, and the seventy elders of Israel (Ex. 24).

⁹ Exodus 32:4.

¹⁰ Exodus 20:20.

¹¹ Heinrich Seesemann, “Πείρα, Πειράω, Πειράζω, Πειρασμός, Ἀπειραστος, Ἐκπειράζω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 23.

word simply means “the process of testing or examining”¹² so that a thing’s value or quality can be rightly assessed.¹³ In fact, when Matthew uses this verb, this is how he always uses it.¹⁴

Note that there are two beings in this sentence, the *Spirit* and the *devil*. Both are treated as completely real and factual. The Holy Spirit is just as real as is the devil. “*The devil*” (του διάβολου), “literally ‘the slanderer, or the accuser,’ refers to the principal supernatural evil being—who is elsewhere called Satan”¹⁵ or “that ancient serpent” (Rev. 20:2). The Bible clearly affirms that that devil is real and not merely the result of an overactive and fictional imagination.

God never ‘*tempts*’ anyone with the aim of causing evil (Jam. 1:13). However, the devil always does. God “*tests*,” to examine and reveal character, while the devil “*tempts*” with the aim of bringing about evil. Thus, this single sentence reveals that there are two things happening here. The Holy Spirit is leading Jesus into the wilderness to “*test*” (i.e. prove, demonstrate, rightly assess) the quality of the character of Jesus, while the devil is aiming to “*tempt*” Jesus so as to cause him to do evil.

It is not unusual for God’s good and just designs to be carried out by evil agents. God used the evil desires of Joseph’s jealous brothers to deliver him to Egypt where he then put him into a position to save his whole family and many others as well (Gn. 45:5,7: 50:20). God used the wicked Babylonians to carry out his just judgment upon wicked Israel. God used the sinful Romans to carry out the crucifixion of Jesus, which has brought us salvation and life and victory over sin and Satan.

What is at stake here is whether or not Jesus truly is the Son of God and whether or not he will give in to sin. Will Jesus turn out like Adam, the first “son of God,”¹⁶ who failed his test in the Garden? Will he turn out like Israel, another “son of God,” who failed the test in the wilderness. Or will Jesus pass this “test” in the wilderness?

Alone in Testing

Jesus was alone during this time of testing. He was “*led by the Spirit*” alone into the wilderness. He had no one with him. He hadn’t yet called his disciples. This took place before his public ministry began. He was completely alone in this time of testing and tempting. The only being with him was the devil and “the wild animals”¹⁷ and neither were good company. Thus, we must realize that the only way we know any of this information and all that took place

¹² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 329.

¹³ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 54.

¹⁴ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 101.

¹⁵ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 144.

¹⁶ Luke 3:38.

¹⁷ Mark 1:13.

in this wilderness is from Jesus himself. Jesus must have later told his disciples about all that happened here.

Church history holds that the wilderness region in which this took place is now called **Quarantena**, or as it is now called Mt. Temptation, which is located about 7 miles north-west of Jericho. The word is the Latin word for 40, and is where we have our word quarantine, which of course refers to a period of isolation.

The particular spot which tradition has fixed upon has hence got the name of *Quarantana* or *Quarantaria*, from the forty days,—‘an almost perpendicular wall of rock twelve or fifteen hundred feet above the plain.’¹⁸



Forty Days Being Tempted (v.2)

Verse two tells us how long this temptation lasted. The temptation lasted “*forty days and forty nights.*” Jesus did not merely face three temptations only. He faced temptation to sin by the devil for the entire forty days that he was in the wilderness. Mark and Luke make this very clear.

Mark 1:13 (ESV) And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Luke 4:1-2 (ESV) ¹ And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil.

So we ought not to think that Jesus only suffered these three temptations and that was it. He endured a 40-day long barrage of temptations by the devil. Neither were these 40 days the last time he was tempted either. Luke makes this clear by explaining,

Luke 4:13 (ESV) And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

After this forty day period of temptation to sin, Satan “*departed from*” Jesus for a while, but then later returned to him “*at an opportune time.*” The devil returned to Jesus at many other

¹⁸ David Brown, A. R. Fausset, and Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Matthew–John*, vol. V (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 16.

times and with many other temptations to sin. The author of Hebrews further clarifies the extent of Jesus' temptations.

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

There is no temptation to sin that Jesus did not face. He endured them all. He has been tempted "*in every respect*," that is, in every way, that we ourselves are tempted and yet he never gave in to sin. We ought not think that this means that Jesus cannot identify with our temptations to sin. We ought never to think, "Well he never sinned therefore he doesn't really know what struggling with temptation is like." Actually, Jesus knows better the extent and allurement of temptation because he has endured longer than any of us. Jesus knows by experience the full weight of temptation better than do you or I, for he has endured the full extent and power of every temptation and yet he has overcome each them. He never gave in to any of them. Jesus never sinned. Thus, Jesus has experienced a greater degree of the pull and allurement of every temptation than have we. We all give in to temptation before the fight gets the hottest. Jesus has endured the hottest heat any and every temptation the devil can muster, and still he remained faithful to God! We fall quickly into sin, but Jesus did not fall quickly. He who runs the farthest down the path of temptation, and yet never gives in to sin, knows better the intensity and difficulty of the allurement.

Jesus is like a running back on a football team who runs through the lineman of temptation, only he keeps going and then he stiff-arms all the linebackers and all the safeties and keeps running all the way to the touchdown. When we face temptation, we try to run through the linemen of temptation and get tackled after about two yards. Now who knows the better the full power of the opposing team? He who ran through every player on the field and kept running or him who tackled at the line of scrimmage?

Remember Odysseus as he passed the Island of the Sirens. Odysseus is the only man to have survived the song of the sirens. He alone knows how deadly their cry is. No man before him had fully known the depth of the enchantment of the siren's salacious song for no man before had listened to the full length of their song. Each captain before him had turned aside mid-song, changing the course of his ship into the dangerous cove and smashed his ship on the hidden reefs and rough rocks below the surface of the water. However, Odysseus heard the whole song. He had been warned in advance of the deadly beauty of the sirens song. He commanded his men to tie him to the mast of the ship and to stuff their ears with wax so that they themselves would not be taken in. Thus, he alone knew just how seductive their song, was, because he alone heard the whole song. The same is true with temptation.

Jesus alone has endured the full duration of the temptation to sin, and he alone has fully experienced the raw pulling power of temptation to sin. All who fail before temptation is

finished, have failed to feel it's full strength. Since Jesus alone never sinned, the Jesus alone knows exactly how tempting temptation can be. He alone knows this, because he alone has never sinned.

First Temptation (v.2-4)

The first temptation is a perfect example of this. The devil attacks at the place of greatest vulnerability.

Matthew 4:2-4 (ESV) ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus had been fasting for forty days. The purpose of fasting is to forego food so that one might focus on God. The reason to fast is to turn away from food so that one might turn to God in a deeper and more focused way. We see this in cases of Moses¹⁹ and Elijah²⁰ who both fasted forty days and nights. Evidently, Jesus understood this time in the wilderness as a season of individual worship of God which freed him to completely focus on the LORD. However, the devil rushes into this moment in order to draw Jesus away from his Father.

We also see that this temptation comes at the end of this forty day period. Prior to this period Jesus was not hungry. Some who have fasted this long say that after about 10 days or so the hunger pains stop and they only restart again just before a person reaches the point of death. However, suddenly he is hungry. And this is the moment the devil appears. Most likely Jesus is physically at his end. By this point, he would have almost no physical strength left. Forty days is about the extent a person can go without food.

The invitation here is simply to eat. The tempter comes saying, "If you are the Son of God, then why don't you have some breakfast. If you are royalty, then why are you experiencing such deprecation?" This is quite tempting, because it is not a sin to eat. Notice that the devil refers to him as "the Son of God." The devil just heard that term as Jesus' baptism. The devil is not here doubting that claim, but rather calling for Jesus to bring a premature end to his hunger.

Perhaps Jesus had predetermined with God the Father that he would fast for forty days, and thus he could not eat until this day was over. What Satan is saying is more like, "Since you are the Son of God, then why don't you prove it by taking care of your hunger." The devil is inviting Jesus to access his divine nature to ease his physical suffering. Jesus' response will help us. Jesus responds to this by quoting from Scripture. He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, saying, "It

¹⁹ He did so on two occasions Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Dt. 9:9, 11, 18, 25; 10:10.

²⁰ 1 Kings 19:8.

is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Reading the larger context will be helpful. Moses is speaking,

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 (ESV) ² And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, 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.

God led Israel in the wilderness, the Holy Spirit led Jesus in the wilderness. Israel was there 40 years (because they failed to believe in 40 days²¹), while Jesus was there 40 days. God tested Israel in the wilderness to expose what was in their hearts, while Jesus also is being tested to expose what is in his heart. Israel was humbled with hunger, and Jesus too is being humbled with fasting. The hunger of Israel was a test to reveal whether or not they would keep God's commandments. They failed the test, because they grumbled and complained every time food didn't come when they wanted it to and eventually they accused God of only bringing them out of Egypt to kill them. They didn't trust God or believe in him. Moses here tells them that the ultimate point of the test to teach them that their lives were more dependent upon God than it was upon food. If they had no food and yet God's word was that they should live, then they would have lived even without food. God's word is more powerful than physical food. Jesus knew this. He would not give in to the temptation to put more trust in food than in the word of God. **Israel failed this test, but Jesus passed this test.**

Which, by the way, is exactly what Adam and Eve did. They saw food as more pleasant than obeying God's word. They put more trust in food than they did in God's command. Israel failed that test, but Jesus here passed this test.

Second Temptation (v.5-7)

The second temptation is different. The scene is not in the wilderness, but in Jerusalem on top of the temple.

Matthew 4:5-7 (ESV) ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸

²¹ Numbers 14:32-34.

The highest point of the temple to the base of the valley below was about 180 feet.²² Once again the devil begins with the phrase, "***If you are the Son of God...***" The devil is focusing his attack on Jesus because he has been declared to be the "Son of God."

Notice that the devil both goes to temple and quotes Scriptures! Did you know the devil can quote Scripture? Here he quotes Psalm 91:11-12. How amazing it is that Satan also studies the Bible. Evidently the devil does his "devotions" too. He not only reads and studies the Bible, he even memorizes Scripture also. The devil studies the Bible, but not to obey God's word, but rather studies it to manipulate it for his own purposes. Beware, just because someone studies the Bible and can quote Scripture, does not mean they are a follower of Jesus. Look closely at the fruit of his or her life. Do they obey God's word in their daily life? Or simply say they are a Christian? Is there any *doing* that accords with the saying? Attending weekly worship services does not make you a Christian either? The devil goes to church too. In the words of Keith Green, "Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger."

What's the problem with this temptation? Jesus' response helps us understand. Jesus answered Satan's temptation again by quoting Scripture. He quotes Deuteronomy 6:16 says, "***You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.***" In context, Moses was telling the people of Israel not to put God to the test like they did at Massah, which was a place where there was no water and the people grumbled and complained to Moses saying, "***Is the Lord among us or not?***" (Ex. 17:7). In other words, the people were saying, "If God is here with us, then he will prove himself by giving us water to drink. And if there is no water that suddenly appears, then God is not here." They were forcing God's hand. They were testing him by demanding him to act in a particular way.

This is exactly what Satan was inviting Jesus to do. He was trying to get him to force God to act. Satan was saying, "Well Jesus, since you are the Son of God, why don't you jump off the top of the temple? There's nothing to worry about, since you are the Son of God, because God's word says that he will send his angels to come quickly and take care of you." Jesus responds by saying that it is wrong to use God's word to force him to act. It is sinful to create a false crisis that demands God act in order to keep his word. God's own word prohibits such actions. Scripture interprets Scripture. God's word never contradicts itself. Thus, knowing all of God's word will help you rightly handle specific portions of God's word. It is sinful and wrong to put God to the test, by forcing him to act. **Israel failed this test, but Jesus passed this test.**

Third Temptation (v.8-10)

Now we come to the third and final temptation included by Matthew.

²² France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, 104.

Matthew 4:8-10 (ESV) ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

This time the devil is more direct and comes straight to the point. He wants Jesus to worship him. Thus, he tries to bribe Jesus by promising to give him "*all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory.*" Again, the devil knows his Bible and probably gets this from Psalm 2, from which came the title, "the Son of God." Psalm 2 is a messianic psalm and God has already made a similar promise to messiah. The devil here is simply trying to get Jesus to take a short cut to what God has already promised to give him.

Psalms 2:7-8 (ESV) ⁷ I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession."

Jesus knows that God has already promised to make messiah the Sovereign over all the earth and to give him the nations as a reward for him faithfully fulfilling all of God's will, but that will only come through suffering the cross and not by avoiding it. Messiah is God's "*suffering servant*" of whom he spoke by Isaiah (42). The rewards of messiah cannot be given unless messiah fulfills all God's will for him, and the first and greatest command "*is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God and him only shall you serve.'*" Jesus again quotes from Deuteronomy (6:13).

Jesus knows God's word, has it memorized in his mind and treasured in his heart, and thus, he does not sin against God. **Israel failed in the wilderness to worship God and him alone, but Jesus in the wilderness passed this test.** Satan is defeated. Jesus tells him to "Be gone!"

Matthew 4:11 (ESV) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Jesus was likely very close to utter and complete exhaustion. He could not even feed himself. Thus, angels were sent to '*minister*' to him. The word translated '*minister*' is *diakonoun* (διακονέω), from which we have our word deacon. The word means "to serve food and drink to those who are eating—to wait upon."²³ Jesus was so exhausted that he could not feed himself so God sent some angels to take care of him. This is exactly the same thing that happened to Elijah when he fasted forty days (see 1 Kgs. 19:4-8).

²³ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 520.

Conclusion

Jesus followed in the footsteps of Israel. Jesus succeeded every where that Israel had failed. Jesus was righteous everywhere that Israel was unrighteous. Jesus believed where Israel had disbelieved.

Jesus went into the wilderness to be alone with God, and Satan jumped in to draw him away. But Satan failed. Jesus did not sin. Jesus remained true and faithful to God even when he had no physical strength. Jesus learned dependance upon the Holy Spirit. Jesus learned that faith in God is more powerful than food, because God is greater than food.

Jesus modeled for us that the way to overcome the devil is by the word of God. If you treasure the word of God in heart and have it memorized, then God's word will be the sword you can use against the devil and his demons when they come to tempt you to do evil. God's word is life²⁴, and Satan's lies is death. If you want to live, then you must know God's words, otherwise you will be deceived by the enemy who only ever lies.

The devil is real, but so is the Holy Spirit. Whom would you rather fill your life?

Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Put your faith and trust in Jesus and tell Satan to "Be gone, in the name of Jesus!"

Put your faith in Jesus, the Son of God who passed the test in the wilderness.

²⁴ Deuteronomy 32:47.