

# The Temptations of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark

Mark 1:12-15 “The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

## **Jesus was also tempted – We have an understanding Savior –Compassion for our weakness**

Hebrews 2:18 “Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.” (Hebrews 3 goes on to outline Jesus’ obedience to Father)

Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.”

## **Keep in mind: Temptation is Ever Present**

Luke 4:13 tells us – It is not over! “When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.”

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour.” (St Michael the Archangel Prayer)

## **Interesting Comparision – Devil taunts Jesus 40 days & Goliath Taunted Israel 40 days**

1 Samuel 17: 10 “The Philistine (Goliath) continued: “I defy the ranks of Israel today. Give me a man and let us fight together” and verse 16 “Meanwhile the Philistine came forward and took his stand morning and evening for forty days.”

## **Desert Temptations look forward to Agony in Garden (& Apostles’ Testing)**

Matthew 26:41 “Watch and pray that you may not ***undergo the test***. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Luke 22:40 (also 46) “When he arrived at the place he said to them, “Pray that you may not ***undergo the test.***”

## **Compare the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew and in Luke about testing or evil**

Matthew 6:9-13 “This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and ***do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.***

Luke 11:2-4 “He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and ***do not subject us to the final test.***”

*Interpret ‘do not subject us’, as ‘Do not allow or permit us to be tempted’ or more fittingly as ‘Lead us away from temptation’ or ‘Show us the way through for faith and courage’*

1 Corinthians 10:13 “No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.

James 1:12-14 “Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him. No one experiencing temptation should say, “I am being tempted by God”; for God is not subject to temptation to evil, and ***He himself tempts no one.*** Rather, each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”

Jesus’ s Temptations in the Desert recall the Israelite’s Testing of God in the Desert

*Jesus is baptized, comes up from water and is led by Spirit into Desert; The Israelites had come through the waters of the Red Sea & were led into the Desert (Compare!)*

***The Israelites break faith with God, yet Jesus displays trust in the Father!***

Psalm 95:8-9 "Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah in the desert.

There your ancestors tested me; they tried me though they had seen my works."

Numbers 20:13 "These are the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the

LORD, and through which God displayed his holiness..." The Israelites **complained**

**bitterly**, Num 20:4-5 "Why have you brought the LORD's assembly into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here? Why have you brought us up out of Egypt, only to bring us to this wretched place? It is not a place for grain nor figs nor vines nor pomegranates! And there is no water to drink!"

Psalm 106:14 "In the desert they gave in to their cravings, tempted God in the

wasteland." (Test God through material desires, food)

Psalm 106:19-20 "At Horeb they fashioned a calf, worshiped a metal statue. They exchanged

their glory for the image of a grass-eating bull. (Tested God or outright rejected Him).

### How Many Times did the Israelites TEST-TEMPT God?

Numbers 14:22 "of all the people who have seen my glory and the signs I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and who nevertheless have **put me to the test ten times already** and have not obeyed me,"

***There is not an exact listing of ten specific occasions of testing, so the phrase may be figurative such as when parents tell children, "I've told you for the 'umpteenth' time' clean your room"***

Yet, one can find at least ten times from Exodus 14 through Numbers 14, where God is 'tested'.

1. Exodus 14:10-12 At Red Sea, as Pharaoh closes in and death seems imminent
2. Exodus 15:22-24 At Meribah, where the water is bitter
3. Exodus 16:1-3 In the Desert of Sin as they hunger for food
4. Exodus 16:19-20 Still in Desert of Sin, when they ignore Moses about hoarding manna
5. Exodus 16:27-30 Still in Sin Desert, when they ignore Moses about Sabbath Rest (manna)
6. Exodus 17:1-4 At Rephidim, they complain for fresh waters again
7. Exodus 32:1-35 At Mount Sinai, as the people make their golden calf to worship
8. Numbers 11:1-3 At Taberah, where the people rage in complaints against the Lord
9. Numbers 11:4-34 At Kibroth Hattaavah the grumbling intensifies among tensions over leadership, and they greedily seek more quail meat.
10. Numbers 14:1-3 At Kadesh in the Desert of Paran, the people complain and fearfully refuse to accept the good report of Joshua/Caleb. They wish for death out of fear.

The crescendo of complaints and their increasing intensity leads up to God asking, "How long, will they grumble.....?" in Numbers 14:11

Interesting to note that the Israelites test God ten times, though they had witnessed ten wonders (Plagues of Exodus 7:14-11:10)

Again, Psalm 95:8-9 "Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on the day of Massah in the desert. There your ancestors tested me; they tried me ***though they had seen my works.***"

**Mark doesn't have Jesus' three temptations**, but His Jesus struggles against Satan throughout Mark's Gospel, as seen especially in his exorcisms (casting out demons or unclean/evil spirits; 1:23-28, 32-34, 39; 3:11; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29) and in some controversies

with human opponents (3:22-27 “The scribes who had come from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “By the prince of demons he drives out demons” see also 8:33). Jesus also involves his disciples in this struggle against Satan by giving them authority to perform exorcisms (3:15; 6:7, 13).

**Funny Thought, how** Jesus brings demons to their knees, in worship of him (they know who to fear!) as in Mark 3:11 “And whenever unclean spirits saw him they would fall down before him and shout, “You are the Son of God.”

## **The Tempting of Jesus in Matthew & Luke**

What is common about all three synoptic gospels:

- occur in “the wilderness” (Mk. 1:12; Mt. 4:1; Lk. 4:1)
- temptings occur by the agency of a spirit figure called Satan/the Devil (Mk. 1:12; Mt. 4:1, 5, 8, 10; Lk. 4:2, 3, 5, 13)
  - events take place both immediately after Jesus’ baptism and his experience of a heavenly voice declaring him to be ‘Son, with whom I am well-pleased’ (Mk. 1:9-11; Mt.3:13-17; Lk 3:21-22) and immediately before Jesus’ first public proclamation to Israel that the “kingdom of God”/the day of Israel’s salvation” has arrived (Mk. 1:14-15; Mt. 4:12-17; Lk. 4:14-30)

What is common to Matthew and Luke:

- Satan/the Devil asking in an open dialogue the 'hungry' Jesus (cf. Mt. 4:2//Lk.4:2) to make 'bread' from stones (Mt. 4:3//Lk. 4:3), to throw himself down from the 'wing' of the temple (Mt. 4:6//Lk. 4:9), and to 'give worship to' his “tempter” who claims to be the ‘owner’ of the world’s kingdoms(Mt. 4:9//Lk.4:6).
- Jesus responding to these petitions with replies that he consistently introduces with the phrase “it is written”, that are each derived verbatim from the LXX of Deuteronomy (Mt. 4.4//Lk. 4.4 with Deut. 8.3; Mt. 4.7//Lk. 4.10with Deut. 6.13; Mt. 4.10//Lk. 4.8 with Deut. 6.16).

***As an Old Testament Comparison, some suggest parallels to Job 1-3 (& Tempter-Adversary), and to Book of Wisdom chapter 2, in addition to Genesis 22:1, “God put Abraham to the test...”***

Wisdom 2:12 “Let us lie in wait for the righteous one, because he is annoying to us; he opposes our actions, Reproaches us for transgressions of the law and charges us with violations of our training.”

Wisdom 2:17-19 Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out what will happen to him in the end. For if the righteous one is the son of God, God will help him and deliver him from the hand of his foes. With violence and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience.”

### **What the difference in order of Temptations for Luke and Matthew?**

2<sup>nd</sup> Temptation in Mat4: 5 “Then the devil took him to the **holy city** and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, For Matthew, 1) Bread 2) Temple Spectacle 3)Worldly Kingdoms (***Matt emphasis on Kingdom of Heavens-King Jesus***)

3<sup>rd</sup> Temptation in Luke 4: 9 “Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple”, For Luke 1)Bread 2) Worldly Kingdoms 3) Temple Spectacle (***Luke emphasis on Temple in beginning of gospel and end of gospel, see 1:5-25 and 24:50-53***).

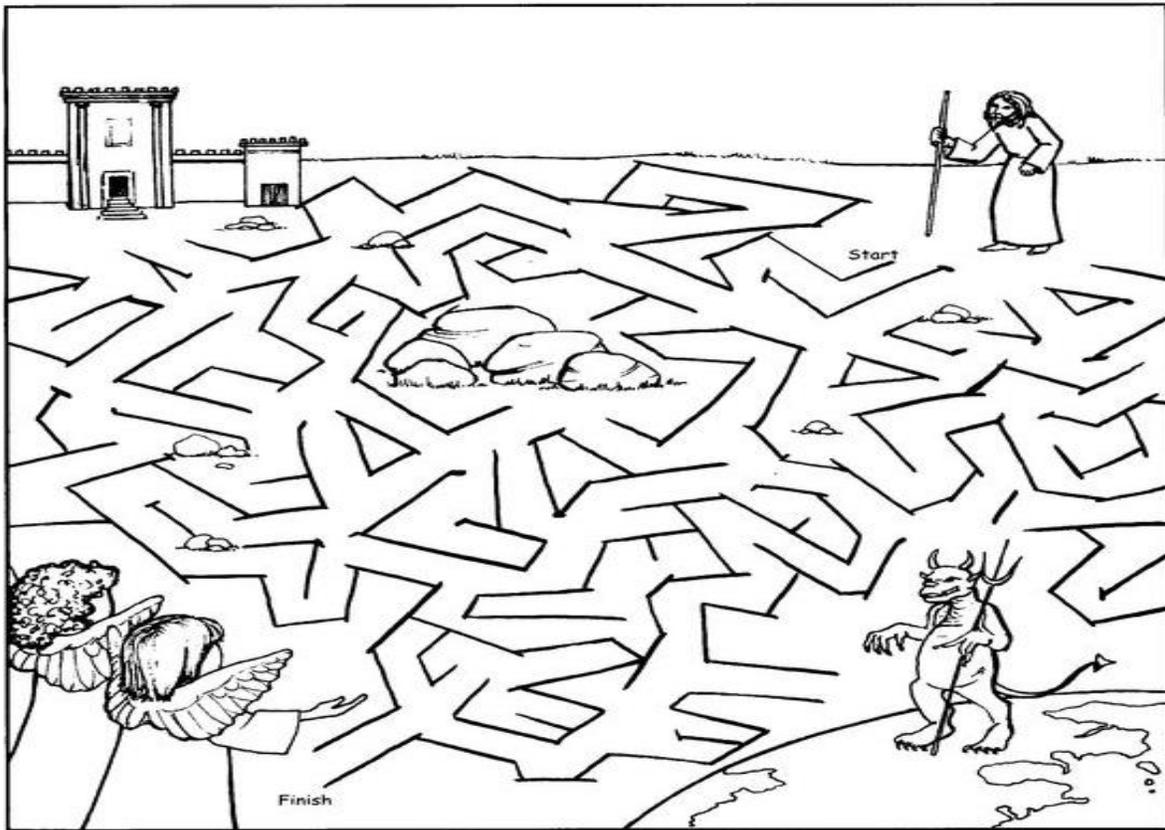
***Matthew and Luke each handle special case of Peter’s testing (Satan influence) differently***

Matthew 16:23 “He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Luke 22:31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

# The Temptation of Jesus

Jesus wanders in the desert for 40 days and is faced with many temptations. Help Jesus find his way through the desert and away from temptation.



S	L	E	G	N	A	L	O	N	E
T	S	D	E	T	P	M	E	T	W
E	Y	E	A	X	F	A	O	L	I
P	T	T	N	E	H	L	I	D	P
A	H	S	R	R	R	V	Y	E	I
R	R	U	E	O	E	B	R	V	H
A	O	A	N	D	F	D	O	L	S
P	W	H	O	G	H	O	L	Y	R
O	Y	X	T	O	R	L	G	I	O
W	T	E	S	T	S	Y	A	D	W



- WILDERNESS
- TEMPTED
- DEVIL
- FORTY
- STONE
- BREAD
- ALONE
- GLORY
- WORSHIP
- PARAPET
- ANGELS
- EXHAUSTED