

Matthew 4:1-11 NIV

The Champion and His Method!

Sunday, March 9 at 8:00 & 10:45

First Sunday in Lent – 2014

Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: God's sinless world became polluted with sin: The first Adam ♦was tempted by the devil and ♦fell into sin ([Gen. 3:1-7](#); [Rev. 12:9](#)). Then, *going ahead in time approximately 2,600 years*, we come to the time of Moses. The LORD's plan was to use Moses to lead the Israelites ✱*from* their Egyptian bondage ✱*to* the Promised Land, BUT they ♦*were tempted*, ♦*fell* and ♦*kept falling!*

The *first* Adam did not stand, neither did the *chosen* Moses; therefore, in the fullness of time, *the Father sent His only Son to be the Champion!* Today, let us →see how the devil attacked Jesus, →understand the power of God's Holy Word, →trust in Jesus as our Champion, and →use Jesus' method in our daily Christian lives!

1. **Jesus' Circumstances:** ¹ **Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.** ² **After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. //**
 - a. How did Jesus get into this situation of being *isolated* and *tempted*? Did He make some poor decisions; was He influenced by our sinful world? No! *He was led by the Holy Spirit!* For us our sinful nature is ever-trying to draw us away from

our Savior, but Jesus was led into His circumstances *by the Holy Spirit!*

- b. What about fasting? We learned on Ash Wednesday (see the 3/5/14 sermon) that fasting in the Bible is almost always connected with fervent prayer. Jesus may have known strong temptations were coming, *so He fasted – making Him physically weak but spiritually strong!* The TDNT says that Jesus fasted **“in order to be equipped to confirm his messianic dignity and power.”** (one volume, 633) If we choose to fast, let us always do so ✚in secret and ✚to bless our relationship with God!
2. **Round One:**
 - a. ³ **The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”** // So the devil, →aware of Jesus' hunger and →wanting Jesus to provide for His own needs – *rather than trust in His Father*, laid out his challenge. Even though Jesus IS the Son of God and COULD have turned the stones into bread, He did not fall to the devil's temptation. Instead, Jesus ♦*showed trust in His Father* and ♦*exercised self-control!*
 - b. ⁴ **Jesus answered, “It is written [in Deut. 8:3]: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”** // Moses originally spoke those words to the Israelites, *reminding them of the LORD's faithful provision of manna during their 40 years in the*

desert. All that we need ultimately comes from the mouth of the LORD – ♦salvation for our souls, ♦bread for our bodies, and ♦everything else! So let us **Fully Rely On God (FROG)!**

3. **Round Two:**

- a. ⁵ **Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.** ⁶ **“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written [in Ps. 91:11-12]: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”** // Here, *as in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-7)*, the devil tried to twist the Word of God by leaving out this phrase: **“To guard you in all your ways” (Ps. 91:11 NIV)**. Dr. Kretzmann wrote: **“It is not in the ways of a man’s own choosing that the protecting hand of God is assured him, but in the ways which agree with the rational order and the laws of the universe.” (NT I:19)** The devil basically said to Jesus: Just jump from here; God will send His angels, they will catch You, and everyone will follow You!
- b. ⁷ **Jesus answered him, “It is also written [in Deut. 6:16]: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”** // The devil had pulled God’s Word out of context, *which can be dangerous*, so Jesus helped us understand Psalm 91 in a proper way by recalling a time when the Israelites wrongly put the LORD to a test.

4. **Round Three:**

- a. ⁸ **Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.** ⁹ **“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”** // To some extent the devil had the world to give, *but it’s pleasures are limited to the here and now!* The devil was enticing Jesus to take the easy way out, but Jesus saw the big picture – *both time and eternity*. He knew that falling to the temptation would result in ♦His ultimate defeat and ♦our eternal punishment.
- b. ¹⁰ **Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written [in Deut. 6:13]: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”** // We are constantly tempted to desire the things of this sinful world, so let us remember what Jesus said: **“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36 NAS)**

5. **Jesus’ Victory:** ¹¹ **Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.** // Jesus was tempted, *BUT He did not fall!* With every temptation He used the Word of God to successfully defend Himself – showing Himself to be the Champion, *our Victorious Savior!*

Conclusion: Now, †sorry for our sins and †forgiven through Jesus, let us grow in *knowing* and *using* God’s Holy Word! And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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Having been saved thru Jesus, let us live for Him and share the good news!
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