

THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL TODAY

June 13, 2015

Chris Katulka, The Temptations of Jesus, Part 1

Matthew 4

Today we're going to begin a series on The Temptations of Jesus from Matthew 4:1-11. I wanted to spend time in this portion of the Gospels, first - because of its significance in telling the story of who Jesus is, and second - how Jesus overcame Satan's temptation is an invaluable lesson for us, the disciples of Christ.

The Temptations of Jesus serve as a prelude or an introduction to His ministry. Each of the synoptic gospels (that's Matt, Mark, and Luke) write about Satan tempting Jesus, and all three place the story in the beginning of their gospel right after the baptism of Jesus. They do this for a reason. Matthew, Mark, and Luke wanted you to see that Jesus was qualified to be the Son of God and the King of Israel by remaining obedient to the Father, even in agony. This is really Jesus' Adam moment from the beginning of Genesis. You remember the story, of how Adam and Eve disobeyed God and acted in their own self-interest, which led to the Fall.

In Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus has a choice to remain obedient to the Father's mission or to take His own course of action. The difference between Adam and Jesus is that Adam could eat of anything he

wanted from the garden, except the fruit from one tree. Jesus was starving after 40 days of not eating and was in the wilderness.

The Temptations of Jesus are a launchpad to help us understand the rest of Jesus' ministry on earth. Once you see how Jesus responds to Satan's deceptive lure it opens our eyes to the depth of who Christ is, and the way He ministered to those who were hungry for the truth of God. [2:44]

In Matthew's account of the temptations of Jesus, Satan tempts Jesus three times. Today we're going to look at the first of the temptations, when Satan tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread after He's not eaten for 40 days, and I want you to hear what this passage says, Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

So first we have to see that Jesus didn't wander into the wilderness on His own, he was led there by God as he was led by the Spirit, which means He was going into the wilderness for a purpose, and

as Matthew explains the purpose was, “to be tempted by the Devil.”
(Application: We don’t wander into the wilderness)

The text in Matthew says that Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, while Luke makes sure we know Jesus didn’t eat saying, “And in those days He ate nothing.” Jesus was starving and weak, and it’s in Jesus’ weakness that Satan makes his move. You’re hungry and weak Jesus, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” 1 Peter 5:8 says it perfectly, “your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Satan, like a lion, notices our weaknesses and preys on those weaknesses. And even though Jesus was weak physically, He was strong in the Spirit and confident in His Father.

Satan was challenging Jesus - If you are God’s Son then shouldn’t the Father be satisfying your hunger now! Doesn’t your Father care about you! Or has God abandoned you in the wilderness. So turn these stones into bread to eat and be satisfied.

Jesus, refutes Satan’s temptation with a verse... a very powerful verse from Deuteronomy 8:3, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”

In Deuteronomy 8:3 Moses is recalling the Law of the Lord and the necessity to follow the Law. Moses reminded the Israelites when they were in the wilderness with nothing to eat that God provided manna to prove a point, that the word of God is more vital for true satisfaction than even our daily needs. God promised to sustain Israel in the wilderness, that was His Word, and He did.

Jesus could see past his hunger, which is hard for me to do. I know when I get hungry my mission is to satisfy that need. Jesus could see past the hunger, because He knew even though He was in agony in the wilderness, His Father would provide for Him and protect Him, Why? Because that's what the Word of God says.

Folk, we're all hungry for something, not just food. We're hungry for power, fame, recognition, sex, appreciation, money, security, companionship, the list goes on. So, I want you to stop for a moment today and ask yourself, "What am I hungry for in life?" Because it's in that hunger that Satan will tempt you the most.

Satan's temptations are a challenge to our basic knowledge of God's character. In the same way He challenged Jesus, he challenges us - If you are God's child then shouldn't the Father be satisfying your hunger now! Doesn't your Father care about you! Or has God abandoned you in the wilderness. So turn these stones into bread to eat and be satisfied.

So what can we do when Satan tempts us?

Look at what Jesus did, the verse He used was only a little section of Deuteronomy 8. The big picture He saw was how God the Father provided for His people in the wilderness because of His word. First we have to see that we didn't wander into the wilderness, we often enter into the wilderness for a purpose. In our hunger as we wait, God wants to remind us that He cares and He will provide because God's Word is greater than our hunger.