TEMPTATION

Following the baptism of Jesus, the Exodus typology in Matthew continues. If the baptism of Jesus is prefigured in the crossing of the Red Sea, then the temptation of the True Israel who is Jesus, follows the Red Sea event with the journey into the wilderness.

> *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. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor 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.*
>
> *Deuteronomy 8:2-3*

Note that in the baptism narrative, God himself says of Jesus, *"This is my beloved Son."* With this affirmation, Matthew connects the baptism of Jesus with subsequent temptation narrative where Jesus is proclaimed by the Tempter to be the Son of God.

Matthew also sets up the recapitulation of the people of Israel story. After their experience of deliverance from Egypt and the establishment of the covenant relationship at Sinai, Israel experienced a season of testing in the wilderness.

Matthew places the sequence in a manner that guides the reader to see this recapitulation.

Following his return from Egypt Jesus's baptism is likened to the Red Sea crossing.

The Divine declaration that Jesus is the God's Son (Hosea 11:1).

The time of testing in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2-3 above).

This time in the testing of Jesus as the True Israel is made stronger by the answers Jesus gives to the Tempter, all coming from Deuteronomy 6-8. This is how Jesus as the embodiment of Israel and the one who fulfills all her hope, repeats through his own experience the experience of Israel.

The three temptations are given by Matthew as follows:

1) to turn stones into bread;
2) to jump from the pinnacle of the temple;
3) to receive the kingdoms of the world by worshiping the Tempter.

The most significant characteristic in all three of these temptations is the quotation of Scripture by Jesus from Deuteronomy with each quotation being introduced by the words *"it is written."*

The three temptations also share a common pattern:

1) the geographic setting;
2) the words of Satan;
3) the response by Jesus.

Important to the Matthew passage is his quotations from Old Testament passages.

Hagner states the following which we would do well to consider:

> *The baptism and temptation of Jesus belong together. Whereas the time of Jesus' testing is understood as occurring in the wilderness, two of the temptations speak of other locations: segment b, the pinnacle of the temple in the "hold city" (v.5), and segment c, a very high mountain (v.8). This suggests that the temptations are to be regarded as subjective experiences of Jesus rather than involving the literal transportation of Jesus to other places. There is furthermore a natural connection between fasting and the experience of visions.*
> *Hagner – Matthew, page 63*

> *I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.*
> *Daniel 10:3*

> *So I fasted seven days, mourning and weeping, as Uriel the angel had commanded me. And after seven days the thoughts of my heart were grievous to me again. Then my soul recovered the spirit of understanding, and I began once more to speak words in the presence of the Most High.*
> *4 Ezra 5:20-22*

> *Therefore, go away and sanctify yourself for seven days and do not eat bread and do not drink water and do not speak to anybody. And after this time come to this place and I shall reveal MYSELF to you, and I shall speak to you true things, and I shall command you with regard to the course of times, for they will come and will not tarry.*
> *Baruch 20:5-6*

Understand, whether we designate these three temptations as subjective or not does not lessen their reality or significance.

> *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*
> *Matthew 4:1*

The geographic location for this experience refers probably to the highlands of the Judean wilderness west of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The wilderness is a suitable place of testing.

In continuity with the Spirit descending upon Jesus at the baptism, it now leads the Son of God into the wilderness. Matthew is revealing to us that the Spirit is sovereignly active in and through Jesus' life and ministry from the baptism onward.

We saw in Deuteronomy 8:2 at the start of this lesson that it was God who led Israel into the wilderness for testing for forty years. That same God now leads True Israel into the wilderness.

As the Son of God, Jesus proves to be triumphant in the testing, which confirms his endowment with the Spirit as the obedient Son of God.

Understand that though the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, it is the devil who does the tempting.

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.
Matthew 4:2

The testing takes place in relation to the fasting which is to be understood as being commanded from God. We see this same typology from the Old Testament through Moses receiving the Law and Elijah following his victory over the prophets of Baal.

So he (Moses) was with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.
Exodus 34:28

And he (Elijah) arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb (Sinai), the mount of God.
1 Kings 19:8

The number forty which is not an exact number, connects to the wandering of Israel for forty years in the wilderness.

And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."
Matthew 4:3

The first thing to note in the pericope (sampling) is that *the tempter comes to him.* There is something First Adamesque is this approach by the tempter which I think Matthew sees as the context of Genesis 3:1-7

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had ma de.
He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, bu t God
said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you
touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowin g good
and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to

the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, a nd she also gave some to her husband who was with her,
and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And the y sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Jesus as the Second Adam from heaven succeeds where the Adam of the earth failed. The tempter approaches with language designed to make one question their relationship with God.

"Did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?"

"If you are the Son of God . . .

The temptation concerns the sustaining of oneself outside of trust in the will of God. Whereas Adam and Eve were found altering God's word for their own gain, Jesus quotes God's word without any such alteration or desire to ease his deprivation.

Matthew has prepared his readers at the baptism of Jesus that Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God and now that preparation finds its purpose as this is the designation that even the devil gives him. The certainty that is being questioned here by the devil is the Son's commitment through his relationship to the Father which ironically was the same temptation faced by Adam.

The story of the *people of Israel* later recapitulated this story of *Adam* as both *Israel and Adam* are a typology to Christ as *sons* of God.

the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.
Luke 3:38

And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor 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. Your <u>clothing</u> did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, <u>as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you</u>.
Deuteronomy 8:3-5

. . . command these stones to become loaves of bread.

The great part of the testing here is that accomplishing the temptation is something quite within the power of the Messiah to do. Satan knows this and his *"if you are the Son of God"* would be better worded as a certainty in his mind as *"since you are the Son of God."*

Truly, the question has nothing to do with Messiah's power or need but rather his obedience to the will of God.

There is nothing sinful about turning stones into bread. Matthew has already told us that Jesus has fasted forty days and was hungry and these two conditions make the temptation seem

harmless. However, if the fasting and hunger are the will of the Father for the Son, then to give into his needs over the will of his Father, would involve a refusal to obey God's will and belie his sonship.

Oddly, the Son will indeed, at a later date, multiply loaves of bread thus validating his Messianic ability.

The testing then amounts to this: shall Jesus exercise his messianic power for his own ends in a way that avoids difficulty and pain, or shall he accept the path of suffering (and death) that is his Father's will?
Hagner – Matthew, page 65

And Jesus answered him, "It stands written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
Matthew 4:4

Matthew has quoted Scripture before as a narrator to the action. His use of quotes here, however, are different in that here in chapter 4 they stem from the lips of Jesus.

We began this study by using Deuteronomy 8:3 which is precisely where Jesus quotes this from. In that context it was God who supernaturally fed Israel in the wilderness with bread from heaven. Also, their clothes or shoes did not wear out. The point is that the Israelites were not able to provide for *their own needs through their own strength*, so God intervened miraculously.

God did not prevent them from meeting their physical needs, but he provided for them in a way that dramatically reminded them of their need to depend on him.

In a sense, man does not live on natural foods alone, but on whatever God decrees nourishing.

The context of the Deuteronomy passage is important for the reader to grasp. As the true Israel, Jesus must relive the experience of God's son, the nation of Israel, but he does so in victory rather than defeat.

Man shall not live by bread alone

The wording here is important, allowing for the necessity of bread for life while implying that bread alone is insufficient. Essential to life, is one's relationship to God.

Jesus said to them, "My food is to the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."
John 4:34

For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
John 6:33

There is a thought that these temptations are related to the Shema.

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
Deuteronomy 6:5

In response to this temptation, Jesus shows that he loves the Father with all his heart. He will not exercise Messianic power to satisfy his own desires but remains convicted in his obedience to the Father and the fulfillment of a messianic role which involves deprivation and suffering.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

We must note here that Jesus serves as a paradigm for the church when he subjects himself, as the human son of God, to a commandment that specifically refers to a *human being* living by the Word of God.

Satan's three temptations form a progression. He moves from a temptation about physical hunger to a temptation to test God instead of humbly obeying Him to a temptation to receive the kingdoms of the earth. The temptations also progress spatially. Jesus moves from the desert to the pinnacle of the temple to a mountain from which he can view the kingdoms of the earth.
Jesus is the true Israel. He is faced with the same series of temptations that Israel faced when they were in the wilderness. When Israel had passed through the Red Sea at the Exodus, they immediately went into the wilderness and realized they had no water or bread. They began to grumble against Moses and the Lord that the only water was bitter, and the Lord brought sweetened water. They grumbled about their lack of bread and wished they were in Egypt, and the Lord rained bread from heaven.
Each of these passages Jesus quotes are from accounts of the wilderness wanderings of Israel. Moses commented on this in Deuteronomy, saying that the Lord caused Israel to hunger in the wilderness for forty years to test them and to see what was on their heart. This is the passage that Jesus quotes in response to the first temptation of Satan: Israel was supposed to learn that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.
Peter Leithart – Jesus as Israel – page 90

The Incarnate Word is codified in the written Word which we call Scripture. There the greatest revelation of Yahweh is found and there we will find the true sustenance that will lead us to Eternal Life.

"It stands written."