

Matthew 4:8-11

- Worship God, the final answer of Jesus to the devil -

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Introduction

- ❖ “Why does God allow temptation? That is a question Christians often ask. Well, he allowed it for Jesus. And after a high spiritual experience, such as the baptism undoubtedly was for Jesus, temptation frequently comes, and properly comes. It sorts out the emotional ‘high’ from the reality of spiritual conquest and growth. We are not meant to live on spiritual highs. We are meant to live on the bread that comes from God alone, even if it is bread in the desert. God deliberately allows temptation. Its arrival does not mean that God’s blessing has evaporated. It simply allows the ephemeral and the emotional to be separated from the lasting. Temptation builds spiritual muscle.”¹
- ❖ The temptation of Christ reveals his true humanity as the Son of God. The devil reveals what is on a man’s mind.
- ❖ Christ was led by the Spirit and showed his wisdom and of understanding, his counsel and power, his knowledge and fear of the Lord (Isa 11:2).
- ❖ The full understanding of the temptation of Christ requires a deep understanding of the Scriptures.
- ❖ The **Lord’s prayer** is the opposite of the temptation of Christ and addresses the same needs, food, the will of God, the kingdom of God, in reversed order. The Lord’s prayer is the true worship of God.

- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Gospel of Matthew, and it is part of a series “The temptation of Christ.” This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

¹ Green, M. (2001, p. 82).

Context

- ❖ The temptation of Christ in the desert takes place immediately after his baptism:
 - The baptism of Jesus (Mt. 3:13-17):
 - Before Jesus was baptised by John, he said: “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this **to fulfil all righteousness.**”
 - And after: “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’”
- ❖ After he has defeated the tempter, Jesus started to preach in the synagogues of Galilee:
 - Matthew summarized these sermons as follows:
 - “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt. 4:17).
 - Jesus continued and took over the ministry of John the Baptist:
 - “In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, ‘**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt. 3:1–2).
 - And later on, when Jesus sent out his twelve disciples:
 - “As you go, preach this message: ‘**The kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt. 10:7).
 - These two aspects, repentance and the kingdom, are prominent in the Sermon on the Mount.
- ❖ There are three main themes in the temptation of Jesus:
 - Are you the son of God?
 - How do you fulfil all righteousness?
 - And finally, to whom belongs this world, the kingdom?

Form and structure

- ❖ The temptation of Christ can be divided in a setting, three scenes, and one conclusion:

<i>Purpose:</i>	Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
<i>First temptation:</i>	After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to

<i>(verse 2-4)</i>	become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”
<i>Second temptation: (verse 5-7)</i>	Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “‘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.’” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
<i>Third temptation: (verse 8-10)</i>	Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”
<i>Result</i>	Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

A Comparison between Moses and Jesus

Moses		Jesus	
Exodus 1:22	The killing of all the Hebrew boys in Egypt.	Matthew 2:16	The killing of all the boys in Bethlehem.
Exodus 4:22-23 and Hosea 11:1	This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.” (see remark)	Matthew 2:15	And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”
Exodus 14 1 Corinthians 10:3	They (Israel) were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the	Matthew 3:14-17	The baptism of Jesus by John.

	sea.		
Exodus 15:22	Moses and the people of Israel were led into the desert	Matthew 4:1	Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
Exodus 15:26	I am the LORD, who heals you.	Matthew 4:23	Jesus healed every disease and sickness among the people.
Exodus 19:20	The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up.	Matthew 5:1	He went up on a mountainside.
Exodus 20:1-17	The law (Ten Commandments)	Matthew 5:17	“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Two comparisons

- ❖ Compare (1) Exodus 4:23 and 7:16 with Matthew 4:2 and 4:10.

Exodus 4:23	“Let my son go, so he may worship me.”
Exodus 7:16	“Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the desert. ”
Matthew 4:2	“If you are the Son of God. ”
Matthew 4:10	Jesus said to him (...): “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”

- ❖ Compare (2) Deuteronomy 8:2-3 with Matthew 4:1-2. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, but the context must be taken into account. See explanation.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3	Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger
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	and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
Matthew 4:1-4	Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

- In each temptation Jesus will quote from Deuteronomy (Dt 8:3 > 4:4; Dt 6:16 > 4:7; Dt 6:13 > 4:10.)

Word studies

❖ Verse 1:

- To be tempted = "πειράζω":
 - 2. to endeavor to discover the nature or character of something or somebody by testing, try, make trial of, put to the test.²
 - 4. to entice to improper behavior, tempt.³
 - The temptation of Christ shows both aspects. The devil wants to entice improper behaviour. Jesus will show his true nature and character.

❖ Verse 5:

- Devil = "ὁ διάβολος": one who engages in slander, *the adversary/devil*, already current in the Greek Translation of the Old Testament (The Septuagint) as a translation of שָׂטָן, satan (Job 2:1).⁴

❖ Verse 8:

- Glory = "δόξα" : 2. a state of being magnificent, *greatness, splendor*, anything that catches the eye: fine clothing of a king (Mt 6:29; Lk 12:27); of royal *splendor* (Mt 4:8; Lk 4:6; Rv 21:24, 26). Generally of human splendor of any sort (1 Pt 1:24; Is 40:6).⁵

² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 792).

³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 793).

⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 226).

⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 257).

❖ Verse 10:

- To worship = “προσκυνέω” : (κυνέω ‘to kiss’) is used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before persons and kissing their feet or the hem of their garment, the ground, etc.; **to express in attitude or gesture one’s complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure, (fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully.** (...) The risen Lord is especially the object of worship.⁶
- To serve “λατρεύω”: The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: “They (= the godless and wicked men) exchanged the truth of God for a lie, **and worshipped and served** created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Final remark

- ❖ Barclay comments: “No one can ever read this story without remembering that its source must have been Jesus himself. In the wilderness, he was alone. No one was with him when this struggle was being fought out. And we know about it only because Jesus himself must have told his disciples about it. **It is Jesus telling us his own spiritual autobiography.”⁷**

⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 882-883).

⁷ Barclay, W. (2001, p. 76).

Exposition

Verse 1 *The purpose:*

- ❖ Immediately after his baptism is Jesus led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
 - “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Mt 3:16, 17).
 - These words spoken by the voice from heaven (the voice of God) are important for the understanding of the temptation in the desert:
 - “This is my Son” (the voice from heaven) < “if you are the Son of God” (the devil) > verse 6!
 - “Son of God” has a double connotation:
 - It refers to the true divinity of Christ.
 - It refers to the true humanity of Christ.
 - “In the same way that God put his son Israel to the test during the days of Moses, so now his son Jesus is put to the test in the wilderness.”⁸
 - God wants to show what is in the heart of Jesus! (Compare Genesis 22:12.)
 - Christ received the Spirit (Mt 3:16): “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord— and he will delight in the fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2).
 - Christ will need the wisdom and understanding, counsel and power, to resist the temptation.
- ❖ There are three “names” used: “tempter” (8:2), “devil” (8:1, 5, 8, 11) and “Satan” (8:10).
 - The devil is not an impersonal evil force, but a powerful spiritual personality.
 - Satan in the Old Testament: 1 Ch 21:1; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7; Zec 3:1–2.
 - In the Revelation of John, these names are combined in one great sign: “The great dragon, —that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan” (Rev 12:9; Rev 20:2).
 - Mathew 16:23 is illuminating: “Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.’” The Devil has the things of men, of us, in mind. Satan, the Devil knows

⁸ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 78).

who Jesus is! The demon-possessed from the region of the Gerasenes knew the true identity of Jesus when he shouted: ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?’” (Lk 8:27, 28).

❖ **“Jesus answered, ‘It is written:”** (Mt 4:4, 7, 10).

- Jesus refers to the authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God. “Jesus does not respond by murmuring against God. Instead, he takes up ‘the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God’ (Eph 6:17).”⁹
- **“Man** does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”
 - Jesus identifies himself with the individual human being and with mankind in general. “For Jesus to be Son of God does not deny his humanity, but it does mean ‘that he can hear and obey God totally, leaving everything up to him.’”¹⁰
Jesus affirms his true humanity.
 - Newman and Stine comment: **“to live really means more than physical existence here.** “Man’s life does not depend only on food” or “Man’s existence does not depend only on having food.” **Rather, for man to have real life,** he must have *every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*, that is, “what God speaks” or “what God commands.”¹¹
- What is meant by **“every word that comes from the mouth of God.”** It is interesting to note that there is a double reference to the authority of God:
 - 1. “It is written.”
 - 2. “Every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Verse 8-10 *The third temptation:*

❖ **“All this I will give you.”** The devil presents himself as the “god of this world.”

- **“All this”** refers to **“all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.”**
 - **“Kingdoms”** here means “countries,” “nations,” or “lands,” not just areas ruled over by kings.¹²
 - The devil claims that all kingdoms of the world are in his power and possession. **POWER** is a key-word.

⁹ Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004, p. 362).

¹⁰ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 81).

¹¹ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 81).

¹² Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 86).

- **“Their splendour.”** This is what people want.
 - He wants Jesus to recognize that not God, but he has all power in this world and that he exercises his power by the powers of the kingdoms and their splendor.
 - “We know ..., and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one”(1 Jn 5:19).
 - “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12).
 - He is called: “The god of this age” who “has blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Cor 4:4). “The prince of this world” (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
 - “The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, **who leads the whole world astray**” (Rev 12:9).
 - Read also **Revelation 13**.
- ❖ **“He showed him how great and beautiful they were.”¹³**
 - But the devil didn’t show him the slums, nor the pestilence, the poverty, the crime, the divorces, the sadness of the people, war, murder, and death. He didn’t show him the cruel consequences of sin.
 - Christ came to this earth came to save sinners, the poor, the mourning, the meek, the seekers for righteousness and mercy. He came to deliver us from evil and sin. And at the end of time, there will be a new heaven and earth (Rev 21:9).
 - When the New Jerusalem has descended from heaven, “the nations will walk by its light, **and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it**” (Rev 21:24).”
 - Jesus Christ didn’t receive all power from the devil, but from the LORD God, his Father, after his crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification. We read:
 - “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18).
 - Psalm 2:6-9: “‘I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.’ I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.’”
 - Psalm 110:1-3: “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing

¹³ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 86).

on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth.”

- Isaiah 9:6-7: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”
- Daniel 7:14: “He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”
- Philippians 2:9-11: “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- Revelation 1:5: “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.”
- Revelation 11:15: “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.’”

❖ **“It is written.”**

- **“It is written”** is a reference to Deuteronomy 6:13. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word **“only”** is omitted, and the verb **“worship”** appears as **“fear”** in the major Septuagint tradition (the word **“worship”** is a favorite in Matthew: 2:2, 8, 11; 4:9; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 18:26; 28:9).¹⁴
- **“Worship.”** Here it can be translated as “to acknowledge as divine,” “to pray to,” “to respect greatly,” or “to accept as Lord.”¹⁵

Verse 11 *The result:*

- ❖ **“Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”** Compare ESV: “Then the devil left him, **and behold**, angels came and were ministering to him.”
 - First Temptation. The devil tempted to take his life in his own hands. Now the angels serve Jesus.

¹⁴ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 87).

¹⁵ Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 87).

- “attended / ministering”: “and here includes the sense ‘to give to eat’ (Mt 8:15; 25:44; Lk 22:27; Jn 12:2; Acts 6:2¹⁶)”
 - Second temptation. Yes, the word of God is trustworthy. God has commanded his angels (Psalm 91) to serve the Son of God.
 - Third temptation. The angels serve him as a King.
 - **“The devil left him.”** “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (Mt 16:23).
- ❖ Yes, he is the son of God!
- the victory of 4:1–11 will have been just as much a ‘fulfilling of all righteousness’ as the submission to John’s baptism in chapter 3.¹⁷
 - Matthew 27:39-40: “Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!’”
 - The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: “They (= the godless and wicked men) exchanged the truth of God for a lie, **and worshipped and served** created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Application

Verse 8-10

- ❖ Praise the Lord Jesus Christ for:
- His obedience to his God and Father.
 - His profound knowledge of the Scriptures.
 - His wisdom.
 - His identification with us.
 - “Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb 2:18; 4:15).
 - “Taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Phillip 2:7).
- ❖ Acknowledge the authority of scripture:
- It is a common mistake that we can quote scripture at random.

¹⁶ Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004, Vol. 1, p. 374).

¹⁷ Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004, Vol. 1, p. 354).

- Quote scripture in accordance with its context.
 - Quote scripture in accordance with its purpose.
 - “God’s rescuing power is not something to be played and experimented with; it is something to be quietly trusted in everyday life.”¹⁸
- ❖ Jesus will enter his Kingdom by suffering:
- “From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”
- ❖ Resist the devil:
- “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph 6:10-12).
 - “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you” (James 4.7-8).
 - “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings”(1 Pet 5.8-9).
- ❖ Worship of God:
- “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3).
 - “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut 6:5). “Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name” (Deut 6:13).

¹⁸ Barclay, W. (2001, p. 80).

- “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (Ps 29:2).
- “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt 6:9-10).

Verse 11

- ❖ “The devil left him.”
 - “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (Mt 16:23).
 - Why do people leave Christ? Some are leaving Christ for the same reason. They don’t have the things of God in mind, but of men.

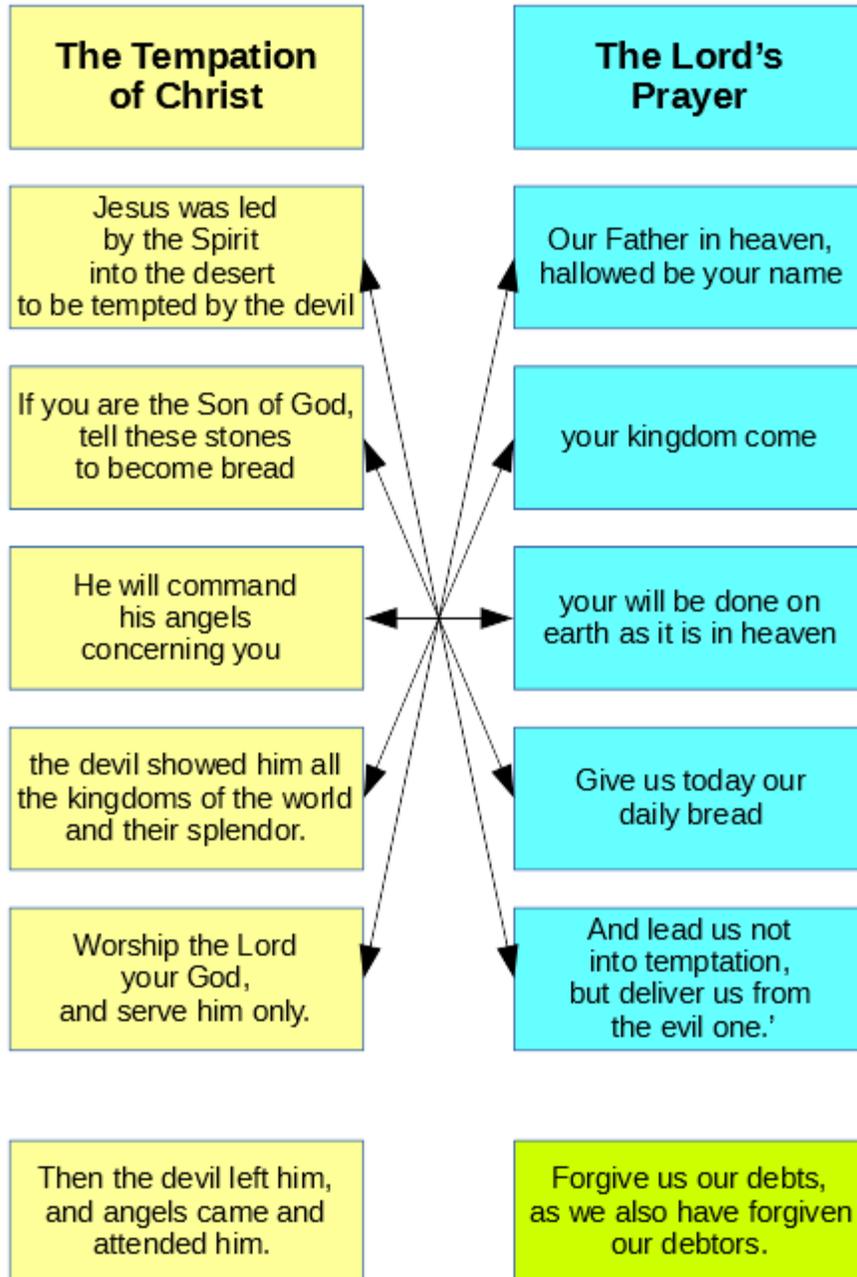
The Lord’s Prayer and the Temptation of Jesus

- ❖ There is a very interesting parallel between the Lord’s Prayer and the temptation of Jesus:

The temptation of Jesus	The Lord’s Prayer
Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.	‘And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’
After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”	‘Give us today our daily bread.’
Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: (...)” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”	‘your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’
Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.	‘your kingdom come.’
“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”	‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name’

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan!
 For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your
 God, and serve him only'"

Then the devil left him, and angels came
 and attended him.



Quotes

- ❖ The SHORTER CATECHISM (Westminster):
Question. 1. What is the chief end of man?
*Answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.*¹⁹

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¹⁹ Westminster Assembly. (1851). [The Westminster Confession of Faith: Edinburgh Edition](#) (p. 387). Philadelphia: William S. Young.