

# The Temptation of Jesus

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Mark / Temptation; Satan; Jesus; Spirit / Mark 1:12–13

How did Jesus deal with Satan when He was tempted? How can this help every believer when being tempted? Join Pastor Steve as he examines Mark 1:12-13.

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## INTRODUCTION

- Is temptation a sin?
- Did Jesus sin when He was tempted?
- Could He have sinned?
- These are just a few questions we will address this morning in our study of Mark’s gospel
- Today we are considering [Mark 1:12-13](#).
- Please take you’re Bibles and turn with me to Mark chapter 1
- Mark’s account of the Temptation is very brief
- He devotes only two verses to it whereas Matthew has eleven and Luke thirteen (Wessel)
- Rather than reading only the two verses in Mark, I want to read them from all three versions
- In his book, “One Perfect Life,” John MacArthur pieces all three accounts together in one reading...
- Listen as I read [Matthew 4:1-11](#); [Mark 1:12-13](#); and [Luke 4:1-13](#)...

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and immediately was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and in those days He ate nothing. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil brought Him to Jerusalem, the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in a moment of time. And he said to Him, “All these things [and] all this authority I will give

You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will fall down and worship before me, all will be Yours.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! Get behind Me! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

- As we have just heard, all three Gospels are providentially followed by Jesus and the approval of the Father
- The mention of the Father’s pleasing are the last words on Jesus’ mind as He enters into a time of testing
- Mark begins with the word “immediately”(euthys, adv.) which means, “right away, at once”
- Mark uses it 11 times in chapter 1
- 41 times in the entire Gospel
- It occurs a total of 60 times in the NT
- There is no lag time between the baptism and the temptation
- There was “no time...spent basking in the glory of the heavenly voice or the presence of the heavenly dove”
- The Servant had a task to perform and He immediately went to do it (Wiersbe)

So “immediately” or “at once”...

## I. The Spirit Impelled Him (v.12)

“Immediately, the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness”

### A. Impelled

- The word “impelled” (ekballo, pres.act.ind.) is “stronger than Matthew’s *anagō* (ἀναγω), “was led up,” and Luke’s *agō* (ἄγω), “was led;” (Wuest)
- The word literally means, “to force to go away or go out”
- In the Septuagint ekballo describes driving Adam who sinned out of the garden (Ge 3:24), casting out Cain after killing Abel (Ge 4:14), Sara asking Abram to drive Hagar and Ishmael out of the household (Ge 21:10), of Pharaoh driving Israel out of Egypt (Ex 6:1, 10:11, 11:1, 12:33, 39), of casting disobedient Israel out of their land (Dt 29:28, Hos 9:15), of casting Jonah into the sea (Jonah 1:15), of the fish "casting out" Jonah on the shore (Jonah 2:10), casting out idols in that future day when Jesus returns in triumph (Isa 2:20 compare Isa 2:12, 16, 18) (PA)
- It is used of our Lord’s expulsion of demons ([Mark 1:34](#), [39](#)).

- It's also used by the disciples in [Matthew 17:19](#), “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not drive it out?”” (cf. [Mark 9:28](#); [11:15](#))
- The Holy Spirit did not whisper in Jesus' ear and say, “I want you to go out to the Judean wilderness.”
- The force of this passage is that Christ was compelled by the Holy Spirit, driven urgently into a desolate, Godforsaken place (Sproul)
- D. Edmond Hiebert says, “The expression here does not mean that Jesus was forced out into the wilderness against His will but indicates that He went with a strong sense of the Spirit's compulsion upon Him.”
- Albert Barnes says, “The Spirit of God, for important purposes, caused Him to go.”

## B. Wilderness

- The “wilderness” (eranos, adj.) place is unknown
- The Gospels indicate that Jesus went there directly from the Jordan
- This was away from where John was baptizing
- Mark mentions in verse 13 that “He was with the wild beasts”
- That is to say that “He was in the most remote, unfrequented, and savage part of the desert” (Clarke)
- This was “an uncultivated and uninhabited part of the desert by men, and where only the most fierce and most savage of creatures dwelt” (Gill) like, “boars, jackals, wolves, foxes, leopards, and hyenas” (Wuest).
- Jewish thought associated the wilderness with danger and gloom and the abode of demons
- [Luke 8:29](#), “For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.”
- If Mark had such scenes and associations in mind, Jesus was pictured as taken into the very domain of Satan for the encounter (Hiebert)

· Mark says...

## II. Satan Tempted Him (v.13)

“And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him”

### A. The temptation lasted the entire 40 days

- This number is literal and not symbolic
- It is speaking of 40 actual days
- Both Matthew and Luke mention that He was fasting without food
- “Hunger strike doctors estimate that a well-nourished individual can survive without medical consequences on a diet of sugar and water for 30 days or more” (<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/78789-longest-survival-without-food>)
- Medical News Today reports that “People who have voluntarily stopped eating to participate in hunger strikes have died after 45-61 days” (<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/how-long-can-you-go-without-food#how-long>)
- His ability to fast was supernatural and it had something to do with the “angels” who “were ministering to Him” (v.13)
- The tense of the Greek verb, “to minister,” suggests the angels ministered to Jesus throughout His temptation (MacArthur)
- The same is true of Moses ([Ex.24:18](#); [34:28](#)) and Elijah ([1 Kings 19:8](#)) who had also fasted 40 days and 40 nights

· The number 40 was also used of...

- Israel’s times in the wilderness
- It lasted forty years
- Moses spent forty years on the backside of the desert in *training*
- The spies spent forty days *spying* out Canaan
- The *rains* were upon the earth forty days and nights during the flood

· All three Gospels state that...

## **B. Jesus was “being tempted by Satan”**

- That’s the point of His time in the wilderness
- Just as Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by being baptized by John and identifying with those whom He would save, so He does with His temptation by the devil
- [Hebrews 2:17-18](#), “17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”
- [Hebrews 4:15](#), “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

- The word that the Gospel uses for “tempted” means to be “tried, tested”
- It may be used to denote any testing or trying (Hiebert)
- Here it has “the sinister connotation of solicitation to evil” (Hiebert)
- The context determines the meaning
- It’s used here in the present tense to indicate that Jesus was repeatedly subjected to temptation during the entire period (Wuest)
- The three temptations that Matthew and Luke give are at the climax of the 40 days
- G. Campbell Morgan says, “These temptations are not the swift, sudden, subtle, insidious temptations that sweep upon men. Our Lord faces such also; but these constitute an organized and systematic attack upon a man in every department of his life” (The Gospel According to Matthew, 29).
- Satan came at Jesus’ weakest point
- He came when He was exhausted and hungry

## C. All three Gospels identify the tempter as Satan

- Satan is a created angel who sinned against God and led a 1/3 of the angels to sin with him in his rebellion
- He is mentioned in 8 OT books
- Every NT writer mentions him
- He appears in 19 NT books
- 28 of the 30 references in the Gospels “involve either direct encounters with or mentions of Satan” (MacArthur)
- His name means “adversary” or “one who opposes”
- This pictures him as a ferocious, roaring lion stalking prey
- 1 Peter 5:8, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”
- There are over 29 titles for Satan

### Some are...

- He is called “the devil” ([Mat.4:1](#)), “the serpent” ([Gen.3:1-2](#)), “the great dragon” ([Rev.12:9](#)), “the prince of the power of the air” ([Eph.2:2](#)), “the god of this age” ([2 Cor.4:4](#)), “the evil one” ([Mat.13:19](#)), “the prince of demons” ([Mat.9:34](#)), “the accuser” ([Rev.12:10](#)), and “the tempter” ([Mat.4:3](#))
- Satan possesses the highest power of created beings

- But his power does not begin to compare with God's
- Satan is not omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, sovereign, eternal, immortal, great or self-existent
- He possesses none of these divine attributes, which belong uniquely to the Creator (MacArthur)
- No human being possesses the supernatural power that belongs to Satan (MacArthur)
- Satan is a master deceiver
- He excels at deceiving and entrapping
- He also rules this world's sinful, evil system
- Jesus referred to him as "the ruler of this world" in [John 12:31](#).
- Paul referred to him as "the prince of the power of the air" in [Ephesians 2:2](#).
- Satan has the power of death, but Christ has rendered him powerless for believers in Christ
- [Hebrews 2:14](#), "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"
- Satan has the power of deceit but Christ exposed him
- [2 Corinthians 2:11](#), "so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes."
- No power of Satan, regardless of how great, will separate a true believer from the love of God
- [Romans 8:35-39](#), "35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- Notice his craftiness as he meets with Eve in the Garden of Eden
- [Genesis 3:1](#) tells us his choice to conceal himself in the serpent was because "the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made."
- Verse 1 notes his intensions with Eve
- He begins by casting doubt on what God said to Adam and Eve
- In other words, he is trying to get Eve to question God's Word
- He still does that to all believers today!

- He said, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”
- In other words, “Did God really say this?”
- Eve says in verses 2-3, “2...“From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ””
- Satan highlights that last line
- He says in verses 4-5, “...You surely will not die! 5 “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.””
- In other words, Eve, God is lying to you!
- He’s holding out!
- He didn’t really mean you will die!
- The bait has been laid
- Will Eve take it?
- Unfortunately verses 6-7 says, “6 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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”
- Satan sought to use the same tactics with Jesus
- He starts the temptation by raising a cloud of doubt (Lenski)
- He says in [Matthew 4:3](#), “And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.””
- Here is his first temptation for Jesus:

## **1. Command these stones become bread ([Mat.4:2-3](#); [Luke 4:2-4](#))**

- After fasting for “forty days and forty nights” ([Mat.4:2-3](#); [Luke 4:2-4](#)), Jesus “then became hungry” ([Mat.4:3](#))
- Satan says, “If you are the Son of God” make bread
- The conditional “if” carries the meaning of “since” in this context (MacArthur)
- There was no doubt in Satan’s mind who Jesus was
- All the demons know who Jesus is
- They said on one occasion in [Luke 4:34](#), “Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One

of God!””

- Satan’s plan was to get Jesus to violate the plan of God and use His divine power that He had set aside in His humiliation ([Phil.2:7](#)) to create bread
  - But Jesus said...
  - “...It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ ””
  - This is a quotation from [Deuteronomy 8:3](#).
  - Lenski says, “The sum and substance of this reply is trust...This trust...crushed the very suggestion of distrust or mistrust and thus overcame the temptation”
  - Jesus will not abandon His trust in God to provide for Himself (Sproul)
  - Albert Barnes says, “No temptation could have been more plausible, or more likely to succeed, than this. He had just been *declared* to be the Son of God (ch. 3:17), and here was an opportunity to show that he was *really* so. The circumstances were such as to make it appear plausible and proper to work this miracle. “Here you are,” was the language of Satan, “hungry, cast out, alone, needy, poor, and yet the Son of God! If you have this power, how easy could you satisfy your wants! How foolish is it, then, for the Son of God, having all power, to be starving in this manner, when by a *word* he could *show* his power and relieve his wants, and when *in the thing itself* there could be nothing wrong!”
- Since the devil was not successful in this first temptation for Jesus, he seeks a second...
- He says...

## 2. Leap off the temple ([Mat.4:5-7](#); [Luke 4:9-12](#))

- [Matthew 4:5-6](#), “5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’ ””
- The “holy city” is Jerusalem
- This is where “the temple” was located
- “The pinnacle of the temple” was “part of the temple wall [that] overlooked the Kidron Valley, leading to a tremendous drop from the top of the temple wall to the bottom of the valley” (Sproul)
- Josephus said this was a drop of nearly 450 feet (MacArthur)
- That’s “45 stories” tall ([https://www.answers.com/english-language-arts/How\\_many\\_stories\\_in\\_450\\_feet](https://www.answers.com/english-language-arts/How_many_stories_in_450_feet))



- D. A. Carson says, “Late Jewish midrash says that Messiah would prove himself by leaping from the temple pinnacle”
- The “Midrash” was a mode of interpretation by the rabbis
- The word itself means “textual interpretation,” “study,” or “exegesis” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash>)
- Satan says, “‘If You are the Son of God’”
- Just like verse 3 it should be “Since”
- Again Satan knew who Jesus was
- “Since You are the Son of God, throw yourself down”
- Satan now quotes Scripture like Jesus
- He quotes [Psalm 91:11-12](#) from the LXX, omitting the words “to guard you in all your ways” (Carson)
- He also strategically avoids [Psalm 91:13](#), “You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down” which alludes to [Genesis 3:15](#), “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.””
- [Psalm 91](#) ultimately emphasizes total trust in Yahweh and loyalty to Him (Barry) not a pretext for tempting Him (MacDonald)
- God had not told Him to jump down from the temple
- If the Savior had jumped, He would have been acting outside the divine will, and then the promise of protection would not have been valid (MacDonald)
- Satan was tempting Jesus against God’s pledge to protect His own
- Jesus replies with [Deuteronomy 6:16](#), “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.”
- This reference “at Massah” alludes to [Exodus 17:2-7](#) where the Israelites “put the Lord to the test” by demanding water
- This was, as A.T. Robinson says, “a sort of manipulative bribery expressly forbidden in the Scriptures” to “test God”
- If the pinnacle of the temple wasn’t high enough, [Matthew 4:8](#) says, “Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory”
- This was his attempt to get Him to...

### 3. Worship Satan ([Mat.4:8-10](#); [Luke 4:5-8](#))

- [Matthew 4:9](#), “and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.””
- This was his ultimate goal
- He wanted to discredit Him by getting Him to worship the devil
- There are many today who are doing the same
- And our culture is ripe for it
- Recently Sam Smith and Kim Petras, who is a trans woman, performed a song called “Unholy” [at the 65th Grammy Awards](#)
- “Smith wore a devil-horned top hat and Petras performed in a cage while the singers were surrounded by red-robed worshippers” (<https://www.businessinsider.com/ted-cruz-grammys-evil-sam-smith-kim-petras-devil-unholy-2023-2>)
- On February 21, 2023, “Saucon Valley’s superintendent defended a decision to allow a newly approved [After School Satan Club](#) to rent space at the district’s middle school, saying in a letter sent Monday night the district legally can’t discriminate against the group.”
- The national campaign director for the After School Satan Club said, “We are run by the Satanic Temple, and we are, the club is brought to you by your local, friendly, self-identified, non-theistic Satanists” ([https://www.wfmz.com/news/area/lehighvalley/superintendent-to-recommend-review-of-after-school-satan-clubs-use-of-facility-at-northampton-county/article\\_90e8189e-b2e2-11ed-9a32-a7f1fae6bdba.html](https://www.wfmz.com/news/area/lehighvalley/superintendent-to-recommend-review-of-after-school-satan-clubs-use-of-facility-at-northampton-county/article_90e8189e-b2e2-11ed-9a32-a7f1fae6bdba.html))
- Did you hear about a new show on [Disney+](#)?
- It’s FX’s new animated horror-comedy series “Little Demon”
- The cartoon takes place 13 years after an unmarried pagan woman is impregnated by Satan and follows her and her daughter (literally the spawn of Satan and referred to as the Antichrist) through everyday life.
- The series features demonic witchcraft, pagan rituals, gratuitous blood, gore, and nudity, and judging by the trailer can easily be considered pornographic by definition” (<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2022/09/disney-airs-sick-satanic-cartoon-little-demon-plot-features-demonic-pagan-rituals-single-mom-knocked-satan/>)
- [Satanic performances, Satanic after school clubs and Disney cartoons are just a few of the ways Satan is duping people into thinking he is not evil as portrayed in the Bible](#)
- John MacArthur says, “Satan now drops his pretense and makes one final, desperate effort to corrupt Jesus. He finally reveals his supreme purpose: to induce Jesus Christ to worship him. He had first suggested what Jesus ought to do for Himself. Next he suggested what the Father ought to do for Jesus. Now he suggests what Satan could do for Jesus—in exchange for what Jesus could do for him.”

- This last proposal by Satan was so preposterous that Jesus dismissed him with “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”
- If the Son of God would not compromise even the least important truth in the universe, He would surely not compromise the greatest: that God, and God alone, is to be worshiped and served (MacArthur)
- Martin Lloyd-Jone said, “The lie of Satan is the lie against God at the beginning” (*Children of God*, 64)
- The devil is always waiting to confuse and muddle us. He wants to destroy God’s work. He can turn himself into an angel of light. He can produce counterfeits. In a very subtle way, he can insinuate his own thinking, and what starts correctly can end by being terribly wrong.” (*Spiritual Blessing*, 158).
- [Matthew 4:11](#), “Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.”

## **CONCLUSION**

- R.C. Sproul says, and I agree, “I do not think we understand a fraction of the stress that hell imposed on Jesus in this situation. He withstood everything that Satan had to throw at Him. In his frustration, Satan left, but let us note two things. First, he departed from Jesus “until an opportune time” ([Luke 4:13](#)). This would not be the last time in Jesus’ life or ministry that Satan would throw everything he had against the Son of God.”
- All of us have been tempted
- Some directly and some remotely
- But remember, as [James 1:13](#) says, “God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone”
- No, you are tempted “when [you are] carried away and enticed by [your own] lust” (v.14)
- “Do not be deceived” (v.16)
- I asked you when I started, “Is temptation a sin?”
- I also asked, “Did Jesus sin when He was tempted?” and “Could He have sinned?”
- What’s the answer?
- Being tempted is not a sin
- And Jesus did not sin when He was tempted
- Sin is when you give in to the temptation
- Listen again to Martin Lloyd-Jones:

- He said, “The Lord Jesus himself was tempted. The devil put thoughts into His mind. But He did not sin, because He rejected them. Thoughts will come to you and the devil may try to press you to think that because thoughts have entered your mind you have sinned. But they are not your thoughts, they are the devil’s. He put them there. It was the quaint Cornishman, Billy Bray, who put this in his own original manner when he said, ‘You cannot prevent the crow from flying over your head, but you can prevent him from making a nest in your hair!’ So I say that we cannot prevent thoughts being insinuated into our mind; but the question is what do we do with them? We talk about thoughts ‘passing through’ the mind, and so long as they do this, they are not sin. But if we welcome them and agree with them then they become sin. I emphasize this because I have often had to deal with people who are in great distress because unworthy thoughts have come to them. But what I say to them is this, ‘Listen to what you are telling me. You say that the thought “has come to you”. Well, if that is true you are not guilty of sin. You do not say, “I have this thought”; you say, “the thought came”.’ That is right. The thought came to you, and it came from the devil and the fact that the thought did come from the devil means that you are not of necessity guilty of sin. Temptation in and of itself is not sin. All woolgathering is Satan taking control of our thoughts” (*Banner of Truth*, Issue 275).
- Do you know the Savior this morning?
- You don’t have any chance of overcoming Satan if you have neglected this one duty of repentance and belief in the gospel
- I urge you to come to Jesus today
- And after you come abide in His Word
- And when the devil attacks you, do what [James 4:7](#) says: “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”
- Let’s pray