

Sunday, February 6, 2011—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 1:12-13: The Temptation of Jesus

Introduction

- The morning we are going to be looking at the temptation of Christ recorded in the gospels.
- Mark in his customary style is very brief and to the point only mentioning it in two verses.
- When one considers the accounts recorded in Matthew and Luke a much fuller picture of what occurred emerges. There is much more going on here with the temptation of Christ than you may initially realize.

Mark 1:12

- ***“And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”***
- We said in our introduction to the book of Mark a few weeks ago that the words “straightway” and “immediately” are key words in Mark’s gospel. They distinguish the book as a book of action recoding the actions of Jehovah’s servant.
- Mark 1:10—in this verse we see the first occurrence of the word “straightway.” According to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word translated straightway means immediately or forthwith.
 - Immediately—35 times
 - Straightway—32 times
 - Forthwith—7times
- So immediately after Jesus came up out the water the heavens opened and the spirit like a dove descended upon him.
- Mark 1:12—immediately after his baptism the spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness.
 - Matthew 4:1
 - Luke 4:1
- Mark 1:4—in order for Jesus to have baptized by John he was already in the wilderness around Jordan. Where specifically the Holy Spirit drove Jesus in the wilderness to be tempted is unclear.

Mark 1:13

- ***“And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.”***
- This verse tells us that Jesus was forty days tempted of Satan in the wilderness.

- In the Bible 40 is plainly the number of probation or testing.
 - Genesis 7:4, 17—in rained 40 days and nights
 - Numbers 14:33-34—Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years
 - Deuteronomy 10:10—Moses fasted 40 days and nights
- A commonsense reading Mark 1:13 seems to indicate that Jesus was tempted of Satan throughout this 40 day period.
- At some point angels came and minister to Christ during this period of testing. We will look at this more in a few minutes.

Comparing Matthew 4 and Luke 4

- As we have seen Mark does not record any of the details of Christ's temptation. The specifics of this event can be found in Matthew 4 and Luke 4.
- As we will see shortly, Matthew and Luke do not record the Satan's tempting of Christ in the same order. Once again this has caused many to suggest that the Bible contradicts itself and cannot be trusted.
- "Commentators and Harmonizers assume that one is right and the other is wrong; and proceed to change the order of one in order to make it agree with the other." (*Companion Bible, Appendix 116*)
- Luke records three temptations of Christ in the following order:
 - Luke 4:3-4—turn stones to bread
 - Luke 4:5-8—kingdoms of the world offered to Christ in exchange for worshipping Satan
 - Luke 4:9-12—throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple and the angels will save him
- Luke 4:13—notice how Luke's account ends. The devil leaves on his own accord for a season.
- According to *Strong's Concordance* the Greek word translated season carries the following meanings: 1) due measure 2) a measure of time, a larger or smaller portion of time, hence:
 - a) fixed and definite time, the time when things are brought to crisis, the decisive epoch waited for
 - b) opportune or seasonable time
 - c) the right time
 - d) a limited period of time
 - e) to what time brings, the state of the times, the things and events of time

- *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* offers the following definitions for the English word season: “literally signifies that which comes or arrives; and in this general sense, is synonymous with *time*. Hence,
 - 1) A fit or suitable time; the convenient time; the usual or appointed time; as, the messenger arrived in *season*; in good *season*. This fruit is out of *season*.
 - 2) Any time, as distinguished from others.
 - 3) A time of some continuance, but not long.”
- The Greek word is translated “time” 64 times, “season” 13 times, and “due time” 2 times
 - Galatians 6:9—“in due season”
 - II Timothy 4:3, 6—“time”
 - Titus 1:3—“due times”
- All the things considered according to Luke’s account the devil tempted Jesus and then departed of his own accord for a season or period of time only to return and tempt him again.
- Matthew records the temptations of Christ in the following order:
 - Matthew 4:3-4—turn stones to bread
 - Matthew 4:5-7—throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple and the angels will save him
 - Matthew 4:8-10—kingdoms of the world offered to Christ in exchange for worshiping Satan
- Matthew 4:8—notice the first word in the verse “again.” This was not the first time the devil had taken him into an exceeding high mountain.
- Matthew 4:10—Jesus orders Satan to leave when he is finished.
- Matthew 4:11—Matthew’s account does not conclude in the same way Luke’s does.
- What we have here is not contradiction but completion. Satan tempted Jesus on 2 different occasions over a forty day period. After being unsuccessful the first time Satan returned using the same three temptations but in a different order.

Theological Significance

- When one considers the divine purpose presented in the gospels it is not difficult to see why this makes sense.
 - The goal of Matthew’s gospel is to present Christ as king.
 - The goal of Luke’s gospel is to present Christ as the son of Man
- The Lord had come both as the “Son of man” in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, and as Israel’s Messiah king to content with the one who held them as his lawful captive. It is logical therefore that Satan would deal with him on both counts and that the Lord would qualify Himself as able to fully function in both areas.

- I John 2:16—Satan’s course for this world being built upon that which so successfully produced the fall in the Garden of Eden and also catering to man’s sinful nature is composed of contrariness to God in three main areas.
 - The lust of the flesh
 - The lust of the eyes
 - The pride of life
- Genesis 3:6—contains all three components
 - “good for food” = the lust of the flesh
 - “was pleasant to the eyes” = the lust of the eyes
 - “a tree desired to make one wise” = the pride of life
- Therefore when Satan tempted Christ as the Son of Man in Luke 4 his temptations followed the same order they had when he tempted Eve.
 - The hunger that would produce the desire for bread matches up with the “lusts of the flesh.”
 - The presentation to the Lord’s eyes of all the kingdoms of the world with their power and glory matches up with the “lusts of the eyes.”
 - The temptation to have the angels rush to His aid because of who He is and “bear Him up,” matches up with “the pride of life.”
- Preventing the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 was not something Satan could achieve by gaining the mastery over the Son of man as he had gained it over the first man. Therefore the devil departed for a season only to return and make another attempt. However, this time Satan would attempt to succeed at assailing Christ as Israel’s Redeemer.
- The Messiah, in order to function as His people’s kinsman-Redeemer, need to qualify Himself as God’s perfect servant—the servant Israel herself never was. If the Messiah could be enticed into any similar action of imperfection as God’s chosen servant, then His capacity to function as Israel’s Redeemer would be thwarted, and God’s ability to deliver His nation from Satan’s ‘lawful captivity’ ruined.
- Therefore when Satan tempted Christ as the Messiah/King of Israel in Matthew 4 his temptation followed a different order.
 - Exodus 16:1-3—had the Lord given in to the temptation to make the stones into bread in view of his hunger, He would have done similar to what Israel did under even lesser circumstances, when they murmured and complained against God and demanded that he satisfy their hunger.
 - Exodus 17:7—In like manner, the temptation to cast himself down from the temple held within the opportunity for Christ to be doubting, mistrusting, and tempting servant like Israel had been.
 - Matthew 4:8-9—the offer to possess all the kingdom of the earth was presented to Christ through a means different from that which He knew was the Father’s will. In this the Lord was tempted to be a disloyal, compromising, and defiant servant who pursued his

own will, his own course, and his own way of doing things rather than following the express will of his master.

- Christ stood where Israel and Adam had both fallen. Christ proved himself to be a qualified redeemer.

Concluding Thoughts

- Theologians debate the purpose of Christ temptation. Was the purpose of Christ's temptations to see if Jesus would sin, or to prove that He could not sin?
- Some say that Jesus was capable of sinning but chose not to. Those who hold this view claim that the temptation would have been a farce if Jesus was incapable of sinning.
- The purpose of these temptations was to prove that Jesus Christ was sinless and therefore able to become the savior of sinners.
- Every temptation we ever face falls into one of three categories: the lusts of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life.
- How did Jesus respond to each temptation? By quoting Scripture.
- Psalm 119:11—this is the reason we need to hide God's word in our hearts.