

***PRECEPTS FOR LIFE***  
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**SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)**

**TITLE: Program 6 – Overcoming Temptation**

**MONDAY**

**OPEN**

The Bible tells us that “...**Jesus was led...by the Spirit into the wilderness** [so that He might] **be tempted by the devil.**” (Matthew 4:1) Now why would the Spirit lead Him into temptation? We’ll talk about it today.

**PART ONE**

I’m in the wilderness of Judea. The Bible tells us that “...**Jesus was led...by the Spirit into the wilderness** [so that He might] **be tempted by the devil.**” (Matthew 4:1) Now the question is why would the Spirit lead Him into temptation? Why would God allow the devil to come and tempt Him? Well remember the first man was tempted by the devil. Remember the serpent in the Garden of Eden? Do you know that Revelation tells us in chapter 12 and chapter 20 that the serpent of old, the devil, Satan, that he was the one that tempted the first Adam? Now the second Adam has come. Now the One that has been born of a virgin, but who is flesh and blood, flesh and blood so that

[He might be tempted in all points as we are and yet without sin.]  
(PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 4:15) So it's very crucial that Jesus, the Son of man without sin, meet the devil face to face and once again be tempted and show that it is possible to withstand the temptation of the devil. Now Precious One, it is possible for you to withstand the temptation of the devil also. All you have to do is follow Jesus' example. And this is what we're going to see as we look at Matthew chapter 4. In Matthew chapter 4 verse 1 it says, **"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."** (Matthew 4:1) So it's very, very clear. Now you want to mark the reference to the "Holy Spirit." Anytime you see a reference to the "Holy Spirit" in the Bible you want to mark it because you want to learn what he tells us about the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit's not mentioned that often in the Word of God compared to Jesus Christ and compared to God the Father. The other thing you want to mark and you want to double underline it in green is "into the wilderness." So you see that it is Jesus. You see where He was led into the wilderness. You see how He was led. You see that He was led by the Spirit. You see why He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And it says, **"And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him...."** (Matthew 4:2-3) Now I want you to mark every reference to the "devil." And the way I do it throughout my Bible is I simply draw a red pitchfork there. So if it's anything that has to do with evil spirits, if it has anything to do with the "devil," anything that has to do with the world of the "devil" I mark with a red pitchfork. And so I marked "devil" in verse 1 and now I mark him again in verse 3. Because what I see about the "devil" is I see that he's a tempter. **"And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, [then] command...these stones [to] become bread.'" (Matthew 4:3)** Now remember He's been in the wilderness for **"...forty days and forty nights...."** (4:2) Remember that He has not eaten a thing in that wilderness.

But in the wilderness, as you can see, there are stones all around. And it's like the devil just takes a sweep of a hand and he says, ["Well then command that these stones be made bread."] (PARAPHRASED, 4:3) Now could Jesus have done that? Yes, He was God. He was there. John chapter 1 said, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... [And] all things came into being [by] Him...."** (John 1:1 & 3) He was the One that spoke and everything came into existence. And so what you and I can know, Beloved, is this, you and I can know that Jesus truly could have commanded those stones and they could have become bread, because He's the Son of God; because He's one with the Father. So what was the devil tempting Him to do? The devil was tempting Jesus to act independently of God. The devil was tempting Jesus to meet His own needs instead of allowing God to meet His needs. The devil was tempting the Son of God to satisfy the desires of His flesh. So how does He answer? And you and I need to know how He answers because this is the way that you and I are to answer. Because as ["He was tempted in all points yet without sin"] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 4:15) so you and I are able to be tempted and yet not sin. It is possible for you and me who has the Spirit of God ["to walk by the Spirit so that we do not fulfill the desires of the flesh."] (PARAPHRASE, Galatians 5:16) The tempter was appealing to the desires of Jesus' flesh. And so watch what He answers, **"But He answered and said, 'It is written....'"** (Matthew 4:4a) Now "it is written" is going to become key repeated phrase. And so what I do is I write over "it is written" I draw a symbol of a Bible a symbol of a book and then I draw it in purple because it's the royal words and I color it green. And so it says, **"...It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"** (4:4) Now he is quoting from the Torah. He is quoting from Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 3 when God fed them manna in the wilderness, when day after day except on the Sabbath they went out and they gathered the bread. What He was showing them was

this: that you don't live by bread alone, but you live by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. There's a lesson here. There's a precept for life that is so important. He didn't say that man lives by just the Word of God in general, but He was very specific. He says "[By] ... **every word...**," and then he makes this statement that comes "**...out of the mouth of God.**" (**Matthew 4:4**) You and I, Precious Ones, hold in our hands the Word of God. We hold every word that God wants you and me to know. And in this Book are all the answers. In this book God promises us that ["there is no temptation, no testing, no trial taken you, but such as is common to man and God is faithful. He will not permit you to be tried or tested or tempted above what you are able to bear."] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 10:13) That's 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 13. So I want you to remember that. I want you to remember that when the days get dark and when darkness seems to envelop you and the light seems to have faded away, I want you to know that you can walk in the light of God's Word. If you are walking in darkness, the Bible tells us in Isaiah, and you don't know which way to go you have the Word of God. And that's why what we're doing on Precepts for Life is so absolutely critical. That's why we give you a study guide. That's why you have the whole book of Matthew to observe, to mark, so that you treasure and you savor every word. And when you do that, Precious One, that word is hidden in your heart. It is stored. And what the Holy Spirit will do is the Holy Spirit will bring it to your remembrance when you need it. So this is the first thing that I want you to see. The Son of man who is a human being just like you, every bit a human being like you ["was tempted in all ways as you and I are, yet He was without sin."] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 4:15) He withstood the devil by pulling out the sword of the Word of God. In the book of Ephesians, which is the book on spiritual warfare, at the very end of that book he deals with the subject of warfare. Let me get it for you in the rising wind and the storm that is coming up here. In Ephesians chapter 6 he tells them in verse 10, "**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength**

of His might. [And] put on the full armor of God....” (Ephesians 6:10-11) And then he tells us about the armor of God and the armor relates to the Word of God. But then he tells us about our one and only, really, weapon of offense. And this is what he says, **“And take the helmet of salvation....”** (Ephesians 6:17) That’s not the weapon. **“...And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”** (6:17) So what does Jesus do in this wilderness? He whips out **“...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”** (6:17) It doesn’t work. Satan is not able to tempt Him. So what does he do next? He takes Him from the wilderness to the city of Jerusalem. And there in Jerusalem, when he takes Him to the holy city it says he has **“...Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,”** (Matthew 4:5) on the very corner of the temple. And there is a huge, huge drop. And this is what he says, **“Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and [he] said to Him, ‘If [You’re] the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written....’** (4:5-6) Okay, you want to quote me the word of God I’ll quote it back to You. It is written. What is written? **“...It is written...,”** he says, [“that he will give His angels command over You.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 4:6) **“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.”** (4:6) Is that in the Word of God? Yes it is in the Word of God. So how does Jesus counteract the devil in this situation?

## **PART TWO**

I’m now standing in Jerusalem, the Holy City. This is where the devil took Jesus for the second temptation. He brought Him to this temple mount. He put Him up on the pinnacle of the temple. They are debating. It was either the southeastern corner of the temple mount or it was the southwestern corner of the temple mount. Many believe it was the southwestern corner. And the reason that they believe this is because there was a building. It was

called the “stoa” and it was a building up on the temple mount. And so if Jesus was going to stand on the pinnacle of the temple and He was going to survey and look at all the kingdoms of the world many believe because of that “stoa” that He would have stood on this corner at this pinnacle of the temple. Where He stood really doesn’t matter. What was offered Him is very important. And it’s important for you and me to understand [“because Jesus was tempted in all points as we are and yet He was without sin. You have a high priest,] as Hebrews says, [who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities because He knows what it’s like to be a human being. He knows what it’s like. He’s called the Son of man and he was a human being, yet He was without sin.”] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 4:14-15) And what the devil wanted to do was, the devil wanted to test Him. The devil wanted to get Him to believe him, rather than to believe God. And this is exactly what happened in the Garden of Eden. [When the serpent came into the garden the serpent said to Eve, “Yea has God said?”] (PARAPHRASE, Genesis 3:4 KJV) He challenged God. Now watch what the devil does in this passage. In verse 5 it says, **“Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and [he] said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God....’”** (Matthew 4:5-6) Now there are different class conditions to “if” and so the verb with the “if” kind of determines what kind of a class condition it was. And he’s not saying here, “If you are the Son of God, it’s debatable, but maybe You are the Son of God.” No, it’s more a first class condition. “... [Since] **You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written....**” (Matthew 4:6) Now what the devil is doing is the devil, at this point, is taking the Word of God, because remember when we were in the wilderness and Jesus hadn’t eaten and suggested that [“He command these stones into bread,”] (PARAPHRASE, 4:3) Jesus counteracted with the Word of God. So now the devil pulls out the sword of the Word also and he says, **“...For it is written....”** (4:6) You want to talk about the Word of God, then listen, **“...it’s written, ‘He will [give] His**

**angels [command] concerning You; and on their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.” (4:)**

[“Since You’re the Son of God this is the promise that He has made to You and He’s going to give His angels command over You.”] (PARAPHRASE, 4:6) And he takes Him to the pinnacle of the temple and he says, “Do this. Do this. Prove Yourself. Show Yourself to be God.” But now watch what Jesus does. “[And] **Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’**” (4:7) **“...On the other hand, it is written...,”** (Matthew 4:7) and what He’s showing him is He’s showing him that Scripture must interpret Scripture, that you cannot isolate a scripture and live by an isolated scripture. You have to understand the whole counsel of God. And so when the devil pulls out his sword which he’s using the Word of God, Jesus in a sense counteracts with the Word of God. Now what’s the temptation here? The temptation is one, I believe, of presumptuous sin. [“Since You are who You are, then You can do this and You can get away with it because God is going to protect You. You can go against the natural laws.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 4:6) Now just imagine standing clear on the top of the pinnacle of the temple and say, [“Just throw Yourself down. Throw Yourself down. You’re the Son of God. He’s going to take care of You.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 4:6) And I think that God has a very important lesson for us. I think that so many times we act presumptuously. We think that because we are a child of God that we can do something and get away with it or we can push the limits of common sense and get away with it. I remember a dear brother, and he broke the law of aerodynamics. He was in a small plane and he overloaded the plane thinking that he could defy the laws of that plane and the law of gravity and because he was a child of God, it was all right to overload the plane because God would take care of him. The plane crashed. The children with him died. You cannot presume upon God. And I think this is the lesson for you and for me today as we stand in the holy city. Well there was yet one more temptation

and we want to look at that and it's in verse 8. And it says, **“Again, the devil took Him...,”** Jesus, **“...to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” (Matthew 4:8)** Where was that high mountain? We do not have any idea. Some say it's here. It's the mount of temptation. But God does not point it out. It's just **“...a very high mountain and [there he shows] Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” (Matthew 4:8)** Now listen to what he offers. **“And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give [to] You, if You [will] fall down and worship me.’ (4:9)** In other words, “I will give You the kingdoms of the world.” Well Jesus was the King. Jesus was to be the reigning King over all the kingdoms of the world so what is the big deal? The big deal is this, that Satan is offering Jesus a crown without a cross. “You can have all the kingdoms of the world. You can have them now. Just don't worship God. Worship me. Bow down before me. Submit to me. I'll not take You to a cross.” But Jesus came. He came and we're going to see this in the gospel of Matthew. [“He came and He gave His life a ransom for many. He came not to be served,”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 20:28) [“but to seek and to save that which is lost.”] (PARAPHRASE, Luke 19:10) And so what he was offering Him was look, if You will just fall down and worship me I'll give you the kingdoms of the world. But you know what? Then Satan would have the reign over all the people in the world. And he would have the reign over all the people in the world because if you and I remain in sin, if we do not have forgiveness of sin then Satan, as Hebrews 2 tells us, has the power of death over us. (2:14) And what did Jesus say? **“...Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”’ Then the devil left Him; and behold, [the] angels came and began to minister to Him.” (Matthew 4:10-11)** Don't think that that temptation was any light thing. Remember that He had been without food. He had been in the wilderness, led by the Spirit, granted, for forty days. But for forty days He had not eaten. He had not drunk. And then the temptation



begins. And His answer to Satan always was this, **“It is written.” (4:4) “It is written.” (4:7) “It is written.” (4:10)** O Beloved, this is why I’m taking you through the Word of God so that you can know **“It is written.” (4:4) “It is written.” (4:7) “It is written.”(Matthew 4:10)** And so that you can resist the evil one, [“There is no temptation or trial or testing taken you but such is common to man and God is faithful and He will not permit you to be tested above what you are able to bear it.”] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 10:13) That’s your lesson for today.