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Mt 4:1–11; Deuteronomy 6–8; Matthew 27:39–43

Intro

Open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 4. How many of us are familiar with the story of Satan tempting Jesus? What is the purpose of this story? Is it just to show us that Jesus is perfect? I would suggest to you that there is far more to it than that. This is an account that is rich with meaning and significance that is interconnected with the story of the Bible in a powerful way.

Read Matt. 4:1-11 – the devil or Satan confronts Jesus with 3 different tests in this passage, but it is Jesus response to them each time that is truly fascinating. Each time He responds to Satan it is with a quote from the OT. Why does He do this? Is it just a really comeback to toss back at Satan? When the NT quotes the OT, there is a lot more depth to it than that. When the biblical authors or Jesus quote scripture it isn't just put there because those words have authority or meaning and fit where the author needs them too. That is a reason they do it, but often when the Bible quotes itself it should remind us of something like a hyperlink on a website.

Think about those words on an online article that are a different color and underlined and you can click on them to see what that word or phrase means and why it is important in the context that it is written in. Jesus is doing the same thing here in His response to Satan's test. He isn't just using these passages because they make a good comeback in response to these tests, but He wants us to plug in to an even bigger picture with incredible significance. He wants us to click on that hyperlink and go the place He is quoting from and read the whole context. All of Jesus responses are quoted from the same section of Deuteronomy. He quotes twice from Deuteronomy 6 and once from Deuteronomy 8. So, lets go back and find this bigger picture that the gospel of Matthew and Jesus want us to see. Let's click on these highlighted quotes and get the whole context.

The Context - Deuteronomy 6-8

We will back up to chapter 5 for just a few verses to get the big picture of what is happening in chs. 6-8. **Read Deuteronomy 5:1-5** – here Moses has gathered all the people of Israel to remind them of their covenant with God. He is going to recall to them much of what was said and done at Mt. Sinai. He is doing this because they are preparing to go into the land which God has promised them after their wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9 – here is the crux of what Moses is trying to tell the people of Israel. This passage is at the core of Moses sermon to the people. Verses 4-5 especially set the tone. They are called the Shema. Which is Hebrew for listen, the first word in verse 4. The Israelites memorized this passage and would pray it everyday, when they woke up and before they went to sleep. They did this because of vv. 6-9. These words were to be in the hearts of God’s people. God’s people are to love Him with all of their being (heart, soul, and strength) and be completely devoted to the one and only God and have their hearts set on His way. It is this total devotion to God that the wilderness experience puts to the test.

So, the context of the passages that Jesus is quoting are in the middles of this sermon from Moses as he is preparing the people to claim what God has promised them after wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. And here we find Jesus who has been wandering in the wilderness for 40 days and we are going to see him face the same tests that Israel did, but he will respond to these tests successfully and show us that He is the Son of God by showing how he can do perfectly what God’s people could not.

Test 1 - Deut. 8:1-3

Satan’s first test for Jesus in Matthew 4 was “if you are the son of God, turn stones into bread to satisfy your hunger.” Jesus rebukes Satan with a quote from Deuteronomy 8:3

Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3 & Exodus 16:1-4 – “The entire Israelite community departed from Elim and came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left the land of Egypt. The entire Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted. Instead, you brought us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of hunger!” Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.”

The people of Israel should have trusted that God would provide a way for them after all that He had already done for them, but they still grumbled and wished to go back to Egypt. All because they were hungry. Jesus is proving that He is the Son of God by doing perfectly what the people of Israel could not do. Jesus knows that the word of God will not physically fill his stomach, but it is a recognition of where His trust and faith truly lies and where it should've been with God's people. He trusts that God will provide and so He will not give in and take matters into his own hands or complain against God. He passes the first test that children of Israel did not.

Test 2 - Deut 6:16

Next, Satan tests Jesus by telling Him to prove He is the Son of God by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple and see if God saves you. We see Jesus rebuke Satan with a quote from Deut. 6:16

Read Deut. 6:16 – “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested him at Massah.” What does that mean? What happened at Massah? Turn to Exodus 17.

Exodus 17:1-7 – “The entire Israelite community left the Wilderness of Sin, moving from one place to the next according to the LORD’s command. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So the people complained to Moses, “Give us water to drink.” “Why are you complaining to me?” Moses replied to them. “Why are you testing the LORD?” But the people thirsted there for water and grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you ever bring us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What should I do with these people? In a little while they will stone me!” The LORD answered Moses, “Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff you struck the Nile with in your hand and go. I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will drink.” Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. He named the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites complained, and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Here Jesus is referencing a specific event where God's people again do not put their faith in Him, and instead they test God. They question whether or not He is really with them or not. Jesus trusts that God is with Him and does not need to put God to the test to see whether or not God will take care of Him. Jesus is continuing to prove that He is indeed the Son of God. He is the perfect fulfillment of everything that God's people were supposed to be.

Test 3 - Deut. 6:12-15

Satan's third test is offering all the kingdoms of the world to Jesus if He will bow down and worship satan. Jesus' final rebuke against Satan comes from Deut. 6:13

Read Deut. 6:12-15 – here we see the Moses reminding the people not forget who brought them out of Egypt, and only worship the one true God, because they have already forgotten once in Exodus 32 when they make the golden calf. Then he warns them not to go after and worship the Gods of the people who are presently living in the land that is promised to them, but when they go into the land, they fail to really conquer it. They allow many of the Canaanites to live among them. As a result, they will indeed forget again and they will worship those gods of the other nations.

But Jesus again does perfectly what God's people could not. He is the perfect fulfillment of Israel, the true Israel, and who they were supposed to be if they had placed their faith and trust wholly and completely in God.

The Final Test

Now we fast forward from the beginning of the gospel account towards the end. Turn to Matthew 26. We now see in this account at the end echoes of the tests that he faced in chapter 4. In 26:53, we see that He claims the power to call down legions of angels to His aid, but he refrains just like He did at the pinnacle of the temple. Even more powerful than this to me is in Matt. 27:39-43. "If you are the Son of God" he was ready and he passes the final test. In 27:50 He gives up His spirit and dies. His trust and faith was still completely in God. He had full confidence that God would raise Him from the dead. Aren't we so grateful that He passed those tests? Because we were not and are not able.

He experienced temptation at a greater level than any of us have ever or will ever experience. Because His temptation was always before Him. There was never a time when He gave in so fullest extent of temptation was always before Him and He still overcame. Motivated by His trust in God and His love for us.

We are now God's People

We now have become God's people. Paul spends a good portion of Romans and in Galatians too explaining how all believers and followers of Jesus are now God's people. Spiritual Israel so to speak. We are the ones that are called to live out [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#) and love God with all of our being. To have complete faith and trust in him and in His way.

Is that the kind of faith and trust in God that we have? Do we trust God enough to truly live out the challenging and countercultural life we have been called to? To trust God enough to be truly generous, with no regard for what it may cost us? To have enough faith to sacrifice anything and everything that stands in between us and God? He calls us to have faith in Him at the expense of what we think is best or what we want.

I want you all to ask yourselves, how am I trusting God to the extent which Jesus did? Or maybe, am I at all? Next time someone needs something from you, give more than makes you comfortable. Doesn't matter what it is. Some thing, money, time, etc. When you decide what you're comfortable with giving of yourself, then be intentional and give more than that. Trust that God will provide for you despite the sacrifice you have just made.

Conclusion

Following the temptation narrative in [Matthew 4](#), Jesus begins his preaching and tells the people that the kingdom of heaven has come near. The promise of God has come near again but this time the promise is even greater and this time His people have an intercessor. A perfect intercessor. Someone who has been tested and He has passed. He is proven as the Son of God and for those who put their faith in Him, he covers their shortcomings with His grace. What a blessing that is, and if you would like to pledge your faith to God, begin a new life devoted to Him and be covered by that grace by having your sins washed away in baptism...