

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

MATTHEW 3:13—4:1-11

LESSON: CHRIST'S IDENTITY ESTABLISHED — January 6, 2019

INTRODUCTION:

John was the prophet of God who spoke after 400 years of silence in Israel. He commanded repentance and baptism demonstrated it. This was not a suggestion, but a command for all who heard him preach. John's baptism not only professed repentance but it confessed a trust in the coming Messiah that John proclaimed. By divine command, John's initiation of baptism was a means of outward declaration of inward repentance and faith. Jesus Christ affirmed it when John baptized Him. Jesus later showed the link of baptism when He commanded His followers to practice baptism for all who believed in Him.

John had shaken Judea with his preaching and the call to repentance, but he was limited. He could preach and baptize but he could not change a man's heart. The Messiah was dramatically different! He would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire! He would winnow, separate the wheat and the chaff. He would gather the wheat into his barn and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The work of Jesus Christ is transforming, purifying, and distinguishing lives. Every one of us will be affected ultimately by His work. The question that demands our response is just this: Will the work of Christ bring blessing or judgment in my life?

LESSON: I. THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST MATTHEW 3:13-17

Jesus Is Coming For Baptism

3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. In the midst of the crowds being baptized by John, Jesus shows up. Now remember, Jesus has not yet begun His public ministry. He is virtually unknown to anyone, except for the people in His hometown. And yet when He came to the Jordan to be baptized, John's attitude completely changes. He has been pointing out everyone's sin, and challenging them, commanding them, to repent, but now, as Jesus is standing in front of John, we'll see what John tells Him.

3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? *"I shouldn't be baptizing You. You should be baptizing me!"* Jesus was compelled to be baptized by John. He was to identify himself with John's ministry. He was the Messiah, the Lamb of God, being proclaimed by John. John's baptism was a call for men to take a stand and to become identified with a life of repentance and righteousness. Jesus needed no repentance. His righteousness was the pattern, the very righteousness that everyone needed; the very righteousness that could stand for and cover every man's sin. So Jesus was obeying the voice of God through the prophet.

Baptized By John

3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. The first point we must note is the humility of our Lord; then the humility of John before Jesus. John had already upbraided the arrogant Pharisees and Sadducees who came for baptism as a show. Jesus said something that convinced John to allow

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the baptism: *Matt. 3:15 "...in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness..."* What does that mean? It means that if Jesus wasn't baptized, all righteousness would not be fulfilled. Which part of righteousness? There are several possibilities. The two most likely candidates for explanation are:

1. Jesus was baptized to fulfill the righteousness of those who believed but were not baptized. "*Righteousness*" in Matthew's gospel implies doing the will of God. It was fitting, therefore, because God had commanded it.
2. And we can also say that when Jesus began His public ministry, He would be open to accusation by everyone. "Well, *'WE'* were baptized by John in the Jordan. Why weren't *'YOU'*?" Jesus gladly humbled himself before John and the crowds as though He was a sinner like the rest. He risked His reputation to identify with sinners, so that He might become a merciful and faithful mediator on our behalf. He was willing to be misunderstood in order to be obedient to the Father's Will.

The humility of Christ, the sinless Son of God fully identifies with the sinners He came to save. Jesus' submission to John's baptism affirmed the validity of what John was doing, the validity of his baptism. And Jesus identified with John as a sinner, just as He did with every other sinner He came to save. John needed the work of Christ just as we do. He had no merit to commend himself to God apart from the merits of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

After Being Baptized

3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:— Jesus had no sins to confess as the others did, so Matthew and Mark both describes Jesus as coming up out of the water of baptism "*immediately*" (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10), and something supernaturally happened— heaven was opened, and the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. Jesus coming up out of the water, it symbolizes that though the way to God had been closed, it was now open through Jesus Christ. The Messiah would open the way for sinners to enter into God's presence with a new righteousness, not a righteousness of their own doing. "*Behold, the heavens were opened.*" No one else opens the way to God but Christ. It also symbolizes the Father publicly declaring His Son's identity. The Triune God is presented to the world! The emphasis and shift in Matthew's gospel from this point, onward focuses upon Jesus Christ! The coming of the Holy Spirit also tells us of the initiation of Jesus Christ's Messianic work. He is the one who anoints the Messiah to bear the Good News. The Father who sent the Son verbally affirms His ministry at His coronation of Baptism.

3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And God the Father spoke from heaven, *Matt. 3:17 ... "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."* We see the working of The Trinity. Jesus Christ is the "*beloved*" of the Father. "*Beloved*" is an endearing term, showing that Christ is the object of the Father's affections from all eternity. He is the "*One*" in whom the Father delights. And it is this "*One*" that has been sent by the Father as our Redeemer. God did not send anyone less than His own beloved Son to satisfy His own justice so that we might be saved forever. The Father finds eternal pleasure in the Son. He finds

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pleasure in the Son's Incarnation, in His sinless life, and in His faithfulness. He finds pleasure in bruising His Son for us. We cannot fathom such depths of love, yet, as Isaiah expressed it, *"But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief" (53:10)*. Why all of this grief for His beloved? So that He might be the guilt offering to avert His wrath, and purchase a people for His own possession. If the Father has such pleasure in the Son, shouldn't we?

SUMMARY:

Chapter 3 John the Baptist's ministry announces the King's arrival, and the consequential effectiveness of His work. He stood as "a voice" from the past representing the long line of prophets. Most importantly in the scene of Christ's baptismal coronation were the recognized guests: the Holy Spirit descending as a dove and the Father speaking as a Voice from heaven. Thus the Trinity in Unity affirmed the identity of the person and work of Jesus Christ as He was baptized. Having no sin, Jesus was willing to go through great lengths to identify with us, in being baptized. And God went through great lengths in presenting to the world His Son, in whom He was well pleased. Christ's baptism marks His coronation as our Prophet, Priest, and King; and in this the Trinity bears witness to our eternal salvation through Christ.

APPLICATION:

Jesus Christ did not personally need John's baptism but He received it because God commanded it. Have you tried to ignore or rationalize around baptism or some other area of divine command? Look at the example of Jesus Christ, and follow likewise. Are you a Christian? Have you followed the Lord's example and command in having been baptized? Jesus identified with us in His baptism. We identify with Him in His death and resurrection when we are baptized into Him. Does this not tell us something quite pointed in our own obedience? Are you one that needs to enter this watery grave in public confession of Jesus Christ?

II. THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST MATTHEW 4:1-11

¹Led By The Spirit Into The Wilderness

4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Right after Jesus' baptism, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness for a time of temptation and testing by the devil. The Devil is, of course, Satan. Jesus said he was a murderer from the beginning and that he has no truth in him (*John 8:44*). The word "Devil" means "adversary" or "accuser." That's Satan's true character. This is Jesus' experience as a man and the Spirit of God led Him, then the tempter came to Him

²Why was Jesus tempted? This season in the wilderness did not start because Jesus upset God. It was quite the opposite. Remember, the Father was well-pleased in Him, and it was the Holy Spirit Who led Him into the wilderness for this testing. Even though Jesus was God, He was also man. Therefore, Jesus hungered as a man, thirsted as a man, suffered as a man, and ultimately died as a man. He was also tempted as a man, yet without sin (*Hebrews 4:15*). This was necessary so that He could become a merciful High Priest (*Hebrews 2:17*).



¹ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew0313.html>
² <http://preachersfiles.com/matthew-41-11-jesus-is-tempted-by-satan/>

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The wilderness of Judea was a rocky, barren, scrubby environment more or less hostile to human life. God cannot tempt any man (*James 1:13*), but Jesus is led to the situation where Satan would provide the temptations. Why could Jesus not do this on His own? - Because it is in and of itself a sin for man to seek temptations. Jesus taught us to pray that we not be led into temptation, but be delivered from evil (*Luke 11:4*). He told the disciples, *"Pray that ye enter not into temptation"* (*Luke 22:40*). The man who willingly seeks after temptations is a man who is not doing the Lord's will. Yet, it was necessary that Jesus be tempted while on earth, so the Spirit directed Jesus to undergo such. *We have not a priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin Heb.4:15.*

Saints, I want you to remember this the next time your life seems to take a horrible turn for the worse. Because if you remember that God is your friend, and not your executioner, then you will remember to deal with the tests and temptations the way you're supposed to. Remember three reasons:

1. To prove and demonstrate your faith.
2. To strengthen and prepare you for heavier responsibility.
3. To demonstrate the mercy, grace, and power of God in human life.

4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. How could He prepare Himself? There was only one way—through fasting and prayer. *"Fasting"* means abstinence from eating food for a period of time (*Luke 4:2*). Jesus fasted so as to focus himself for the challenge of temptation that He was about to face. He had to get alone with God and subject Himself; to gain complete control over His body, as the Spirit of God led Him. He had to get completely apart from the world. Being tempted directly by Satan was no ordeal into which one ought to enter unprepared. Prayer is often accompanied with fasting (*Mark 9:29, Luke 2:37, Acts 14:23*). A WISE TEACHER ONCE SAID, "YOU CAN PRAY WITHOUT FASTING, BUT YOU CAN'T FAST WITHOUT PRAYING." Just imagine the pressure and weight pressing upon His body. Jesus had to be prepared—prepared mentally, prepared spiritually, and physically.

POINT:

How much more could be done if believers sought God with the same intensity! How much more growth and ministry could be gained!

Fasting helps the prayer life. There are special times when communion with God is absolutely essential:

- In times after a mountaintop experience (i.e. Christ's baptism)
- In times before a great trial or time of temptation (i.e. Jesus' 40 days and 40 nights* with the tempter)
- In times of periods of great service for God (i.e. Jesus' ministry- going before the public)

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" Matt.6:33.

NOTE:

**There seems to be a significance in the number 40 here. The earth was cleansed in 40 days and 40 nights of rain during the flood. Joseph's embalming process was 40 days (Genesis 50:3). The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. It seems to be a number that indicates cleansing and purification. The numerology is consistent in the case of Jesus' fasting as well.*



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Three Temptations

4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. We have to notice that maturity does not exempt a person from temptation. Jesus' first temptation was for Him to use His power to meet a personal hunger. He could then see fit to feed the world and prove Himself to be the Son of God. Men would rush to serve any Messiah or man who could meet their physical and material needs. However, Jesus would have failed:

- To meet their spiritual need.
- By teaching error that the physical is more important than the spiritual.
- By teaching that receiving was more important than giving.

Jesus was alone and hungry. He may have seemed defenseless when the devil came to Him with three temptations. But He was not. He was packing a massive broad sword, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Every time the devil attacked with a temptation, Jesus quoted the Word of God to repel the attack:

1. The devil said, "You're hungry, so turn these stones into bread." Jesus quoted *Deut.8:3*.

Saints, the Word of God is your offensive weapon against the devil. God has given it to us to wage war against trial, tests and temptations. Matthew calls Satan "the Tempter" in verse 3. The tempter can only tempt, appeal, entice not force. Four clear lessons are seen in these temptations.

1. Temptation often attacks an area of desperate need such as hunger.
2. Temptation is to be resisted by using the Word of God.
3. When needs arise, be strengthened in God's presence and plan alone not yours.
4. Trust that the enemy will flee by the Spirit's Power.

Psalms 51:11 says, "Cast me not away from thy presence; And take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,— The holy city was Jerusalem and the pinnacle of the temple was the highest point on the top of the temple which overlooked the lowest valley on one of its sides making for a height of around 700 feet.

4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. The second temptation was to prove His deity by the spectacular, so the devil thinks. The worshipers at the temple, seeing such an event would accept and proclaim Him to be the Son of God.

2. The devil said, "Jump off this high place to prove that God will protect You." Jesus quoted *Deut.6:16*.

The thing that's wrong with this reasoning is that God is not to be tested or tried (that is to attempt to ensnare Christ; challenging God to sin). *In Acts 5:9, But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?* This is not something we want to be caught doing. While in contrast, the challenge God gives in Mal.3:10c, is a challenge to prove

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Him regarding the rewards of tithing. God is to be trusted and He wants men to believe Him because they love Him as their Father, not because of the events and happenings. God would have failed if He had given in to this temptation:

1. This act would have abused God's Will and misused what God had promised. This would have ignored what God really wanted and had really said.
2. This would have had the people's attention centered on the spectacular instead of faith in God.

The power of Satan is limited. He can only tempt. He could not push Christ off the pinnacle and he cannot push or force us to sin. The lust or desire is from within man. Satan's temptation can only stir and arouse the desire and lust. Satan cannot cause a man to lust. Therefore, if a person is living in communion with God and living in God's Word, he will be stirred to obey God more than he is stirred to yield to the temptation. Satan knew scripture, but he always put a twist on it. It is possible to know the scripture and not know God. It is also possible to know the scripture and stand against God, abusing and misusing His Word.

4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. So, we see Jesus continues to speak the Word that can come against Satan's lies. Jesus lets him know that he can't tempt the Lord thy God.

- Satan deceives and lies. The kingdoms of this world are only temporary—for a few short years.
- Believers cannot receive from Satan what God has promised them.

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;— The third temptation was to prove His deity by compromise. The temptation was to secure the world without the cross, without paying the price.

3. The devil said, "Take the easy way out, and I'll give you the world." Jesus quoted *Deut.6:13*.

If Christ would have given into this temptation, he would have failed.

- Compromising with the devil and the world is not become God's way. God's way is to conquer the corruption and death of this world.

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. The temptation was to choose another way instead of God's Way. The temptation was to compromise His life and His loyalty—switch loyalties. He was offered the world and the sovereign leadership of the world if He would just do one thing: worship the devil. What does this mean? It means that Christ would have been tempted to allow the world (including man) to remain corruptible and dying with no hope of life eternal with God.

- God alone is to be worshiped, not the devil nor the world and its power.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt.16:26.

4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Jesus had to command Satan to leave. A believer is often tempted to compromise both his life and his work or ministry if he doesn't command the enemy to get out.



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- Temptation must be resisted immediately. Jesus did not hesitate a moment in resisting temptation.

When a believer is tempted time after time, he faces two critical dangers:

1. Discouragement – Succumbing to temptation and sinning can discourage a person. In fact, the greater the fall of a person, the more unworthy and self-accusing he becomes. Self-pity, shame, guilt, and failure always discourage to some degree.
2. Over-confidence – A person can feel strong and mature, feeling above temptation, leading them to think that everything they do is bound to be right; feeling they can conquer any temptation on their own; pulling scripture out of context to justify their ungodly and loose behavior.

Angels Ministering To Him

4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. This was the triumphant victory. Jesus resisted the temptation the only way he could!—By doing exactly what the Word of God said. He simply spoke it and it commanded the enemy to bow. Therefore Jesus never got out of the Will of God. The end result of Jesus' successful battle was twofold. **First**, the devil left Him. This is how we are to obey James' command: *James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* **Secondly**, after the devil left, angels came and ministered to Him. You might think, Well, Jesus was special, so He was ministered to by angels. And you might say I'm nobody; what makes you think that I would ever qualify to be ministered to by angels? Well, the writer of *Hebrews 1:14* says that angels are, "...all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation." We are accounted to receive this salvation that Christ gave His life for.

SUMMARY:

Chapter 4 Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit. He didn't eat anything for 40 days and 40 nights, in contrast with John the Baptist being in the desert eating locust and wild honey. Satan, the devil, the tempter came to Jesus with three temptations.

TEMPTATIONS

1. Turn these stones into bread (tempting the flesh).
2. Cast Yourself down from this pinnacle (tempting the pride of life; fame).
3. Fall down and worship me, the devil (tempting the lust of the eyes—can have it all).

Jesus does not hesitate on any. He says, "**IT IS WRITTEN!**"

IT IS WRITTEN

1. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God v4.*
2. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God v7.*
3. *Get thee hence...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve v10.*

The primary focus is doing the Will of God when tempted by the enemy—not to compromise. It therefore shows you, who you are and who God is. It also shows that if Jesus is able to do it by speaking the Word of God with His power. It is not in our power alone but *in the power of His might Eph.6:10.*

As a man, He had to be filled with the Holy Spirit (*the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove*

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Matt.316). As a man He had to confess the Word of God (*It is written Matt4*). As a man, He was hungered (*fasted 40days and 40 nights Matt.4:2*). As a man, he had to pray and keep in constant contact with the Father.

Every trial and temptation was for our learning and example because in the end the devil had to leave. When He said *away from me Satan*, he had to leave. When He endured the temptations, and didn't give in, Satan had to leave. When He submitted first to God and resisted the devil, the devil had to flee. *1Corth.10;13* says, *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it"*. God always has someone to minister to us in our time of need. Jesus did not minister to Himself. *"...Behold, angels came and ministered unto him."* This was a time of complete exhaustion for Jesus. As the enemy departs, he departs for a season, meaning that there would be other temptations. But for now we have the victory because of Jesus! One of the blessings of having Jesus as our Savior is His ability to comfort and aid those who are tempted. He is sympathetic, and can provide mercy and grace to help in the time of need – *Heb. 4:14-16*. This is because He too was tempted – *Heb. 2:18*.

APPLICATION:

How many of you know how to play the game "Simon Says?" If Simon says to do something, you do it, but if Simon doesn't say to do it, you don't do it. The devil will try to trick you into doing what he wants you to do? If he tried with Jesus, he will try with us. When he does, do what Jesus did, answer with Scripture. Remember, adhering to the temptation is a sin. Are you going to accept God's Plan of Salvation? Well, you can! The Bible says in, *Rom. 10:9-11* that *if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation*. For the Scripture says, *"WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."* Maybe life has offered you a lot of disappointments. Jesus never will. He died to pay the price of your sin, and then rose from the dead, alive today. If you believe Him, repent and be baptized, and you will receive God's Plan of Salvation. Now, tell others of your belief. The Lord gives us His Holy Spirit to be our guide, strengthener, and consoler in times of temptation and testing.