

Matthew 4:1-11

Satan Tempts Jesus and Jesus Does not disappoint

Jesus, with hair still dripping wet from His baptism at the Jordan, with the sweet words of affirmation from His Father in heaven, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased," follows the leading the Spirit, the heavenly dove to the wilderness.

How about this. The children of Israel, marches through the Red Sea, still dripping from a baptism so to speak, And is led by a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, into the wilderness. after hearing the words "I am the Lord your God." Israel followed.

Along the way Israel would have several opportunities to demonstrate their trust in the Lord their God and His promise to them. Forty years would be a long time, the food supplies would start to run low and stomach would start to grumble. What a wonderful opportunity to affirm their trust in the great I AM, who brought them safely out slavery in Egypt, through the Red and defeating Pharoah at the Red Sea. Yes, He will supply our every need!

If the Israelites would have said, "God will supply our daily bread." "We will not be anxious about our life, what we will eat or drink, is not life more that food and drink? Look at the birds, they neither sow or reap and gather into barns yet the heavenly Fathers feeds them/Are we of more value than them?" For God has said, I am the Lord your God."

What they really said was this, "Would that we would not have died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the to the full, for you have brought us out here into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger." Ex 16:3.

What a disappointment Israel was! Yet God heard their stomachs growl and their curses and gave them manna and quail to fed on. This satisfied them, for a while.

Then the Pillar of Cloud and pillar of Fire led them to a place they would call Massah. FYI Massah is a dry place, and I do not mean dry as in no beer or alcohol.

It is as dry as the desert that surrounds them. Bellies full and the word of the Lord's "I am the Lord your God" still ringing in their ears, they would have another opportunity to affirm their trust in the Lord their God to provide and take care of them. If they would have said, "we shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind or sun shall strike us, for he who has pity on us is leading us and by springs of water will guide us." God's word shall not fail us.

Instead, they said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our livestock with thirst." Instead of trusting God to care for them, they put God to the test saying, "Is the Lord with us or not," with the pillar of cloud and fire right in their midst! Massah in Hebrew means to 'test.'

What a disappointment Israel was, yet the Lord their God heard their cry and took their test and instructed Moses to strike the rock and water gushed out and they drank and were satisfied. For a while.

With bellies full and thirst satisfied, the pillar of cloud and fire led them to Mt Sinai. God called Moses to go up the Mountain and Moses was gone for a long time, 40 days in fact. Much longer than the people expected. They wondered what had become of Moses and if He had died up there who would lead them to the Promised Land.

Once again, they had the perfect opportunity to affirm their Trust in the Lord their God, saying together in one voice, "Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield, For our heart is glad in Him, because we trust in His holy name. We shall have no other gods."

What they really said was this, "What has become of this Moses, Make for us god's who shall go before us." The golden calf was formed and Aaron declared, "This is your God O Israel." and the people worshipped it.

What a disappointment Israel was. What a disappointment we are too. We have received the same Word at our baptism, "I am your God, you are my child." We have had opportunities to confess that The Lord is our God, yet we have complained, put Him to the test, and fallen down before other gods, more than we can count.

"Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Still dripping wet with water from his baptism and the sweet words of affirmation from His heavenly Father, "This is my Son the Beloved, with who I am well pleased." Jesus is going to be tempted just as we are tempted, just as Israel was tempted and even as the Christian Church is tempted.

After 40 days and nights of fasting Jesus is hungry. "And then Tempter came and said, If you are the Son of God," And there is good reason to doubt it you. Did God really say you should not eat of any of the trees in the garden." "But we are in the wilderness and not the garden. there are no trees out here." "Yes, that is so, but what about these stones. Turn them into bread." "If you are the Son of God your heavenly Father would not want you to go hungry." If He gave bread for the faithless Israelites, wouldn't he do the same for you."

What a wonderful opportunity to Trust in God's Word of promise. And Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God." Here is the one who does not disappoint. He trusts that God's Word does what it says it will do.

Then the Devil took Jesus the Holy City and placed him on the pinnacle of the Temple." "If you are the Son of God...There is good reason to doubt it, you know, Have not you wondered how far God would let you fall before sending His angels to rescue you, for you know the Word says He will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone." Then you could be even more confident in His word if you put it to the test.

What a great opportunity to confess His faith in God and his promise in God's word. Jesus said. "You shall not put the Lord God to the test."

Here the one who does not disappoint. He trusts that God's word does what it says.

"Again, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory." They are yours if you fall down to worship me. How tempting. Jesus knows the mission before him. This journey in the wilderness is just the first battle of the war. He will come out unharmed this time with the angels ministering to Him. He knows that the agony and suffering of the

beating and the cross are before him and there will be no angels ministering to Him, and here would be a great opportunity to bypass all that and grab the kingdom now. If you are the Son of God, your Father certainly does not want you to go through all that suffering. All you need to do is worship the devil.

And Jesus answered, "Be gone Satan, you shall worship the Lord your God and only Him shall you serve."

Here is Jesus the one who does not disappoint. He Trusts God's Word to do what it says it will do. Whereas Israel was a great disappointment, here is The one in whom the heavenly Father is well pleased. Israel's and our failures and disappointments are swallowed up in Jesus' victory on the cross.

The devil has no power over us, and it is not because we are strong. It is because you are in Christ. By faith we are surrounded by this worldly wilderness of temptation. Our victory over temptation cannot be found in our resistance. Our confidence in this wilderness is found in Jesus who was tempted in every way we are, but he was without sin. So that you can be counted with Him. He said, "I am the Lord your God." and can we believe that Word is for us?

Then the devil left him, and the angels ministered to hm. And can we all say thanks be to God who gives us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."