

## First Sunday in Lent

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 3:1-21

### *The Fall*

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” 11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14 The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” 16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” 17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” 20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

**3:1** *serpent*. The great deceiver clothed himself as a serpent, one of God's good creatures. He insinuated a falsehood and portrayed rebellion as clever, but essentially innocent, self-interest. Therefore “the devil, or Satan,” is later referred to as “that ancient serpent” (Rev 12:9; 20:2). (CSB)

This a common Hebrew word for “snake.” Snakes would have been among either the general group of “creeping things” or among the “beasts of the earth” (1:24) that God created. There is nothing inherently evil in snakes. In this instance, Satan has either possessed one of these animals or appeared in their form. (TLSB)

The devil, created good and perfect, was not tempted by anyone else, but the first thought of sin and rebellion against God originated in him. (1 John 3:8) How this could be, we do not know. He and his angels fell away from God sometime between the seventh day, when all things God had made were still “very good,” and the Fall of man. (Luther's Small Catechism – Annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler)

*crafty*. The Hebrew words for “crafty” and “naked” are almost identical. Though naked, the man and his wife felt no shame (2:25). The craftiness of the serpent led them to sin, and they then became ashamed of their nakedness (see v. 7). (CSB)

In Proverbs this word is used with a positive connotation (“prudent,” Pr. 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8, 15, 18; 22:3; 27:12). In Job, it is used with a negative connotation (crafty” Job 5:12; 15:5). Here in Genesis, the usage appears to be neutral. The main reason for the choice of this word (‘arum) appears to be that it forms a play on words with the word “naked” (‘arom) in 2:25. (TLSB)

In Paradise man had everything that he needed for the proper development of his nature and for the fulfillment of his object in life. But now temptation came to him from outside. Just as in other parts of the Bible animals are characterized by certain physical or mental features, so the serpent is here described as being cunning or crafty by nature, this fact distinguishing it from the other animals of the field. (Kretzmann)

*Did God actually say ... ?* The question and the response changed the course of human history. By causing the woman to doubt God’s word, Satan brought evil into the world. Here the deceiver undertook to alienate man from God. In Job 1–2 he, as the accuser, acted to alienate God from man (see also Zec 3:1). (CSB)

This first temptation was (and remains) the temptation to doubt God’s Word. Satan implies God has selfish motives, but there is no hint from Moses that God had ill motives toward Adam and Eve or planned their fall. Moses makes clear that the destructive effects of sin only grieved God (6:6). The Smalcald Articles state, “[The devil] turned Adam and Eve into enthusiasts. He led them away from God’s outward Word to spiritualizing and self-pride” (SA III VIII 5). (TLSB)

Luther points out the temptation involved directs itself against God’s Word. More specifically, it seeks to make that Word doubtful to man. This Word was for Adam both law and gospel. Adam and Eve are to be led away from its truth according to the purposes of the tempter. In this respect the temptation is a type of all temptations which the evil foe presents. (Leupold)

Disorder has its steps of digression as well. Woman eats and sins and draws man into it because he has not been a spiritual leader. By his lack of leadership he has allowed his wife to be tripped up. The downward steps continue by covering this nakedness, hiding from God. The lack of truth and the consequences of disobedience continue about his nakedness before God. Things take another step downward with blame game Adam and Eve play. Bottom is hit when the punishment is meted out.

**3:2 woman said** – By permitting His highest creatures to be tempted to sin, God was once again providing another opportunity for them to glorify Him – in this case, by consciously choosing good where the possibility of choosing evil existed. (PBC)

As soon as one does not wholeheartedly and unreservedly trust God, mistrust is gain ground and sin has entered. (Leupold)

**3:3 neither shall you touch it.** The woman adds to God’s word, distorting his directive and demonstrating that the serpent’s subtle challenge was working its poison. (CSB)

Woman adds this provision to the instructions that God had given to Adam (2:16–17). (TLSB)

Already the attitude of the heart to God is clearly seen no longer to be one of perfect trust. The suspicion which Satan so cleverly suggested was allowed to take root. To have suspicions of God and His goodness is a wicked insult of His majesty. All this, it is true, does not at once appear in its most fully developed form. The first steps on the road away from God have been taken. Here the Fall took place. What follows is the further unfolding of what lay in this first act and the full evidence of it. (Leupold)

**3:4** *You will not surely die.* The blatant denial of a specific divine pronouncement (see 2:17). (CSB)

Satan moves from doubting God's Word to outright denial and rejection of it. Luther says: "When Satan sees these beginnings [of temptation], he now exerts himself with his utmost power, as though against a leaning wall, in order to overwhelm her altogether" (AE 1:155). (TLSB)

**3:5** *God knows.* Satan accuses God of having unworthy motives. In Job 1:9–11; 2:4–5 he accuses the righteous man of the same. (CSB)

The serpent does not challenge the woman's understanding of God's instructions, but calls God's integrity into doubt, suggesting that real reason God does not want them to eat of the fruit is that He wants to keep them from becoming like Him. (TLSB)

*your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.* The statement is only half true. Their eyes were opened, to be sure (see v. 7), but the result was quite different from what the serpent had promised. (CSB)

Note the progress of temptation having begun with doubt about God's Word, he then moved to rejection of it, and now the serpent offers Eve the power to establish her own standard of right and wrong, to define truth for herself. The temptation to which the serpent exposed the woman, and to which all humankind has been subject since the first disobedience, is the desire to become godlike, the desire to determine our own standards of good and evil and to direct our own affairs according to our will. (TLSB)

*knowing good and evil.* God does know evil, not because it is part of His character, but in the sense that He understands the destructive nature of evil. So far man and woman had known only the good of God's very good creation. In view of this, the serpent spoke the truth: by disobeying God they will come to know evil as well as good. For the man and the woman, however, the only way to come to know evil is by doing evil through the breaking of God's command. (TLSB)

**3:6** *good for food ... delight to the eyes ... to be desired to make one wise.* Three aspects of temptation. Cf. 1Jn 2:16; Lk 4:3, 5, 9. (CSB)

In her desire to gain wisdom, the woman lost sight of the fundamental truth about wisdom: to be truly wise is to believe and trust in God and to obey His teachings. This truth is summarized in the OT saying that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Temptation frequently consists of desiring something that God says is wrong. (TLSB)

*gave some to her husband* – We notice that in the fall both Adam and Eve abandon their God-given roles. Eve, designed by God to be a helper for the man, presumed to act as leader of the family – and spiritual leader, no less. And Adam, designed to be the spiritual head of the family, abandoned his leadership role and listened to his wife instead of to God. (PBC)

To impart the new "wisdom" to him. (TLSB)

*who was with her* – The Hebrew for “with her” means right there, elbow to elbow. Adam isn’t away in another part of the forest, he has no alibi. He is standing right there, watching the whole thing unravel. What does he do? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. (Wild at Heart – Eldredge pp. 52-53)

Adam joined her in disobedience; she did not trick him into eating. It is not clear that he stood with her throughout the temptation. (TLSB)

*he ate* – Adam must have fallen exactly as Eve had, with as little excuse, with as great a guilt. The only difference appears to be that, as Eve had eaten and apparently had suffered no ill effect, this constituted an additional argument why Adam need not hesitate to adopt the same course. (Leupold)

**3:7** *they knew that they were naked.* No longer innocent like children, they had a new awareness of themselves and of each other in their nakedness and shame. (CSB)

The immediate result of their disobedience was a new experience of self-consciousness that resulted from the breaking of the union that formerly characterized their relationship with each other and with God. This feeling of separateness produced a shame that had not been a part of their experience (2:25). Luther says: “It is as if Moses were saying: ‘Satan had closed not only the eyes but also the heart of Eve through the unbelief and disobedience of all her members within and without. But after sin was allowed to enter and was committed, he blithely allows their eyes to be opened that they may see what they have done.’ Here Satan seeks to make another gain, namely, that those who have sinned should perish in despair” (AE 1:164). (TLSB)

*they ... made coverings.* Their own feeble and futile attempt to hide their shame, which only God could cover. (CSB)

In their painful embarrassment they sewed together the large leaves of the paradise fig tree for aprons to gird about their loins. Modesty or bashfulness naturally centers in this part of the body, requiring that the organs through which the impurities of the body are expelled, and which are now defiled for the service of indecency, be covered. (Kretzmann)

**3:8** *cool of the day* – Hebrew indicates that it was the time of the day when the breeze blows, probably evening. (TLSB)

*hid themselves* – Just covering themselves gave physical expression to their awareness of separation from each other, so their attempt to hide from God gives physical expression to their awareness of separation from Him (cf v. 10, Adam’s response to God). (TLSB)

*the garden.* Once a place of joy and fellowship with God, it became a place of fear and of hiding from God. (CSB)

**3:9** *called to the man* – God addressed Adam. As the head and steward of God’s creation, Adam is responsible for what has happened, even though the woman was the first to disobey God’s command (cf Rm 5:12, 15-17). (TLSB)

*Where are you?* A rhetorical question (see 4:9). (CSB)

Rhetorical, as with the questions God later asks of Adam (v 11) and Cain (4:9). God knows what has been done in secret (cf Ps 90:8; Is 29:15; Jer 23:24). (TLSB)

A rhetorical question meant to make Adam think about what he and Eve had done and what it had led to at this point in time. It is also a reminder that we can't hide from God and that he looks deeper than just earthly surface matters. The passages below confirm the saying, "You can run but you can't hide from God." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Jeremiah 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a Man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

Jeremiah 23:24 "Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD."

Amos 9:3 "Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt Them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them."

Zephaniah 1:12 "At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those Who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The LORD will do nothing, either good or bad.'"

Romans 8:27 "And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

**3:10 I HEARD YOU IN THE GARDEN** – Sound of God walking in the garden. (TLSB)

*I was afraid* – A dread came over Adam. When we are frightened by our own guilt we often fudge on the truth and begin to make excuses as Adam does in this verse. His shame at being naked, not guilt because of his sin, moved Adam to hide. This revealed a consciousness of self as a being separated from God, which was new to human experience, parallel to the experience of separateness from each other that man and woman experienced (v. 7). (TLSB)

**3:11 he said** - God is cross-examining Adam by asking questions that begin with the outward concern and moving to the real problem of disobedience (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

Rhetorical. God already knows the answer, as the next question makes clear. (TLSB)

**3:12 The woman whom... gave to with me.** The man blames God and the woman—anyone but himself—for his sin. (CSB)

Adam's answer attempts to make both God and the woman responsible for his disobedience. (TLSB)

This excuse reveals the depravity of Adam's heart, even at this early stage. For he not only tries to place the blame upon the woman, but there is even a charge against God in the words: The woman whom Thou didst place at my side. He forgets that he had hailed her coming with delight, and herself as a gift of the Lord. He indicates that the entire matter might not have taken this turn if God had not made the woman as his helpmeet. Incidentally, the loss of love which followed the transgression is shown by the fact that Adam does not call her Eva, or wife, but only that woman by his side. (Kretzmann)

**3:13 what...done** – It is a call full of reproach: Wherefore hast thou done this? What a terrible thing to do! How couldst thou be so forgetful of the command! (Kretzmann)

*The serpent deceived me.* The woman blames the serpent rather than herself. (CSB)

There is indeed a confession of the fact, but not of the sin, just as in the case of the man. She placed the blame on the serpent as having deceived and seduced her. What was lacking was the smiting upon the breast and the humble prayer: God, be merciful to me, a sinner! We see here the unspeakable baseness of sin, also in its invention of lies and excuses, in order to place the blame on someone else. A proper realization of its power will enable us to understand all the better the glory of God's mercy in Christ Jesus. (Kretzmann)

Exodus 32:22-24 "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

1 Samuel 13:11-12 "Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."

1 Samuel 15:20-21 "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

*Deceived me* - To delude and completely seduce. (QV)

Hebrew implies that the serpent had given her a false hope, an accurate description of events. (TLSB)

**3:14** *Cursed.* The serpent, the woman and the man were all judged, but only the serpent and the ground were cursed—the latter because of Adam (v. 17). (CSB)

The serpent, which had placed its cunning into the service of the devil, was the first to receive its sentence, and with it Satan, who had hid himself in this form for the purpose of seducing man. The punishment which struck the reptile was only a type of the devil's punishment. The serpent's form and means of locomotion were changed in this curse which singled it out from all animals, both those that were eventually domesticated and those that would remain game and predatory animals of the field. (Kretzmann)

*dust you shall eat.* † Synonymous with groveling defeat and humiliation (Ps 72:9; 44:25; Isa 49:23; 65:25; Mic 7:17). (CSB)

Serpents do not eat dust, and the Scriptures do not mean to say that they do. Parallel to the expression “eat dust” is the other more common one in the Scriptures, “lick dust,” (Mic 7:17; Is 49:23; Ps 72:9) which in every case implies “to be humbled,” “to suffer defeat.” (Leupold)

Implies humiliation and defeat in an ancient Near Eastern context, where defeated rulers were often forced to do obeisance by placing their faces on the ground. (TLSB)

Instead of walking upright, the serpent was hereafter to wind itself along in the dust, which it could, incidentally, not avoid swallowing. (Kretzmann)

**3:15** Note movement in the text, which begins with conflict between the woman and the serpent. It then moves to conflict between the descendant of the woman and the descendant of the serpent. But, usually, it includes with conflict between the woman’s descendant and serpent himself. Clearly this verse is not simply about the origin of the conflict between humans and snakes, but about a conflict that will culminate with the defeat of the serpent by One who will descend from the woman. This points to Christ and His defeat of Satan on the cross, and for this reason this verse is often called the “protevangelium” (the first promise of the Gospel). (TLSB)

*your offspring* – Hebrew zera, “seed” (singular form can refer to one seed or to an entire group; e.g., English, “bag of seed,” not “bag of seeds”). It refers to all the descendants of Eve, but most significantly to Christ as the Second Adam, i.e., all humanity reduced to one. (TLSB)

*he* – Presence of other masculine grammatical forms makes it clear that Hebrew intends the subject to be masculine, not feminine. Vulgate inaccurately translates this as a feminine form (she), leading some to interpret this as referring to the Virgin Mary. (TLSB)

*he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*† Although no other offspring of the woman was able to overcome the tempter, One, “born of woman” (Gal 4:4), would come “to destroy the devil’s work” (1 Jn 3:8). Mortally wounded in the conflict, he nevertheless inflicted the deathblow on demonic power. Jesus Christ, Executor of God’s curse on Satan and man’s Champion, enables man to look forward to a victorious end of his strife with his enemy because the “God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Ro 16:20). The curse on the serpent constitutes the first gospel, the Protevangel (Jn 12:31; Ac 26:18; Ro 5:18–19; Heb 2:14; Rev 12:1–9. (CSB)

There would be everlasting and uncompromising enmity between the descendants of the woman, on the one hand, and the devil and all satanic powers, on the other. And this enmity, which would show itself in continual warfare, would finally have its culmination in the event that the one great Seed of the Woman, He to whom the entire Old Testament looks forward, would utterly crush the head of the serpent, of Satan, while the latter, in turn, would not be able to do more than crush the heel of the Victor. To overcome the devil, to annihilate his power, that is a feat beyond the ability of any mere man; only God is able to do this. Christ, the promised Seed of the woman, born of the descendants of Eve, and yet the almighty God, is the strong Champion of mankind, who has delivered all men from the power of Satan and all his mighty allies. True, indeed, in doing so His heel was bruised, He was obliged to die, according to His human nature. But deliverance was effected, salvation was gained by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the representative of all mankind. (Kretzmann)

The shuph decidedly means “crush.” Luther: zertreten vs stechen. This is explained; for when man steps on a serpent’s head, a crushing results; but when the serpent strikes while the contest is on, only a sting on the heel or a bruising results. A crushed head spells utter defeat. But the same time a bruised heel may be nursed till healed, and if the bite have been poisonous, the poison may be removed by sucking or cauterizing. (Luther)

*bruise his heel - Shoof* – A primitive root; properly to *gape*, that is, *snap* at; figuratively to *overwhelm*:—break, bruise, cover. (QV)

Some commentators argue that the two forms of the verb used of the seed and the serpent are actually from two different Hebrew words (e.g., crush...strike in NIV). While there is some support for this among languages related to Hebrew, most scholars prefer to take these two forms as being from the same Hebrew word. The difference in the degree of injury does not depend on having two different verbs here but on the differing parts of the body being struck. (TLSB)

Luther: “Satan understood this threat well; therefore he has continued to rage against human nature with such great hatred. Adam and Eve were encouraged by this promise. Wholeheartedly they grasped the hope of their restoration; and full of faith, they saw that God cared about their salvation, since He clearly declares that the male Seed of the woman would prostrate this enemy.” \*AE 1:193) Chemnitz writes; “The Son of God announced to our first parents the mystery of the promise of the Gospel which had been hidden from eternity in the bosom of the Father, (when) He gave a brief summary of the doctrine of the Gospel in Gen 3:15” (LTh 1:37). (TLSB)

**3:16** *pains in childbearing*. Her judgment fell on what was most uniquely hers as a woman and as a “suitable helper” (2:20) for her husband. Similarly, the man’s “painful toil” (v. 17) was a judgment on him as worker of the soil. Some believe that the Hebrew root underlying “pains,” “pain” and “painful toil” should here be understood in the sense of burdensome labor (see Pr 5:10, “toil”; 14:23, “hard work”). (CSB)

Entire pregnancy, not only giving birth. (TLSB)

This was the woman’s burden and punishment for her transgression. Whereas without sin the propagation of the human race would have been a welcome, joyful function and all the other work of life a pleasant burden, the troubles and burdens of woman, especially those connected with pregnancy and birth, are most severe. So woman’s nature was weakened as a result of the disturbance of the normal relation between body and soul by sin. (Kretzmann)

*bring forth children*. As a sign of grace in the midst of judgment, the human race would continue. (CSB)

*desire ... rule*. Her sexual attraction for the man, and his headship over her, will become intimate aspects of her life in which she experiences trouble and anguish rather than unalloyed joy and blessing. (CSB)

Despite the pain associated with pregnancy, women will not cease to desire marital relations. (TLSB)

The order God established in creation has not been altered by the fall. Together, Adam and Eve will continue to rule over the rest of creation (1:28). God also intends that Adam remain His steward, responsible for cultivating creation (vv 17, 23), and that the husband remain the head of the family. All of these relationships will be stained by the effects of the fall. That women may experience this order troublesome and a source of suffering is a direct result of the fall. (TLSB)

**3:17–19** *you will eat*. † Though he would have to work hard and long, the man would be able to produce food that would sustain life. (CSB)



Because he submitted to his wife, whereas he should have ruled, therefore he shall experience insubordination on the part of the soil, whereas otherwise he would have exercised complete control. (Leupold)

**3:17** *listened to* - Adam's sin included his failure to act as head of the human community, the role God had given him. (TLSB)

*cursed is the ground* - Adam's role as steward of creation is taken away. Rather, the curse God places on the ground means that man will suffer in performing his function as husband, even as woman will suffer in her function as wife. (TLSB)

**3:19** *return to the ground ... for out of it you were taken*. Man's labor would not be able to stave off death. The origin of his body (see 2:7) and the source of his food (see v. 17) became a symbol of his eventual death. (CSB)

Tacit condemnation to death, as God warned Adam initially (2:17), fulfilling the promise that Adam would die after eating from the tree. "Human nature is subjected not only to death and other bodily evils, but also to the devil's kingdom" (Ap II 46). (TLSB)

**3:20** *called...Eve* – Both Adam and his wife received the first Gospel proclamation in silence; they believed the promise and arose from their fall with due repentance. This is shown even in the name which Adam applied to his wife, calling her "life," or "source of life," because she became the mother of the entire human race, whose propagation and life was dependent upon her. (Kretzmann)

Adam gave his wife a new name befitting her role as child-bearer. By this name, Adam expresses hope for the future through the promised Seed of the woman. In giving her a new name, he continues his role as steward of God's creation. "Eve" Hebrew chawwah,

6/17/11 – Gen 3:20-24 – Even in a negative setting God looked for His people by clothing them with skins (now these would be the death of animals). Even in driving them out of the Garden and guarding the tree of life He was taking care of their futures. We produce lemons and God makes lemonade.

Lord thank you for giving us a glimpse of the great eternity ahead by the sun rays through the trees this morning.

**3:21** *clothed them*. God graciously provided Adam and Eve with more effective clothing (cf. v. 7) to cover their shame (cf. v. 10). (CSB)

Some commentators argue that God killed animals to provide a covering for Adam and Eve, thus anticipating the introduction of the sacrificial system (as providing a covering for sins), and so ultimately pointing to Christ. However, nothing in this verse necessarily implies that God killed the animals whose skins were used; they could have died of natural causes after the fall. Moreover, this verse is never treated as messianic elsewhere in the Bible. While it may be read by Christians as an allegory pointing to Christ, it is probably more accurate in this context to suggest that the verse demonstrates God's continuing care for Adam and Eve (and ultimately for all creation) despite the judgment that He pronounced on the. Luther states: "Here Adam and Eve are dressed in garments by the Lord God Himself. Whenever they looked at their garments, these were to serve as a reminder to them to give thought to their wretched fall from supreme happiness into the utmost misfortune and trouble. Thus they were to be constantly afraid of sinning, to repent continually, and sigh for the forgiveness of sins through the promised Seed. This is also why He clothed them, not in foliage or in cotton but in the skins of slain animals, for a sign that they are mortal and they are living in certain death" (AE 1::221). (TLSB)

## EPISTLE – Romans 5:12-19

### *Death Through Adam, Life in Christ*

**12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men[e] because all sinned— **13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. **15** But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. **16** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. **18** Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

**5:12–21**† A contrast between Adam and Christ. Adam introduced sin and death into the world; Christ brought righteousness and life. The comparison begun in v. 12 is completed in v. 18; these two verses summarize the whole passage. These two men also sum up the message of the book up to this point. Adam stands for the condemnation of all people (1:18–3:20); Christ stands for the justification of all people (3:21–5:11). (CSB)

**5:12** An overview of various commentaries gives the impression that more is written on 5:12 than any other verse of the letter: “On account of this, just as sin entered into the world through one person and death through sin, and thus death passed through to all people on this [reason], that all sinned” (5:12). (CC)

*therefore*. διὰ τοῦτο—This prepositional phrase occurs sixty-four times in the NT. (CC)

*one man* – There was no sin in God’s perfect creation until the fall of Adam (Gn 3:1–7). (TLSB)

Paul’s reference to “one person” in 5:12 clearly signifies Adam, who is explicitly named in 5:14. God created a world that was “very good” (Gen 1:31). There was no sin and no death. This stands in sharp contrast to the description of humanity in Rom 1:18–3:20. Rom 5:12 communicates succinctly what intervened and how man disrupted that “very good” existence. “Sin had its origin in one man, Adam” (SA III I 1). Paul does not go into the details of the narrative of the fall (Genesis 3), but this does not mean he is unaware of them. (CC)

*Sin came into the world*. “Into the world” should not be restricted to humanity. Paul’s main focus here is sin’s impact upon the human race, as indicated by the parallel “(in) to all people” (εἰς πάντα ἄνθρώπους) later in 5:12. But the ramifications are certainly more extensive. (CC)

*death*. Physical death is the penalty for sin. It is also the symbol of spiritual death, man’s ultimate separation from God. (CSB)

Death is a consequence of sin. (TLSB)

Death then arrives on the scene through sin. This was in keeping with the warning of Gen 2:16–17: “And Yahweh God commanded upon the man, saying, ‘From every tree of the garden you may surely eat, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day of your eating from it you shall surely die.’ ” The penalty is at least partially enforced in Gen 3:19, 23–24. (CC)

*spread.* Parents have transmitted mortality to their children since the fall. (TLSB)

In chiasmic form, Paul then makes another statement about death, before returning to sin. “And thus death passed through to *all* people” (εις πάντας ἀνθρώπους, 5:12). This phrase marks Paul’s first jump from “one” to “all.” He highlights that notion by the prefixed διά on the verb διήλθεν, death “passed *through* to all people.” Death has penetrated humanity and taken hold of all. (CC)

*because all sinned.* Not a repetition of 3:23. The context shows that Adam’s sin involved the rest of mankind in condemnation (vv. 18–19) and death (v. 15). We do not start life with even the possibility of living it sinlessly; we begin it with a sinful nature (see Ge 8:21; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Eph 2:3). (CSB)

Adam’s fall brought sin to all humanity. We inherited his guilt and the desire to sin. Here, Paul stops abruptly, confronting us with the reality of original sin and our guilt. “This hereditary sin is such a deep corruption of nature that no reason can understand it. Rather, it must be believed from the revelation of Scripture” (SA III I 3). (TLSB)

**5:13-14** After his opening statement about the entrance of sin and death through Adam, Paul inserts a parenthetical comment in 5:13–14. It makes an important clarification about the role of the Law in all this, which anticipates the final words of the chapter. “Indeed, until the Law, sin was in [the] world” (5:13). Sin’s presence apart from the Law is evident already from Paul’s description of all humanity in 1:18–32, and it is stated explicitly in 2:12–16. “For as many as sinned without [the] Law, they will also perish without [the] Law” (2:12). People are able to sin “without [the] Law” (ἀνόμως) and are liable to punishment for those sins. (CC)

**5:13** *sin is not counted.* In the period when there was no (Mosaic) law, sin (“breaking a command,” v. 14) was not charged against man (see 4:15). Death, however, continued to occur (v. 14). Since death is the penalty for sin, people between Adam and Moses were involved in the sin of someone else, namely, Adam (see note on v. 12). (CSB)

Though the Torah had not yet been revealed, Adam had heard and broken God’s Law. (TLSB)

With “until the Law” (5:13), Paul is speaking specifically of those who lived “from Adam until Moses” (5:14). The reference to Moses confirms the definition of “Law” (νόμος) as the Torah revealed on Mount Sinai. A tangential point that can be deduced from this is that the patriarchs did not have the Law, and therefore they could not have been accounted righteous through works of obedience to the Law. Paul then adds: “But sin is not being charged to one’s account while the Law is not existing” (5:13). Bultmann charges that this assertion makes 5:13 “completely unintelligible.” But Paul proceeds to clarify exactly what he means. He just asserted: “Death passed through to all people on this [reason], that all sinned” (5:12). As a result, those who lived between Adam and Moses are also included within the earlier assertions that “all sinned” (3:23; 5:12). Paul’s supreme evidence is that death reigned over them (ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος, 5:14). They all died; therefore, Paul concludes: they all must have sinned (cf. 6:23). (CC)

Sin is a transgression of a wise and good law. It follows that there was such a law binding on men before the time of Moses, and before any written revelation of the will of God was made to men. There was a

law given to Adam from the mouth of God, by the violation of which sin entered and death by sin. There was a law, too, written upon the hearts of all men as moral being. (CB)

**5:14** *death reigned* – All humans were mortal and under death’s power. (TLSB)

The point is further clarified by pointing out how death reigned “even upon the ones who were not sinning upon the likeness of the transgression of Adam” (5:14). Once again, Paul’s premise is significant. The people under consideration may not have sinned in the same way as Adam, but that statement is merely an addendum to the fact that they all sinned (ἀμαρτήσαντας, 5:14). The distinction is that Adam received a specific divinely revealed command: “And Yahweh God commanded upon the man, saying, “From every tree of the garden you may surely eat, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day of your eating from it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:16–17). Millennia later, God gave further commands in the Law given through Moses. What Paul means by “the likeness of the transgression of Adam” is the breaking of a divinely revealed pronouncement. This is signaled by Paul’s use of “transgression” (παράβασις) in Rom 5:14. He uses the same term when leveling charges against the Jew for breaking specific commandments in 2:23 (cf. 2:27). Those who violate them are being charged, like Adam, with a crime against God’s Word. They are perpetrating sins “upon the likeness of the transgression of Adam.” (CC)

*Moses. The writer of God’s Law (Torah).* (TLSB)

*type.* Adam by his sin brought universal ruin on the human race. In this act he is the prototype of Christ, who through one righteous act (v. 18) brought universal blessing. The analogy is one of contrast. (CSB)

Adam violated a specific command that he heard from God. Others may not have heard the command as clearly as Adam did, but they still sinned. (TLSB)

Paul does, however, utilize a significant theological term by referring to Adam as a “pattern” or “type” (τύπος). This term is used to depict “those OT persons, institutions, or events that have a divinely intended function of prefiguring the eschatological age inaugurated by Christ—hence the word ‘typology.’ ”<sup>63</sup> The OT foreshadowing is normally favorable (e.g., Joseph, Moses, David, the sacrifices, temple, and priesthood). But this is not the case in 1 Cor 10:6, where the Israelites who perished in the wilderness serve as “types for us” (τύποι ἡμῶν), that is, as present day warnings to Paul and the Corinthian Christians. Whether the implications are positive or negative, the point of correspondence is “the essential similarity in God’s acts.” Goppelt’s observation regarding the original sense of τύπος as an impression made by a blow provides a key to Paul’s use of the term in Rom 5:14. (CC)

*one who was to come.* Adam prefigured and foreshadowed Christ (cf vv 15–17). (TLSB)

In the midst of the dismal tone of 5:12–14, Paul concludes 5:14 with a glimmer of hope: Adam “is a pattern of the one [who was] about to [come].” As in 4:24, μέλλω, “to be about to [come, happen, etc.],” is intended from the perspective of OT times. Ever since Gen 3:15, Adam, those between Adam and Moses (such as Abraham; see Romans 4), and all who lived with faith in the promise waited expectantly for the one whose advent was imminent (τοῦ μέλλοντος, 5:14). Notice this is not the messianic title “the coming one” (ὁ ἐρχόμενος), which occurs often in the Gospels (e.g., Mt 3:11; 11:3; Lk 7:19, 20; 13:35; 19:38). (CC)

**5:15** *gift is not like a trespass* – God’s grace in Christ. (TLSB)

Adam’s sin. Adam, with his sin, is not a perfect parallel to Christ with His grace. (TLSB)

“Indeed, if by the trespass of the one, the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the undeserved gift in grace which is of the one person, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many” (5:15). The first half of this comparison introduced by “if” (εἰ) reiterates 5:12. Sin or, in this case, “trespass” (παράπτωμα) entered into the world through one person, Adam. With sin came death, a death which passed through to all. By Adam’s trespass, “the many died” (οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, 5:15). In Paul’s letters, οἱ πολλοί often means “the many” as opposed to “a few.” However, under Hebrew influence, it is also used synonymously with πάντες for “all” (see the textual note). Paul could imply that the sin which entered through Adam leads all to sin, which then results in the death of all. But, as stated above, he does *not* fill in *that* blank here. Instead, he directly asserts that by Adam’s transgression, “the many died.” This is somehow true even of those people who were not yet alive. In some sense, “the sentence of death imposed on all people took place immediately in conjunction with the trespass of Adam.” Paul proceeds to explain this with greater clarity as the chapter becomes more negative, at least on Adam’s side of things. (CC)

*many.* The same as “all men” in v. 12 (see Isa 53:11; Mk 10:45). (CSB)

Rabbinic form of logic uses contrast to show that one man saved everyone. (TLSB)

All humans are subject to death. (TLSB)

*much more.* A theme that runs through this section. God’s grace is infinitely greater for good than is Adam’s sin for evil. (CSB)

The terms complement and reinforce each other. (TLSB)

Fortunately, with each step we also get Christ. Paul returns to the rabbinic formula of “lesser to greater” utilized in 5:9, 10 and also in 5:17 (see the first textual note on 5:9). “How much more” (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) completes the parallel thought introduced earlier in the verse by “if” (εἰ). The dominant thought again is of God’s grace. In 5:15 Paul redundantly speaks of “the grace of God and the undeserved gift in grace” (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι). This again recalls the thought of 3:24 cited above. In addition to “grace” (χάρις), 3:24 also uses an accusative noun functioning as an adverb, δωρεάν, which often carries the meaning “freely,” and which would then reinforce the very essence of grace. But δωρεάν can also mean “undeservedly” (BDAG, 2), which is more appropriate for the context of Romans 3. Here in 5:15 the same noun (in the nominative) functions as a substantive, δωρεά, expressing “an *undeserved* gift.” It is given “in grace” (ἐν χάριτι), which is then modified with the phrase “which is of the one person, Jesus Christ” (τῆ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). The trespass which leads to death came by the one man Adam; grace, on the other hand, is defined as “of the one person/man.” It belongs to and comes from Jesus Christ. (CC)

Romans 11:33-36 “<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and <sup>a</sup> knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup> “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”<sup>b</sup> <sup>35</sup> “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

**5:16** *grace of God.* Salvation. (CSB)

*Not like the result.* The same “not as” (οὐχ ὡς) formula which began 5:15 also opens 5:16: “and not as through [the] one who sinned [is] the bestowed gift” (5:16). The “trespass” (παράπτωμα) of 5:15 is paralleled by “one who sinned” (ἐνὸς ἀμαρτήσαντος, 5:16). Here is another restatement regarding Adam. The “gracious gift” (χάρισμα) in 5:15 is synonymous with another -μα word in 5:16, “the bestowed gift”

(τὸ δῶρημα). Here the result of the action indicated by -μα is communicated by translating τὸ δῶρημα as “the *bestowed* gift.” (CC)

*judgment* – Sin rightly resulted in judgment. (TLSB)

Instead of proceeding with the “how much more” formula of 5:15, Paul instead explains further in 5:16 with “for” (γάρ) and by utilizing a μὲν ... δέ construction: “For, *on the one hand*, judgment from the one [is] to condemnation. But *on the other hand*, from many trespasses the gracious gift [is] for a decree of righteousness.” In the first sentence the contrast is not between Adam and Christ, but between Adam’s *one sin* and the *many trespasses* which followed. What comes “from the one” (ἐξ ἑνός), that is, from Adam’s one sin, is “the judgment” (τὸ κρίμα). And this “judgment” results in a “condemnation” (κατάκριμα). The prefixed κατά gives κρίμα the clear sense of a negative verdict, a conviction or “condemnation” (see the textual note; 5:18; 8:1). It would be an overstatement to insist that *in this phrase* “condemnation” (κατάκριμα) must express the condemnation *of all*. Instead, it recalls God’s singular warning to Adam, “In the day of *your* [singular] eating [ ἤρῃς ] from it, you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17). Whether or not the actual execution of the punishment is included in the meaning of “condemnation” (κατάκριμα) is debated. But this noun certainly increases the ominous sense of foreboding beyond Paul’s use of “judgment” (κρίμα) earlier in the verse. (CC)

*many trespasses*. The sins of the succeeding generations. (CSB)

**5:17 will ... reign in life**. The future reign of believers with Jesus Christ (2Ti 2:12; Rev 22:5). (CSB)

Cf vv 12, 14. The death Adam merited spread to all humanity. (TLSB)

*Much more*. The comparison “if ... how much more” (εἰ ... πολλῷ μᾶλλον) is utilized for a final time in 5:17, which begins, “for if by the trespass of the one, death reigned through that one.” Here Paul broadens the impact of Adam’s sin, as well as the condemnation of death pronounced because of it. By his trespass, “death reigned” (ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν). The identical clause was used in 5:14 (but with the Greek words in reverse order: ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος): there death continued to reign over those who lived after Adam as well. Similarly here, Paul does not say death simply reigned *over* Adam because of his trespass. Instead, he uses “through that one” (διὰ τοῦ ἐνός). The preposition implies death’s reign extends *through* Adam and over all others. Paul has, thereby, moved beyond his earlier statement that “death passed through to all people on this [reason], that all sinned” (5:12). The impact of Adam’s trespass is extended further. As in 5:12, the *inauguration* of death’s reign came by means of Adam’s one trespass (τῷ τοῦ ἐνός παραπτώματι, 5:17). Now Paul adds that “through that one,” death’s reign has come to cover all people. This is in keeping with how Isaiah pictures death as “the shroud that enshrouds over all the peoples, the covering that is covered over all the nations” (Is 25:7). (CC)

*grace ... free gift of righteousness*. God gives Christ’s righteousness to cover our sin. (TLSB)

*reign in life ... Jesus Christ*. Death no longer reigns over God’s people; God has restored our dominion in life. Cf Ps 8:6–7. (TLSB)

Past events with their resulting present implications, often indicated by -μα words, have dominated on both sides of the battle since 5:12. The main verb in 5:17 is the first future verb form since 5:10. It expresses how those who receive everything discussed above “*will reign in life* [ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύουσιν] through the one, Jesus Christ.” This counters the previous uses of the aorist tense of the same verb to describe the “reign” of death in 5:14 and earlier in 5:17. More powerfully, the emphatic position of “in life” (ἐν ζωῇ) right before the verb (in the Greek word order) moves past all the previous references to death and forward “in life.” Previously in 5:10, those who are reconciled through the death of God’s Son

heard this “how much more”: “we will be saved in his life.” As with “in his life” (ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ) there, “in life” (ἐν ζωῇ) here in 5:17 is used with a view to the future. “Will reign in life” expresses the ultimate goal of the grace and righteousness received already now. It indicates the direction and forward-focused movement of Paul’s argument ahead toward the “not yet.” In each and every case, this future reign in life which overpowers the reign of death becomes ours only “in his life” (5:10); it comes “through the one, Jesus Christ” (5:17), which is reminiscent of the thematic phrase of Romans 5–8, “through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1, 11; cf. 4:24; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39). But the formula is incomplete here and awaits its full expression in 5:21. (CC)

### 5:18 Christ’s work in death and resurrection. (TLSB)

*Therefore.* “Consequently then” (ἄρα οὖν), which begins 5:18, introduces two summative comparisons which use the formula of “(just) as” (ὡς or ὡσπερ) followed by “thus also” (οὕτως καί). A similar format is used in 5:15 and 5:16; however, Paul negates the initial clause in both of those verses in order to heighten the contrast. Here the sense is more of a comparison, but the two combatants are once again opposites in both action and effect. (CC)

*Condemnation.* Although the “sentence” is basically a string of prepositional phrases, the terms in 5:18 are all familiar by now. Paul utilizes them with increasing intensity in order to assert directly how the consequence of Adam’s sin impacts all people. This is evident in the latter part of both “clauses,” where “(results) in, for” (εἰς) expresses a resulting state. The first half of the comparison states: “consequently then, as [what was] through one trespass results in condemnation for all people.” “Trespass” (παράπτωμα) is by now familiar from 5:15, 16, and 17. It clearly refers to the one sin of Adam through which sin entered the world (5:12). In 5:16 Paul says Adam’s one act of trespass led to “condemnation” (κατάκριμα), at least for Adam himself. Now the condemnation is extended to “all people” (εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους). Paul did not say all of this in 5:12, but the subsequent progression has brought him to this point. In 5:17 he asserted it was by Adam’s transgression and *through* him that death exerted its reign (over many others). Now in 5:18 he states that “condemnation,” in fact, extended over all. That is the result “for all people” (εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους) from God’s condemnation of Adam. “κατάκριμα [‘condemnation’] does indeed result for all men from Adam’s sin, but this κατάκριμα is no absolutely irreversible, eternal fact.” (CC)

*Act of righteousness.* Jesus’ “righteous act” (δικαίωμα) “results in present/coming righteousness of life” (εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς). As in 4:25, the noun (δικαίωσις) rendered as “righteousness” again carries with it a sense of “process as well as its result” (BDAG). This is fitting here due to the connotations of the genitive noun (ζωῆς) which follows, “of life.” Paul will soon clearly state how believers are now alive in Christ (e.g., 6:4, 11, 13). Yet they still await the future reigning in life of 5:17 (also 6:5, 22–23; 8:11, 13). The translation that Christ’s past act results in the “present/coming righteousness of life” seeks to express both aspects, life now and “the life of the world to come” (Nicene Creed). (CC)

*life for all men.* † Does not mean that everyone eventually will be saved, but that salvation is available to all. To be effective, God’s gracious gift must be received through faith, a gift of God through the work of the Holy Spirit (see v. 17; Eph 2:8–9). (CSB)

Paul then adds that this life is “for all people” (εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους). Previously, it was recognized that “the many” (οἱ πολλοί) can encompass “all” (see the fourth textual note and the commentary on 5:15). Now it might appear that the opposite is the case: either πάντες means only “some” people or Paul is a universalist! Käsemann, for examples, concludes: “All-powerful grace is unthinkable without eschatological universalism.” However, the fact that God’s grace overpowers sin and death does not make his grace irresistible, as Romans 9–11 will make abundantly clear (e.g., 10:16–21). In regard to the matter

of linguistic definition, Moo responds: “That ‘all’ [πᾶς] does not always mean ‘every single human being’ is clear from many passages, it often being clearly limited in context.” (CC)

**5:19** The format and thought of 5:19 are comparable to 5:18. However, a number of new terms are introduced, namely, the nouns “disobedience” (παρακοή) and “obedience” (ὕπακοή) and the verb “establish” (καθίστημι). The two nouns are rooted in the verb “to hear.” They express two opposite responses to the hearing of God’s Word. Adam heard God’s command in Gen 2:16–17. Note the serpent’s first words, “Did God actually say?” (Gen 3:1). Adam then responded with an action contrary to the command; thus “disobedience” is an appropriate translation. Christ, however, heard (and acted) under (ὕπό) the Father’s plan and responded appropriately in active obedience *and* passive acceptance (cf. “obedient,” ὑπήκοος, in Phil 2:8). (CC)

*Man’s disobedience.* “For just as through the disobedience of the one person, the many were established [as] sinners” (ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί, 5:19). This statement asserts the result of Adam’s trespass. The “many” continues to refer to all people; they are now identified ontologically as “sinners.” This then is different than the assertion in 5:12 that “all sinned” (πάντες ἥμαρτον). One could debate whether Paul understands that sinners are those who (because of their inherited sinful nature) consequently sin, or whether those who sin are (because of their sinful actions) consequently sinners. In his corpus of writings, his answer to both is a resounding yes! But what specifically does he mean here in 5:19? (CC)

*by the one man’s obedience* – Christ’s fulfillment of the Law and substitutionary death. “God’s eternal, unchangeable righteousness, revealed in the Law, has been satisfied” (FC SD III 57). (TLSB)

Yet “thus also through the obedience of the one, the many will be established [as] righteous” (5:19). Because of Christ’s obedience, all who “were established” (κατεστάθησαν) by God as sinners may also be “righteous.” The numerous legal terms utilized throughout this section, for example, “judgment” (κρίμα), “condemnation” (κατάκριμα), and “righteous act” (δικαίωμα), support recognizing the prevalence of the forensic sense of “establish” (καθίστημι) as well. “Will be established” (κατασταθήσονται) is another divine passive. (CC)

*Will be.* By virtue of its future tense, “will be established” (κατασταθήσονται) may refer to the eschatological judgment of God on the Last Day, particularly if the fulfillment of “coming righteousness of life” (δικαίωσις in 5:18; cf. it also in 4:25) is in view. But the future tense more likely has a logical sense, looking forward from Easter with the perspective of what follows from Christ’s obedient “righteous act” (δικαίωμα, 5:18). The verdict “righteous” (δίκαιοι, plural, 5:19) stands, therefore, as a present reality based upon the declaration of God which Paul has announced previously (e.g., 3:24, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1). (CC)

*made righteous.* † A reference to a standing (status) before God (see 2Co 5:21), not to a change in character. The results (implications) of justification are developed in chs. 6–8. (CSB)

Romans 4:25 “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

**5:12–21** Adam’s sin brought guilt, the desire to sin, and mortality to all humans. We continue to sin and deserve condemnation. Praise God, He did not stop with Adam. He sent a Second Adam to begin a new humanity. Christ fulfilled the Law. He was obedient to the Father, and He paid the penalty for our sin. One man—Christ—has redeemed us and changed humanity forever. • O Lord, Your grace abounds for me so that I may enjoy justification, life, and peace as Adam enjoyed before the fall into sin. Reign over me, gracious Lord, that I may reign over trespasses and death, inheriting all the blessings of the Second Adam—Jesus. Amen. (TLSB)



## GOSPEL – Matthew 4:1-11

### *The Temptation of Jesus*

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” <sup>4</sup> But he answered, “**It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’**” <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple <sup>6</sup> and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ““He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ““On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”” <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “**Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’**” <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “**Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”**” <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

**4:1–11** The significance of Jesus’ temptations, especially because they occurred at the outset of his public ministry, seems best understood in terms of the kind of Messiah he was to be. He would not accomplish his mission by using his supernatural power for his own needs (first temptation), by using his power to win a large following by miracles or magic (second temptation) or by compromising with Satan (third temptation). Jesus had no inward desire or inclination to sin, for these in themselves are sin (Mt 5:22, 28). Because he was God he did not sin in any way, whether by actions or word or inner desire (2Co 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1Pe 2:22; 1Jn 3:5). Yet Jesus’ temptation was real, not merely symbolic. He was “tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin” (Heb 4:15). He was confronted by the tempter with a real opportunity to sin. Although Jesus was the Son of God, he defeated Satan by using a weapon that everyone has at his disposal: the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17). He met all three temptations with Scriptural truth (vv. 4, 7, 10) from Deuteronomy. (CSB)

The narrative of the divinely arranged temptation in the desert of Jesus, God’s Son, should be read in the closest possible connection with the preceding material, especially the baptismal account in 3:13–17. Just as the chapter break between 2:23 and 3:1 was misleading, so is the one here. Matthew simply writes: “And, look, there was a voice from heaven that was saying, ‘This one is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.’ Then [τότε] Jesus was led up into the desert by the Spirit in order to be tempted by the slanderer” (3:17–4:1). (CC)

Both 3:13–17 and 4:1–11 display the Spirit of God, Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, and the typological parallels between Jesus and OT Israel. This combination creates a tight context for interpretation. As the true Son, the nation of Israel reduced to one, Jesus receives John’s baptism as the representative and substitute for the people. He passes through the water and comes out as God’s Chosen One, and in this humble form he hears the Father’s pleasure. As the true Son, the nation reduced to one, Jesus is led into the desert, just as Israel of old was after its watery “baptism” and “adoption” through the Red Sea. Jesus enters the desert to play the role of champion for Israel. Israel was *tested* by God, but the sin of the people led them astray. In their place, it is God’s will that Jesus, the Son, be *tempted*, and so prove himself to be the one who will overcome Satan in the place of—and for the sake of—God’s people. As we attempt to display the theology of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, this “Jesus in the place of Israel” typology is the most important feature to keep in mind. (CC)

The general structure of the verses is indicated clearly enough by the presence of three temptations, with the third temptation in the climactic position. Scholars seem almost instinctively to join 4:2 to 4:1 as part of an introduction or setting of the scene. I would argue, however, on two counts, that 4:2 properly belongs with 4:3–4 as part of the first temptation. First, the other temptations begin with a narrative statement that sets the stage for that incident and that is then followed by Satan’s address to Jesus. So, in 4:5, Satan takes Jesus along and stands him on the pinnacle of the temple, and then in 4:6, Satan speaks to him. A similar pattern occurs in 4:8–9. Therefore 4:2 sets the stage for the first temptation. Second, and more obviously, only the first temptation involves Jesus’ hunger. It is never mentioned again, and it plays no apparent role in the temptations for Jesus to throw himself down from the temple or to worship Satan. If this analysis of 4:2 is correct, then the structure of 4:1–11 lays out easily as follows:

1. Introduction: Jesus is led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted (4:1).
2. The first temptation: “Command that these stones become bread” (4:2–4).
3. The second temptation: “Throw yourself down” from “the pinnacle of the temple” (4:5–7).
4. The third and climactic temptation: “Fall down and worship” the slanderer (4:8–10).
5. The conclusion: The slanderer leaves Jesus, and angels serve him (4:11). (CC)

As is evident from the commentary on 4:1–11, my conviction is that Matthew here is proclaiming Jesus’ *work* rather than Jesus’ *example*. It is common, in my experience, to hear sermons preached on this text that extol Jesus as the one who shows us how to resist temptation. This hermeneutical move assumes that Matthew presents Jesus as our *model* and that the *method* by which Jesus resists Satan’s temptations involves the appropriate use of Scripture to refute the evil one’s lies. (CC)

Given the dominant Christology in this Matthean context, it is difficult to conclude that the evangelist wants his audience to view Jesus primarily as a moral example. There is a sense in which 4:1–11 can have that force. However, given Jesus’ identity as the Son of God in place of the failed, fallen, sinful nation in both 3:13–17 and 4:1–11, the primary message of 4:1–11 must be that *Jesus is Victor over Satan on behalf of the nation and ultimately on behalf of all people*. (CC)

And yet, “a disciple is not above the teacher, nor is a slave above his master” (10:24). Just as Jesus’ own cross is both salvific and exemplary (properly understood, as in 16:21–26), so there is application from 4:1–11 for the disciples of Jesus as they wage war against Satan and his temptations. The application, however, should not be direct, as though each of Jesus’ temptations is intended to correspond directly with something that we Christians experience. Rather, read holistically, the attacks of Satan against Jesus call up for review the nature of Jesus’ identity as God’s Son. Satan tries to get Jesus to misunderstand or contradict what it means for him to live out his mission as God’s Son. In other words, it is a question of grasping his identity (CC).

So it is also in the Christian life of temptation and struggle against sin. Mt 4:1–11 does not so much teach disciples that they should “find the right Bible verse with which to combat temptations.” Rather, as men and women in Christ, Jesus’ disciples of all ages can learn to recognize Satan’s temptations as attacks on their identity as the children of God, and on what it means to live out that identity in the world and in our vocations. So the pattern of combat with Satan that Jesus here establishes is not so much “find the right Bible verse,” although “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph 6:17), is indeed the believer’s chief weapon in this battle that will go on until Christ our Victor returns in glory. Rather, Jesus’ paradigm is this: “Know from God’s Word who you are and how that identity as God’s baptized, adopted son or daughter is to be lived out.” In that sense, even as he wins the victory, Jesus the Son of God prepares his disciples for the battle. Just as the Spirit led Jesus into temptation and spiritual warfare with the evil one, so it will be with Jesus’ disciples as they serve and follow their Master. (CC)

The hymn writer said, “From vict’ry unto vict’ry His army shall He lead.” Following Satan’s departure, one might reasonably expect Jesus to head straight into more a victorious conflict with the enemies of God’s people. However, the reader of the Gospel’s first major section (1:1–4:16) should by this time be expecting that Jesus will do something “unreasonable,” unexpected. So he does, as the final unit (4:12–16) in the section relates the Son of God’s movement according to the Scriptures. (CC)

**4:1** *led by the Spirit ... to be tempted.* This testing of Jesus (the Greek verb translated “tempted” can also be rendered “tested”), which was divinely intended, has as its primary background Dt 8:1–5, from which Jesus also quotes in his first reply to the devil (see v. 4 and NIV text note). There Moses recalls how the Lord led the Israelites in the desert 40 years “to humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.” Here at the beginning of his ministry Jesus is subjected to a similar test and shows himself to be the true Israelite who lives “on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” And whereas Adam failed the great test and plunged the whole race into sin (Ge 3), Jesus was faithful and thus demonstrated his qualification to become the Savior of all who receive him. It was, moreover, important that Jesus be tested/tempted as Israel and we are, so that he could become our “merciful and faithful high priest” (Heb 2:17) and thus be “able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb 2:15; see Heb 4:15–16). Finally, as the one who remained faithful in temptation he became the model for all believers when they are tempted. (CSB)

The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus received at His Baptism (3:16), at once led Him to be tested. (TLSB)

In Judea. The desert was a place associated with demons (cf. 12:43). God also led Israel into the wilderness to wander 40 years (Dt. 8:2). (TLSB)

The introduction is significant. In the first place, this verse closely links 4:1–11 with Jesus’ Baptism in 3:13–17, when the Spirit descended upon him and the Father announced, “This one is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (3:17). The Father’s good pleasure in his humble Servant-Son-for-the-nation finds immediate expression when the Spirit leads Jesus up into the desert, just as Israel, God’s “son,” was led up into the desert of old. (CC)

In the second place, God’s remarkable purpose in the Spirit’s leading Jesus into the desert is “in order” for Jesus “to be *tempted*” by Satan. The Son has come vicariously for the nation, to be in its place and to repeat its history. When Israel went into the desert, God *tested the people for faith and righteousness*. Israel failed, however, falling into sin and gross idolatry time and time again. Now that the true Son has come in the place of Israel, he will be *tempted to sin* by Satan himself. This is the Father’s good pleasure, and this Son will show his perfect Sonship by perfect obedience. (CC)

*tempted by the devil.* God surely tests his people, but it is the devil who surely tempts to evil. (CSB)

These temptations were not willed by the devil but by God, whose eternal plan called for the Savior to be tempted and to triumph. Jesus met the test as Israel had not (Ex 15:25; 20:20). As true man, Jesus experienced genuine temptation. As true God, He could overcome temptation. (TLSB)

Means “slanderer.” Also called the tempter (v 3) and Satan (v 10), which means “adversary.” (TLSB)

πειρασθῆναι—Though πειράζω can have a neutral sense (“attempt”; “test”), Matthew uses it only with a negative force, and Jesus is always the target of the temptation. In 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35, people “attempt to entrap” Jesus (BDAG, 3).<sup>1</sup> The passive here, πειρασθῆναι, “to be tempted,” corresponds to the participle describing the devil in 4:3, “the tempter” (BDAG, 4). (CC)

Significantly, it is God’s will that the slanderer *tempt* Jesus. This involves an important semantic and theological distinction. When God led the nation of Israel into the wilderness after the exodus, it was to “test” them (πῑ, Ex 15:25; 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:2, 16; 13:4 [ET 13:3]), not to *tempt* them. When the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, however, it is precisely for Satan to *tempt* Jesus, in order that Jesus may show himself the perfect and perfectly obedient Son of God in and for Israel, God’s flawed and sinful “son.” Because the people of Israel failed the *testing*, Jesus must be subject to the *tempting* in their place. (CC)

The presence of two levels at work in Jesus’ temptation is stylistically reflected through the double use of the personal-agency construction, ὑπό plus the genitive, in 4:1: Jesus was led up into the desert “*by the Spirit* [ὑπό τοῦ πνεύματος] to be tempted *by the slanderer* [ὑπό τοῦ διαβόλου].” (CC)

διαβόλου—Satan receives three different names in the account of Jesus’ temptation. He is ὁ διάβολος, “the slanderer,” in 4:1, 5, 8, 11. In 4:3 he is ὁ πειράζων, “the tempter,” and in 4:10 Jesus addresses him as σατανᾶ, “Adversary.” Elsewhere in the Gospel, he is ὁ πονηρός, “the evil one” (5:37; 6:13; 13:19, 38), “Beelzebul” (10:25; 12:27), “ruler of demons” (9:34), or “Beelzebul, ruler of demons” (12:24). (CC)

**4:2** *forty days and forty nights*. The number recalls the experiences of Moses (Ex 24:18; 34:28) and Elijah (1Ki 19:8), as well as the 40 years of Israel’s temptation (testing) in the desert (Dt 8:2–3). (CSB)

ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα—Matthew consistently expresses the extent of time using the accusative case, as in classical Greek. The accusative word or phrase for time, such as “forty days,” then functions as an adverb and answers the question “How long did the action (here, the fasting) go on?” (CC)

The typological parallelism in the first temptation (4:2–4) is clear enough. After God led Israel up out of Egypt through the Red Sea, the people became hungry in the wilderness and they murmured against God. In Ex 16:3, they declare that it would have been better to die in Egypt than to starve to death in the wilderness. Although the people try to blame Moses and Aaron for their plight, Moses makes it clear that their grumbling is really against God himself: “What are we? Your grumbings are not against us, but against the LORD” (Ex 16:8). The people’s murmuring was not quieted by God’s provision of manna from heaven. They continued to murmur against God throughout the days of their wilderness wandering. (CC)

In much greater and contrasting measure, Jesus, God’s Son, is led into the desert, and his personal fast of forty days and forty nights corresponds to Israel’s forty years in the wilderness. Whereas when Israel was tested, the people sinned miserably and did not trust God, Jesus does not fail. Though hungry, he does not murmur against God or doubt God’s purposes. (CC)

There are a number of places in Scripture where 40 comes up. Israel’s hunger and temptation for 40 years in the wilderness immediately after their baptism by going through the Red Sea relates to today’s text. Moses fasted for 40 days and nights in Ex. 34:28. Elijah fasted in 1 Kings 19:8. Moses’ fasting was one of glory; that of Jesus, one of humiliation. An angel brought food to Elijah before his fast began; many angels ministered to Christ after his fast ended. All three of Jesus’ replies to the tempter quote Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:13; 6:16) which recount Israel’s failure during that period and stand as a warning example for Christians today. (CC)

*He was hungry* – Israel had also experienced great hunger in the wilderness (Ex 16:3; 24:18). The devil’s first temptation attacked a basic need. (TLSB)

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wilderness. Although the people try to blame Moses and Aaron for their plight, Moses makes it clear that their grumbling is really against God himself: “What are we? Your grumbings are not against us, but against the LORD” (Ex 16:8). The people’s murmuring was not quieted by God’s provision of manna from heaven. They continued to murmur against God throughout the days of their wilderness wandering. (CC)

In much greater and contrasting measure, Jesus, God’s Son, is led into the desert, and his personal fast of forty days and forty nights corresponds to Israel’s forty years in the wilderness. Whereas when Israel was tested, the people sinned miserably and did not trust God, Jesus does not fail. Though hungry, he does not murmur against God or doubt God’s purposes. (CC)

**4:3** *If you are the Son of God.* Meaning “Since you are.” The devil is not casting doubt on Jesus’ divine sonship, but is tempting him to use his supernatural powers as the Son of God for his own ends. (CSB)

The devil attempted to get Jesus to prove what the Father had just declared (3:17) and so satisfy His hunger. (TLSB)

Satan was aware of who Jesus is but he did not believe. He tries to lead Jesus to doubt his Father just as Satan did with Adam and Eve and tries today to lead us to doubt God’s power and plan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ—The present particular (or first class) conditional sentence assumes the truth of the “if” clause for the sake of argument. This verse is a good argument against those who wish to translate the protasis of this form of conditional sentence as “since ...” Satan’s rhetoric is precisely designed to leave the question of Jesus’ divine Sonship somewhat open. (CC)

According to Colwell’s Rule, when a predicate nominative (here: υἱός) that precedes the linking verb (here: εἶ) lacks the article (is anarthrous), this does not in itself indicate that the noun is indefinite; that is, Satan is not just calling Jesus “a son of God.” Rather, in the cases of predicate nominatives where other contextual factors indicate that the predicate noun is definite, the absence of the article is the stylistic norm. In light of the baptismal pericope immediately preceding and the use of “Son of God” throughout Matthew’s Gospel, Satan’s temptation centers precisely around what it means for Jesus to be “the Son of God.” (CC)

*Stones to become loaves of bread* – Jesus was tempted to provide bread miraculously for His own needs, just as God had miraculously provided manna for Israel. (TLSB)

εἰπὲ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται—After the verb of commanding (the imperative εἰπέ), the object clause with ἵνα uses the subjunctive verb γένωνται. Such object clauses tell *what* is commanded: “Command that these stones become bread.” (CC)

The first temptation consists primarily in Satan’s attempt to get Jesus to use his own power to serve himself in time of need. The slanderer grants Jesus’ identity as “the Son of God” (4:3), but he seeks to lead Jesus into being the wrong kind of Son. He acknowledges that Jesus has the power to turn stones into bread. The later narratives of the miraculous feedings of the five thousand (14:13–21) and the four thousand (15:32–39) show Jesus doing something very much like what Satan tempts him to do here, except that there Jesus will perform the miracles for the benefit of others. Jesus possesses divine power, but how will he use that power? (CC)

The LORD had tried in vain to teach Israel: “He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you the manna ... so that he would make you know that man does not live on bread alone, but man lives on every word that comes out from the mouth of the LORD” (Deut 8:3). Jesus knows well what Israel had failed to learn;

unlike Israel, Jesus lives according to the divine Word. Jesus' life and relationship to God the Father come from what God provides, and especially from what God speaks: "by every word that comes out through [the] mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). (CC)

The Jews demanded a sign as proof of Jesus' divinity. They didn't believe He was the Christ. Unbelievers always talk just as does Satan, doubting and trying to cause doubt.

**4:4** Just as God gave the Israelites manna in a supernatural way (Dt 8:3), so also man must rely on God for spiritual feeding. Jesus relied on his Father, not his own miracle power, for provision of food. (CSB)

*It is written* – This is repeated by Jesus in vv. 7, 10. Here, Jesus quoted Moses' explanation to Israel of why God had let them hunger in the wilderness. Life does not depend on food alone but on the Word of God. Jesus did not exhibit His own glory by performing a miracle but displayed trust in the Word of His Father. (TLSB)

οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτω μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος—The negated third person future indicative, οὐκ ... ζήσεται, has a true indicative force ("will not live"), rather than the sense of an imperative. Both in Deut 8:3 and here in Matthew, "will not live" is a statement of fact, not a command (e.g., "should not live"). Greek does employ the *second* person future indicative as the equivalent of an imperative, as in Jesus' words in 4:7 and 4:10 (see the textual notes there). However, very rarely does the third person future indicative have that force. (CC)

Jesus does not argue or debate. He does not deny that he is hungry nor that he is the Son of God. He does not remind Satan of what the Father said (because he would not have believed it anyway) nor pray for the Holy Spirit. He answers Satan, in great humility, by quoting Scripture. He doesn't even say "I say unto you." He sticks to Scripture.

Specifically, Jesus knows that God *has already spoken* and that from his mouth have come the words "This one is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (3:17). Jesus' time of temptation in the wilderness is God's will; it is the Spirit's leading. Jesus will not use his power to murmur or reject God's will and purpose, as Israel did in the wilderness. The people in their wilderness wanderings did not realize that "as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you" (Deut 8:5), nor did they respond to his discipline as an obedient son should. Jesus, however, overcomes the slanderer, knowing the Father's Word that declared him to be God's Son, and living by every divine word, even and especially in his experience of being tempted in the wilderness. Jesus came in humility to his Baptism, and he willingly suffers the time of hunger and temptation, obeying his Father. He lives perfectly and completely by the Father's Word and will. (CC)

*But* – ἀλλ'—Matthew follows LXX Deut 8:3 in translating the adversative ׀, which after a negative can mean "on the contrary" (HALOT, 3a), by ἀλλ' in presenting the contrast: not that way of living, *but rather* this one. (CC)

*Every word* – rhema – The exact utterance from God. Not as preached which passes through the mouth of humans or is summarized by humans. Jesus relies on God's spoken Word in which the Father promises to sustain him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

**4:5** *took him* – παραλαμβάνει—Matthew's style employs the historical present tense sparingly, yet it occurs six times in this unit (παραλαμβάνει in 4:5, 8; λέγει in 4:6, 10; δείκνυσιν in 4:8; and ἀφίησιν in 4:11). Apart from the uses of λέγω, the historical present occurs a mere twenty-seven times (based on the text of NA) in the entire Gospel of Matthew. Eight of those twenty-seven, plus six such uses of λέγω—a total of fourteen historical presents—are clustered in two pericopes: Jesus' temptation in the wilderness

(4:1–11) and Jesus’ temptation in Gethsemane (26:36–46). These two texts have three more historical presents that are variant readings (ἴστησιν for ἔστησεν in 4:5; λέγει for εἶπεν in 4:9; and εὕρισκεῖ for εὔρεν in 26:43), which, if read, would increase the number in both texts. (CC)

The devil only seemed to be in charge. Ultimately, it was the Spirit who continued to lead Jesus (v. 1). (TLSB)

Because Matthew uses the historical present so seldomly (except for forms of λέγω), the groupings of this usage in 4:1–11 and in 26:36–46 are significant. In a noteworthy way, Matthew portrays with extra vividness the two accounts of the temptation of God’s Son—in the desert by the great opponent (4:1–11) and in the garden, where Jesus prepares to submit to the Father’s will to drink the cup of wrath for all (26:36–46). Matthew thus highlights stylistically what is also highlighted theologically. To reflect this in translation, I have rendered the historical presents in a somewhat archaic manner with “did,” as here: “Then the slanderer *did take* him ...” (4:5). (CC)

The one historical present verb that Matthew employs often is λέγω, “speak.” Based on the text of NA, thirty-eight times Jesus “speaks” in historical present, twenty-eight times other real persons’ speech is thus described, once Satan’s is, and ten times various characters in Jesus’ parables “speak” in historical present. (CC)

*highest point of the temple.* (Either the southeast corner of the temple colonnade, from which there was a drop of some 100 feet to the Kidron Valley below, or the pinnacle of the temple proper.) (CSB)

The second temptation occurs after Satan takes Jesus to a high location, either on the temple itself or perhaps on the wall surrounding the temple compound. The typological parallelism with Israel is not so clear in this second instance as it was in the first. Jesus’ citation of Deut 6:16 in his reply to Satan directs us to the incident at Massah (Ex 17:1–7), whose name (מַסָּה) derives from the Hebrew verb “to test” (נִסָּה). There the people of Israel quarreled with Moses and doubted whether God’s power was available to provide for them: “They *tested* the LORD, saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’ ” (Ex 17:7). (CC)

Once again, the NT antitype to the OT incident is greater and contrasting. Satan cites Ps 91:11–12 (LXX 90:11–12) in part, though he cites Scripture out of context and omits a key line (see the textual note on Mt 4:6). He fails to include that the LORD promised “to keep you in all your ways” (Ps 91:11b), that is, to protect his people *as they live according to the “ways” he has taught them*. The psalm speaks of God’s “protection from dangers that approach the righteous, not testing God to see if he will really do what Scripture promises.” (CC)

*temple.* The temple, including the entire temple area, had been rebuilt by Herod the Great. The courtyard had been greatly enlarged, to about 330 by 500 yards. To accomplish this a huge platform had been erected to compensate for the sharp falling off of the land to the southeast. An enormous retaining wall made of massive stones was built to support the platform. On the platform stood the temple building, porches and courtyards flanked by beautiful colonnades. (CSB)

When Satan wanted to tempt Job he appeared right in the presence of God (Job 1:6). So he does here as well. Luther said: “Where God builds a church, Satan builds a chapel.”

ἔστησεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ περὺγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ—There is a variant reading here, ἴστησιν, that would place another historical present tense into this unit that already contains so many; see also the variant in 4:9 (λέγει for εἶπεν). Both of these historical presents are found in L W Θ 0233 and the majority of manuscripts. Perhaps, however, the variants arose from the general tendency to harmonize readings to the near context, that is, to harmonize the aorist ἔστησεν to the other historical presents in this unit. (CC)

It is not possible to be certain about the precise location of the temple's "little wing," "extremity," or "pinnacle" (περυγιον, a diminutive of πέρυξ, "wing"). That Satan tempts Jesus in connection with the temple may evoke the temple as the place of God's refuge and protection. Some OT verses speak of people taking refuge under Yahweh's "wings" (רַחֲבֵי, e.g., Pss 17:8; 91:4; Ruth 2:12; cf. Mt 23:37), and in the temple Yahweh himself was enthroned on the winged cherubim (e.g., 2 Ki 19:15 || Is 37:16; Ps 80:2 [ET 80:1]). (CC)

**4:6** *throw yourself down* – Such a rash action would likely result in death or severe injury. (TLSB)

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*It is written* – The devil sought to overthrow Jesus' previous use of Scripture by quoting a psalm in which God promises to command His angels to protect those who trust in Him (though significantly Satan omitted the phrase "in all your ways"). (TLSB)

γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ ἐντελεῖται ...—NA and most English translations take ὅτι as introducing direct discourse and so do not translate it, then set the rest of the verse as a block quotation, indicating that (they believe) the slanderer is directly quoting Ps 91:11–12. However, two factors lead toward understanding ὅτι as introducing indirect discourse, as in the translation above ("for it stands written *that* to his angels he will give orders ..."). The first is that only here in Matthew is γέγραπται followed by ὅτι. Elsewhere in Matthew γέγραπται usually is followed immediately by the OT quotation (as in, e.g., 4:4, 7; 11:10). Thus the form of this "OT citation" is unique, and one might for that reason expect ὅτι to serve another function besides introducing direct discourse (the OT quote). The second factor is that the slanderer actually omits the crucial second line from Ps 91:11, which in both the MT and the LXX (90:11) reads, "For to his angels he will give orders about you, *to keep you in all your ways.*" Not only is the slanderer's citation of Scripture indirect; it is incorrect. (CC)

Satan wants Jesus to test whether God's power is available to protect and save him, just as the people of Israel wondered whether God would provide water for them in their thirst. But Jesus will doubt neither God's promise nor his power. He will not deviate from his Father's "ways." Jesus cites Deut 6:16, a truth that Israel had yet to learn after the people's time in the wilderness: "You shall not test the Lord your God" (Mt 4:7). Jesus, however, knows and holds fast to this commandment. He has no need to learn whether God's power and purposes are guiding him. (CC)

As Genesis 3, Satan twists God's words to suit his evil purposes. Since Jesus had conquered him with Scripture, now Satan tries to use Jesus' method but adds *gar* which Jesus had not used in verse 4. Satan tries to outdo Jesus with Scripture.

This second temptation, then, differs from the first in at least this way. The first assumed that, as the Son of God, Jesus has miraculous power; the question was how Jesus would use it. The second assumes that, as God's Son, God's power is available to protect and sustain Jesus; at issue is whether Jesus would trust that promise. The perfect Son trusts perfectly. He will not put God to the test. (CC)

**4:7** *again it is written* – Jesus met this temptation by quoting Moses' warning to Israel against testing God as they had done at Massah (cf Ex 17:2–7). Jesus would have been guilty of the same sin had He felt it



necessary to prove God’s power by jumping from the temple pinnacle in an attempt to gain personal glory and fame. (TLSB)

*Shall not put the Lord your God to the test* – This quotation reflects the situation of the Israelites described in Ex 17:1-7, how at a place called Massah and Meribah they put Jehovah on trial and rebelled against Moses because of a lack of water. They insolently and provocatively challenged God saying “Is Jehovah among us or not?” Had Jesus thrown himself down, it would have been arrogance and insolence, not trust.

οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις—Here the second person future indicative has an imperatival force: “*You shall not test the Lord your God.*” The Greek is a literal translation of the Hebrew negated imperfect (יִבְחַן אֱלֹהֶיךָ, Deut 6:16), which likewise has imperatival force. (CC)

**4:8** *showed him all the kingdoms* – Satan was granted the power to show Jesus the vast splendor of all earthly kingdoms. That is incomprehensible to us, but so is Satan’s power.

In this climatic temptation, the devil was permitted to create for Jesus a spiritual vision of “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” An earthly mountain from which one could see all this does not exist. The highest point likely would have been Hebron in Judea. (TLSB)

**4:9** *worship me* – Though Satan has some dominion in this world (Col 1:13; 1Jn 5:19), here he offered things that were not his to give. Satan demanded that the Son of God worship him rather than do His Father’s will. (TLSB)

ἐὰν πεσὼν προσκυνήσῃς μοι—This is, literally, “if, falling down, you worship me.” The aorist participle πεσὼν (from πίπτω) preceding the main verb of the clause fits well into Wallace’s important category of an “attendant circumstance participle.” To use Wallace’s phrase, the participle simply “piggy-backs” onto the main verb of the clause and can be translated to match the mood of that main verb. The participle has no independent force, but merely accompanies and attends the main verb of the clause. Matthew’s narrative contains a multitude of such participles. (CC)

In light of the quotation of Deut 6:13 in Mt 4:10, which uses προσκυνέω again, προσκυνέω here too means “worship” in the fullest sense of the term. Like Israel of old in the desert, Jesus is being tempted to commit gross idolatry; he is being tempted to *worship* Satan. (Compare the last textual note on 2:2, which discusses the meaning of προσκυνέω in 2:2, 11.) (CC)

The third temptation brings to the fore the key issue in terms of Israel’s relationship with God. From the very beginning of its identity as a nation, when God led his “son” up out of Egypt into the desert, Israel had struggled to remain loyal to and to worship God alone, having no other gods before him (Ex 20:2–3). In Ex 32:1–35, the incident with the golden calf at the foot of Sinai showed the nation’s apostasy, and the subsequent history of Israel in the land told no substantially different story. (CC)

To be a “son” is to have one “Father,” and one only (see Deut 6:4; Mal 2:10; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:6). Israel, the OT type, was a failure. The One who stands in the place of the type does not fail. Satan shows the glories of the world’s kingdoms to Jesus and promises to give them all to him if Jesus will “fall down and worship” Satan (Mt 4:9). Jesus refers to Moses’ words to Israel in Deut 6:13: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him alone” (Mt 4:10). As the people were poised to enter the promised land, Moses had so warned them, but they did not take his words to heart and make them their own (see, e.g., Judges 2). Jesus is poised to “enter the land,” in order to begin his ministry of salvation in and for Israel (Mt 4:17). As God’s perfect and perfectly obedient Son, he makes Moses’ (and God’s) words his own. (CC)

Satan begins very subtly in verse 3. He becomes bolder and bolder. Luther says that in the first temptation Satan showed himself as a black devil, in the second as a white devil. But in this third temptation he displays himself as a divine, majestic devil, who comes right out as though he were God himself. He drops his mask and appears as the prince and ruler of this world. His statement is based on a lie. He is not the owner of the world and its kingdoms. He is a usurper. He has arrogantly caused the world to be sinful. He works through sinful men and thus gives the appearance of owning all. God owns it all. He gives unconditionally. His gifts are followed by worship. Satan owns nothing. He gives conditionally. He expects to be worshiped before he gives.

The last temptation differs from the first two in a remarkable way. In the first, Satan assumed that Jesus has power, and asked how he would use it. In the second, the slanderer acknowledged that God promised to exercise power on behalf of Jesus, but he asked Jesus to doubt that promise or misuse that power. In this final and climactic temptation, Satan presumes that the Son will worship and serve someone, so he seeks to turn Jesus aside from wholehearted worship and service of God his Father. Jesus, however, will not turn aside. His life and ministry will be a perfect act of worship and service to God. (CC)

Notice the remarkable descending Christology in the sequence of the three temptations. This may be Matthew's way of echoing the theology of Jesus, who, conceived by the power of the Almighty (1:18–25), was baptized as the humble Servant (3:13–17). This also prepares for Jesus' public ministry in Israel. Here we see not a Messiah of power nor a Messiah who abuses or misunderstands God's power, but a Messiah of faithful obedience and service to God and to God's people—to "his [own] people," whom he will save from their sins (1:21). (CC)

**4:10** *be gone* – hpago means "leave a person's presence... be gone."

Jesus had heard enough from Satan and ordered him to leave. This demonstrates the true extent of Jesus' authority as manifested late (cf. 7:29). (TLSB)

*it is written.* Jesus' third quotation of Scripture was from a passage where, with similar words, Moses admonished Israel to fear and serve the Lord rather than idols when they entered the Promised Land. If Jesus had worshiped the devil and rejected the way of the cross, He might well have gained earthly glory for Himself. (TLSB)

*worship...lord your God...only* – κύριον τὸν θεόν σου προσκυνήσεις καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις— The second person future indicatives προσκυνήσεις and λατρεύσεις function as imperatives: "You shall worship ... you shall serve." So too did ἐκπειράσεις in 4:7 (see the textual note there; contrast the second textual note on 4:4). The first verb in Deut 6:13 in both the MT (אָרַא... תַּפְחֵהוּ) and the LXX (φοβηθήση ... λατρεύσεις) is "fear," whereas Matthew records Jesus as saying "worship." In the OT, "to fear" God usually connotes faith and thus also worship of him (see אָרַא in, e.g., Ex 14:31; 2 Ki 17:36; Is 50:10; Pss 40:4 [ET 40:3]; 115:11). Jesus' reply picks up on Satan's temptation that Jesus should "fall down and worship" him (4:9). Moreover, the pair of verbs "worship" and "fear" (προσκυνέω and λατρεύω) occur together often in the OT, including LXX Deut 4:19; 5:9; 8:19; 11:16; 17:3; 29:25 (ET 29:26); 30:17. Most LXX verses with that pair of verbs refer to false worship of false gods, either in prohibitions that Israel should not do so or in statements that apostate Israel did so. (Only LXX Dan 6:27 [ET 6:26], spoken by Darius, uses them for worship of the true God.) So Jesus, in using these two verbs for true worship in Mt 4:10, is being faithful to God in the exact way that Israel was unfaithful to God. (CC)

Wallace cautiously puts forward a distinction between the construction of προσκυνέω plus a dative object and προσκυνέω plus an accusative object. He suggests that the latter construction "may imply either misconception of God on the part of the worshiper ... or worship that is at a distance." He uses Mt 4:10 as

a test case, suggesting that here προσκυνέω plus the accusative (κύριον τὸν θεόν σου προσκυνήσεις) suggests that “a personal application of this text to the tempter is being made. Although only the Lord God is the true God, the devil will have no chance for a *personal* relation with him.” But here Wallace misreads the context, and 4:10 cannot support his conjecture. In each of the OT citations that comprise Jesus’ replies to Satan’s temptations, the OT citation applies to Jesus himself. *He* is the one who lives by every word that comes from God’s mouth, and *he* is the one who will refuse to put God to the test. In 4:10, *Jesus* is the one who will worship and serve the Lord his God alone. (CC)

**4:11** *devil left him* – Satan was forced to depart. The Son of God had vanquished the old evil foe. Cf Jas 4:7. (TLSB)

Satan departs. He will return in subtle ways, seeking to turn Jesus aside from path that leads him to his ultimate act of service (16:23; 27:40). But Matthew’s readers/hearers are confident. Their champion has held the field. He will not falter, as Israel did, and as Matthew’s readers/hearers through all centuries do. He will win the final victory. Only after Jesus has defeated Satan do the angels appear and begin to minister to him. (CC)

The same pattern in 4:1–11 of Jesus overcoming temptation will reappear at the end of the Gospel. Jesus will be crucified precisely because he is the Son of God (26:63–64). The onlookers tempt him to act wrongly as God’s Son, just as Satan did in 4:1–11: “Let him save himself, *if he is the Son of God*” (27:40; see also 27:43). But Jesus will be victorious over that temptation too. Conflict ended and resurrection victory revealed, an angel will reappear, but instead of serving Jesus directly (4:11), he will announce Jesus’ resurrection to the women (28:1–10). (CC)

aphiasin means the leaving is caused by defeat. Satan attacked Jesus again and again in Jesus’ lifetime.

Luke 4:13 “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.”

*Angels were ministering to him* – Jesus had refused to relieve His hunger with a miracle. Now, miraculously, the angels served Him, probably also with food (cf 1 KI 19:6-7). (TLSB)

**4:1–11** The devil tempts Jesus to seek His own glory. Jesus refuses this path to walk the way of the cross. In love, He “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Php 2:6–8). He did all this for the sake of Israel, who had failed God’s test. He did all this for our sake, because we, too, have failed God’s test. Jesus is our substitute who defeated Satan for us, setting us free from sin, death, and the devil’s power. • Mighty Hero, though devils fill the world, we do not fear because You have won the victory. Amen. (TLSB)