

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
Student-created		Required (bold)

## The Text

### Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"* Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the **pinnacle** of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written:

'He will give his angels charge of you, and  
On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, *"Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"*

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; *and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "**Begone**, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"*

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

### Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest

point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you carefully;  
they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the **test**.'"

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an **opportune** time.

## Analysis<sup>1</sup>

### Stones into bread

The temptation of making bread out of stones occurs in the same desert setting where Jesus had been fasting. Alexander Jones reports that the wilderness mentioned here has since the fifth century been believed to be the rocky and uninhabited area between Jerusalem and Jericho, with a spot on Mount Quarantania traditionally being considered the exact location. The desert was seen as outside the bounds of society and as the home of demons such as Azazel (Leviticus 16:10). Robert H. Gundry states that the desert is likely an allusion to the wilderness through which the Israelites wandered during the Exodus, and more specifically to Moses. Jesus' struggle against hunger in the face of Satan points to his representative role of the Israelites, however he does not fail God in his urge for hunger. This temptation may have been Jesus' last, aiming towards his hunger.

In response to Satan's suggestion, Jesus replies, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (a reference to Deuteronomy 8:3) Only in Matthew is this entire sentence written.

### Pinnacle of the temple

Most Christians consider that holy city refers unquestionably to Jerusalem and the temple to which the pinnacle belongs is thus identified as the Temple in Jerusalem. Gospel of Matthew refers to "the temple" 17 times without ever adding "in Jerusalem". That Luke's version of the story clearly identifies the location as Jerusalem may be due to **Theophilus'** unfamiliarity with Judaism.

What is meant by the word traditionally translated as pinnacle is not entirely clear since the Greek diminutive form *pterugion* ("little wing") is not extant in other architectural contexts. Though the form *pterus* ("large wing") is used for the point of a building by Pollianus, Schweizer feels that little tower or **parapet** would be more accurate, and the New Jerusalem Bible does use the translation "parapet". The only surviving Jewish parallel to the temptation uses the standard word *šbyt* "roof" not

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1 Source: Wikipedia. ("Really, Mr. Scott?" "Really.")

"wing": "Our Rabbis related that in the hour when the Messiah shall be revealed he shall come and stand on the roof (šbyt) of the temple." (Peshiqta Rabbati 62 c–d) The term is preserved as "wing" in **Syriac** translations of the Greek.

Gundry lists three sites at the Jerusalem temple that would fit this description:

- On the top of the temple's main tower, above the sanctuary proper, some 180 feet above ground, the location that artists and others using the traditional translation generally set the story.
- Atop the lintel of the main gateway into the temple, the most prominent position where the pair could easily have been seen.
- A tower on the southeast corner of the outer wall that looks down into the Kidron Valley. In later Christian tradition this is the tower from which James the brother of Jesus was said by Hegesippus to have been thrown by way of execution.

"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Luke 4:9–13) citing Psalms 91:12.

Once more, Jesus maintained his integrity and responded by quoting scripture, saying, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" (Matthew 4:7) quoting Deuteronomy 6:16.

## **Mountain**

For the final temptation, the devil takes Jesus to a high place, which Matthew explicitly identifies as a very high mountain, where all the kingdoms of the world can be seen. The spot pointed out by tradition as the summit from which Satan offered to Jesus dominion over all earthly kingdoms is the "Quarantania", a limestone peak on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Instead of a literal reading, George Slatyer Barrett viewed the third temptation as inclining to a doubt of Christ's mission, or at least the **methodology**. Barrett sees this as a temptation to accept the adulation of the crowds, assume leadership of the nation to overthrow Roman rule, take the crown of his own nation, and from there initiate the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdoms Jesus would inherit through Satan are obtained through love of power and political oppression. Barrett characterizes this "the old but ever new temptation to do evil that good may come; to justify the illegitimacy of the means by the greatness of the end."

The mountain is not literal if the temptations only occur in the mind's eye of Jesus and the Gospel accounts record this mind's eye view, as related in parable form, to the disciples at some point during the ministry.

Satan says, "All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me." Jesus replies "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God and only Him shall you serve.'"

(referencing Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20). Readers would likely recognize this as reminiscent of the temptation to false worship that the Israelites encountered in the desert in the incident of the Golden Calf mentioned in Ex. 32:4.

## Artistic Renderings



*Temptation in the Wilderness*, John St. John Long, 1824



*Tentaciones de Cristo*, Botticelli, 1482