

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing

This lesson developed into three parts:

I. Context within the Bible, specifically the Old Testament

II. Context within the book of Matthew

III. Matthew Chapter 4

The “Tempting” of Jesus in the desert is sometimes dealt with in a cursory manner. Jesus was tempted. He resisted and passed the test. But what was the point of the test? What is the context of this test? Why those questions?

The Angelic Conflict is a topic that many, maybe most churches never mention. There are books that document the topic of the Angelic Conflict.

It is interesting to note that in three books of the Bible, Angels both fallen and “saved” show up early on.

In the **book of Job**, the book that was the first to be composed, chapter 1 deals with Satan’s challenge against God’s chosen believer, Job.

In the **book of Genesis**, chapter 3 deals with the “serpent” who is understood to be Satan challenging Adam and Eve to turn against God.

Now, in the **first book of the New Testament**, in the testing of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew chapter 4, Mark chapter 1, Luke chapter 4), at the beginning of His ministry, Satan is the “tempter.”

I haven’t mentioned other books like Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Judges, etc.

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Before focusing on the individual passages, let us look at the broader context. Why did Jesus Christ need to be on the earth and go to the cross? This factors into the questioning of Jesus.

It started in Genesis, in the Garden of Eden.

Man was given dominion over the earth.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Rule over. It means to rule, to have dominion, to subdue. God gave man dominion over the earth.

From Biblehub.org:

“Usage: The Hebrew verb "radah" primarily means to rule or have dominion over something. It conveys the idea of exercising authority or control, often in the context of governance or stewardship. In the biblical narrative, it is frequently used to describe the dominion given to humanity over creation, as well as the rule of kings and leaders over their subjects.¹”

Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the

¹ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7287.htm>

earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Subdue it. From Biblehub.com:

“**Usage:** The Hebrew verb "kabash" primarily means to subdue or bring under control. It conveys the idea of exerting authority or dominion over something or someone. In the context of the Bible, it often refers to the act of subduing the earth or enemies, indicating a sense of stewardship or dominion granted by God.”²

As a result of Adam's sin, Adam and Eve lost dominion. There is no specific Bible passage that says that. But there are a couple of passages that indicate that Satan is now ruler over earth.

Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

Ephesians 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

John 12:31 Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

John 14:30 I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

2 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3533.htm>

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

John 16:8 And He (the Holy Spirit), when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

John 16:9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

John 16:10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

John 16:11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2 Corinthians 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Part of the context is the rulership over the earth. After the Garden, Satan has dominion, he rules. Keep in mind that God can veto actions that God forbids Satan to do.

Satan also has an appeal trial before God. How can a righteous God condemn Satan and yet redeem sinful man under the curse of Adam's sin, individual sin natures and individual sins?

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Another part of the context is that Adam sinned. He has a sin nature and is out of fellowship with God and is on His way to the Lake of Fire if there is no provision to solve the problem.

The questions of Job clearly identify the problem. How can a righteous God cleanse his creatures without perverting His Own righteousness?

**Job 4:17 'Can mankind be just before God?
Can a man be pure before his Maker?**

**Job 8:3 "Does God pervert justice? Or does
the Almighty pervert what is right?**

**Job 14:4 "Who can make the clean out of the
unclean? No one!**

From a human perspective, from Satan's perspective, no one can make the righteous or clean out of the unrighteous or unclean. If God alone does this, He perverts His righteousness because sin has been left unjudged. Sinful, unrighteous man cannot cleanse himself. That is impossible. The only way is for God to become man. From Satan's perspective he is only familiar with demon possession: two separate entities, one controlled by the other. The hypostatic union is probably something he did not understand. Even with Biblical passages that explain this, we have some difficulty.

Satan's first question elicits a response. He is expecting Jesus' deity to respond since from his perspective, deity would be in control. But the hypostatic union is a unity. Jesus is fully God and fully man, the two natures fully integrated.

God provides the hypostatic union. This is something unique in all the universe and throughout all history. There is nothing else like it.

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

So Satan, as part of the Angelic Conflict is invited to examine Jesus as an exhibit in the appeal trial of Satan. This is how God is going to do it. Through Jesus the Messiah. As part of his legal investigation, Satan is allowed to ask three questions to verify the authenticity of Jesus Christ in hypostatic union, the God-Man.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

But what questions will Satan ask the Messiah, the God-man hypostatic union? Why does he ask these three questions?

Hold on! The context is important. The context starts at Matthew 1:1.

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Originally, this was going to be a lesson strictly focused on Matthew chapter 4. But chapter 4 is the culmination of a series of documentations concerning Jesus' qualifications to be the Messiah. Please note that this is not a study of the text of Matthew. I am only pulling out some of the verses that help to show that Jesus was indeed qualified to be the Messiah King of Israel. He is qualified to start His mission journey to the cross.

Important note: In the Middle East and in the Orient, it is necessary for a teacher to provide his qualifications before he can teach. When I was taught Arabic, the teacher took the first hour to communicate his qualifications. He had two PhD degrees with several papers published and included in some index of Harvard publications. He had been in the cabinet of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. For an hour, he touted how qualified he was. From his perspective this was necessary. In fact, there was a former gym teacher who was a better teacher than this PhD. But that is the mindset of that culture. So here in Matthew, there is documentation of Jesus qualifications to be the Messiah, King and savior. He was qualified to address the appeal trial of Satan.

It is my contention that the first four chapters of the gospel of Matthew provide the qualifications for rabbi Jesus to start His ministry in Israel. Below is the outline by chapter. Keep in mind that chapter breaks are not inspired.

Overview:

Matthew Chapter 1: Qualified by genealogy & prophecy

Matthew Chapter 2: Qualified by prophecy fulfilled

Matthew Chapter 3: Qualified by God the Father

Matthew Chapter 4: Qualified by examination and evaluation

Matthew Chapter 1

Matthew 1:1 The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Record. This is the word for book or scroll. It is a word for documentation. In this instance, Matthew documents the qualifications and history of the Messiah's life leading up to the cross and after. It is the first word in the first verse. It is important.

Genealogy. This word is used for genealogy. But it is more. Chapter 1 starts with a title or statement of purpose.

You may see three different explanations of this. I like what Robby Dean has said about this.

Here is what Robby Dean has to say:

“As we look at this first verse there is a bit of a translation problem. It looks like this is a book about genealogy. The Greek: *biblos geneseos iesou xristou*. What is interesting about this is that that does not necessarily mean the book of the genealogy. If we go to the early part of Genesis, Genesis 2:4, it says, "This is the account of the heavens and the earth." These are the same words in the Greek [LXX] as in Mathew, except that instead of "of Jesus" it is "of the heavens and the earth." The word "account" is probably the best translation. When we compare Matthew 1:1 with Genesis 2:4 we see that Matthew is connecting what he is saying to the background in Genesis. This is to demonstrate the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.”

“So when we read Matthew 1:1 we understand it to be, “This is the account,” or, “This is the history of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” So this is a title for the Gospel. Matthew is going to

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

give an account of Jesus the Messiah who is Jesus the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Matthew 1:2-17 contains the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph. We know that Joseph did not provide any DNA to Jesus. Only Mary provided DNA which was complemented by the Holy Spirit.

Qualification of the king (genealogy). This genealogy traces Jesus' ancestry to Abraham. But David is mentioned first. David was the king with which God had a covenant, the Davidic covenant. This covenant was a result from the Abrahamic Covenant. In particular, it was about the “seed.” The seed was the original promise of a Messiah redeemer.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

The seed is traced through the genealogies in the Old Testament. This seed shows up in the Abrahamic Covenant:

Genesis 12:7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.

Descendants. This word is “seed” in the singular. It is true that it is translated as a collective noun representing “seeds” (plural) of Abraham. Yet, it is the same singular word used in Genesis 3:15. Interesting.

God's promise to Abraham is repeated in the three paragraph covenant a) land b) seed c) blessing. Only the “seed” paragraph is quoted below.

Genesis 15:4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

Genesis 15:5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants (collective "seed" in the singular) be."

Genesis 17:6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

Genesis 17:7 I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants (collective "seed" in the singular) after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants (collective "seed" in the singular) after you.

Genesis 17:8 I will give to you and to your descendants (collective "seed" in the singular) after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Son of David (Davidic Covenant: seed)

2 Samuel 7:12 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant (collective “seed” in the singular) after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

2 Samuel 7:13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Forever. Solomon's kingdom ceased. Only the kingdom of Messiah Jesus will last forever. Matthew points to David and Abraham in the title of his gospel account. A Jew would pick this up quickly. Mathew is talking about the seed first mentioned in the “first gospel” (protoevangelium) in Genesis tracing it to the Davidic (seed) covenant going through the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 3:15 (seed) → Abrahamic Covenant (seed) → Davidic Covenant (seed)

There is an important caveat buried in the genealogy. Joseph is a descendant of Jechoniah (Matthew 1:11). But there is a curse associated with this evil king.

Jeremiah 22:30 “Thus says the Lord, ‘Write this man (Jeconiah/Coniah) down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants (collective “seed” in the singular) will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.’”

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Conservatives take this to mean that Joseph could not pass on his DNA to his son as king. This caveat requires a virgin birth.

Chapter breaks are not inspired. Matthew chapter 1 in our Bibles really contain two separate narratives. The first is the genealogy. The second deals with the virgin conception. Chapter 2 deals with the virgin birth. The genealogy requires a virgin birth so that Jeconiah could not be the physical ancestor of Jesus. Now the second part of the chapter documents the prophecy of the virgin conception from Isaiah. We are also aware of a third requirement for a virgin conception. Having two human parents mandates the child have a sin nature. Jesus could not have a sin nature and be qualified to go to the cross. So there are three reasons for the virgin conception/birth:

1. **Jeconiah curse.** No physical descendant of Jeconiah could become king. Yet, Joseph is in the line of Jeconiah. Hence he could not be the physical father of Jesus. In a legal sense he was the father as the husband of Mary. (Jeremiah 22:30/Matthew 1:11)
2. **Prophecy.** The Messiah was prophesied to be virgin conceived/virgin birthed. Hence Joseph could not be the physical father of Jesus. Only the Holy Spirit could provide the needed DNA. (Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:18-25)
3. **No Sin Nature:** The Messiah had to be free of sin: No inherited sin from Adam, no inherited sin nature and no personal sins. The only way to avoid being “born in Adam” and having a sin nature was to be born of a virgin. By virgin is meant, there could be no male DNA. Even artificial insemination wouldn't qualify as virgin conception.

There is another observation. There are four women listed in the genealogy. Tamar (who acted like a prostitute), Rahab the prostitute,

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13

Ruth the Moabitess, and Bathsheba Uriah's wife. Each one has an obvious "defect."

The purpose of the genealogy is to document Jesus' qualification as the seed. Then prophesy is used to show the necessity of the virgin conception/birth.

Next week will continue with Matthew chapters 2-4. Chapter 4 is the heart of what I want to cover.