

Angelic Conflict & Jesus' Testing Part 2

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.

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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>

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?

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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.

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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.

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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

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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."

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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.’”

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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 was raped by her brother), Rahab the prostitute,

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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 prophecy 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.

Matthew Chapter 2

Through typology Jesus is a type of Israel. I dealt with typology extensively in the lessons on “fulfillment.”³

A definition of typology is “the recognition of a correspondence between New and Old Testaments, based on a conviction of the unchanging character of the principles of God’s working.”⁴

The key is the correspondence.

Matthew 2:14 So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.

Matthew 2:15 He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.”

This is a quote from

Hosea 11:1 When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.

This clearly refers to Israel and not to Jesus. Some would complain that to point to this and call it typology is not fair play. But, Michael Rydelnik points out that there is a precursor to the Hosea verse. Numbers 23:18-24 is another reference to Israel. But parallel to that is Numbers 24:7-9 is

³ <https://www.springvalleybiblechurch.org/Audio/Speakers/notes/20220821GuestSpeaker420.pdf>

⁴ R. T. France. The Gospel According to Matthew, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 40

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refers to a person.⁵ So in those two Balaam prophecies Israel and “Son” are set up in a correspondence to each other and to the “king.”

Numbers 24:7 “Water will flow from his buckets, And his seed will be by many waters, And his king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted.

Numbers 24:8 “God brings him out of Egypt, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox. He will devour the nations who are his adversaries, And will crush their bones in pieces, And shatter them with his arrows.

Without going into all the details (you can follow this in the aforementioned lesson on “fulfillment.”) there is a parallel between the two Numbers passages that parallel the future King of Israel to Israel. Below is the table from Michael Rydelnik’s book showing this⁶.

Figure 7.1 The Typology of the Balaam Oracles <i>Israel's past experience prefigures the King's future experience.</i>	
<i>Israel</i> <i>Num 23:18–24</i>	<i>King</i> <i>Num 24:7–9</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• God brings them out of Egypt• God is for them like the horns of an Ox• Israel is like a lion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• God brings Him out of Egypt• God is for Him like the horns of an Ox• The King is like a lion

This flows through Hosea 11:1 which is then quoted in Matthew 2:15.

5 Rydelnik, M. (2010). *The Messianic Hope : Is the Old Testament Really Messianic?* Nashville: B & H Pub. Group. P103.

6 Rydelnik, M. (2010). *The Messianic Hope : Is the Old Testament Really Messianic?* Nashville: B & H Pub. Group. P103.

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In actuality, the Numbers passages may, from divine perspective, be related to and follow from Exodus chapter 4.

Exodus 4:22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, "Israel is My son, My firstborn.

Exodus 4:23 So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

Here is a chart showing this:



This is not a prophetic fulfillment. It is a correspondence between Israel and the king and between the king and Jesus. Israel came out of Egypt. In the same manner the King, Jesus, will come out of Egypt. It was not a coincidence. God planned it. So, Jesus is identified typologically with His people through prophecy. Jesus is qualified typologically and identified with Israel's history.

Salvation is "from the Jews."

John 4:22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

I did not explore the Magi and their announcement that the king of Israel had been born. That would lead us to say that nature itself, the stars, identify Jesus as the prophesied king. He is qualified by the stars.

Matthew Chapter 3

Baptism is an identification. I am not going to address all the details of baptism and the various baptisms. In chapter 3 here, John the Baptist was baptizing believers into an identification with the kingdom through repentance.

John tries to dissuade Jesus from being baptized. Jesus has no sin and need not repent from anything. The point is that the baptism of Jesus is unique. It may appear to be the “baptism of John” but it is unique. It is identification of Jesus with His mission which is related to the kingdom. It is this kingdom that John proclaims as available to Israel if they will “repent.” What was missed by so many in Israel was that the “cross” came before the “crown.”

Jesus by insisting on the baptism He is saying, “I am ready for my mission.” God the Father certifies Jesus’ qualification and readiness for the mission in one of the few communications from Him in the Bible.

Matthew 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

Matthew 3:17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Here is one of the few circumstances in which all three members of the Trinity are present.

“In summary what we are saying is that Jesus' baptism is an identification with the Father's plan of presenting the kingdom to Israel,

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but that presentation is based upon the order of events: the suffering Messiah will come before the crown, the glory of the Messiah. In order to fulfill that Jesus goes to John for John to baptize Him as identification with the plan of the Father.⁷

In addition to the baptism is the fact that Jesus has a “forerunner” which is the royal herald proclaiming the king and an offer of the kingdom.

Matthew Chapter 4

Examination and Evaluation

Robby Dean gives a good overview of the testing of Jesus. It also meshes with the theme I am presenting that the first four chapters of Matthew present the qualifications of Jesus to be the Messiah King.

“What Jesus is showing in the testing is that He handles the test from His humanity with the same resources that God has given to you and me. 2 Corinthians 5:21 also states this principle, that “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us ...” again stressing the point that Jesus was not a sinner. That is part of the purpose of the virgin birth, that He never received a sin nature. Some might say, well wait a minute, if He didn't have a sin nature of course He didn't sin. But Adam was not created with a sin nature and yet Adam sinned. The first Adam failed the test. He entered into temptation, to testing, and he responded through disobedience. He didn't rely on the provision of God, he tried to handle things from his own resources. He failed, disobeyed, and yielded to the temptation. What Jesus is going to show is that He is qualified to be the Messiah because He passes the test that Adam failed. So, as the second Adam demonstrates His qualifications to be the Messiah and to go to the cross to die for our sins. As such, this initial episode emphasizes giving

7 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/matthew-menuitem/message/12-the-inauguration-and-authentication-of-the-messiah-b/read>

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evidence at the beginning of His ministry that He is qualified to enter into that ministry of presenting the kingdom to Israel.⁸

Robby Dean makes an important point. Jesus is starting His mission as the last Adam. He will “repair” what Adam broke.

Let us begin. This line of reasoning will be tied to the Matthew passage bringing in information from Mark and Luke as needed.

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

In chapter 3, Jesus had been baptized by John. It had been a unique baptism. John was baptizing in the Jordan River. It was probably just east of Jericho. So now, Jesus moves from the Jordan River inland to a deserted area not far from Jericho.

Was led by the Spirit. Jesus was led by the Spirit. It was God the Holy Spirit that orchestrated this. Mark says it emphatically.

Mark 1:12 Immediately the Spirit *impelled Him to go out into the wilderness.

The word “was led” in Matthew is more emphatic in Mark. The Spirit “impelled” Him. The Greek word can mean thrown or impelled or send. From Biblehub.com:

“Usage: The Greek verb "ekballo" primarily means to cast out or drive out. It is used in various contexts in the New Testament, often referring to the expulsion of demons, the sending out of laborers into the harvest,

⁸ <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/matthew-menuitem/message/12-the-inauguration-and-authentication-of-the-messiah-b/read>

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or the removal of individuals from a place. The term conveys a forceful action, often implying authority and power over the object being cast out.⁹

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

Jesus was led up. The word is in the passive. Jesus followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus quotes Scripture, that is something Christians can do. When Jesus depends upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, that is something Christians can do. I do not go around asking “What would Jesus do?” (WWJD). No. But I do consider the principles of Scripture and how they can be applied to my current situation. That is something Jesus did. That is something we can do to solve everyday problems. What does Scripture say and how can we apply that to our situations now. Application of Bible Doctrine. You can do that.

Wilderness. A place without people. It may have been a desert but more than that it was a deserted place. According to Robby Dean, it was likely just east of Jericho.

To be tempted. This is an infinitive to show purpose. The purpose and plan of God is for Jesus to be “tempted.”

There are so many doctrines that connect to this event that we need to slow down and review some of them.

Tempted. When taught, a pastor might emphasize that the Devil was trying to get Jesus to sin. While there is truth in that, if we translate the word “tempted” instead as “examine” in the context of the Angelic Conflict, these verses take on a more impactful meaning. The Devil examined Jesus. Is He the One? Is He qualified. If not, then Jesus’

⁹ <https://biblehub.com/greek/1544.htm>

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ministry never starts. If He is qualified, then He continues. Obviously, He passed the test, the examination.

The Devil was not testing just a human being. He was examining the Hypostatic Union. Jesus was unique in his Hypostatic Union. This is important to understand. It was...is unique. Jesus continues in the Hypostatic Union.

Hypostatic Union. First, consider the doctrine of the hypostatic union. Rather than give you some points for further study, let us look at what this means.

GotQuestions.org has a decent definition:

“The hypostatic union is the term used to describe how God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human nature, yet remained fully God at the same time. Jesus always had been God (John 8:58, 10:30), but at the incarnation Jesus became a human being (John 1:14). The addition of the human nature to the divine nature is Jesus, the God-man. This is the hypostatic union, Jesus Christ, one Person, fully God and fully man.”

“Jesus’ two natures, human and divine, are inseparable. Jesus will forever be the God-man, fully God and fully human, two distinct natures in one Person. Jesus’ humanity and divinity are not mixed, but are united without loss of separate identity. Jesus sometimes operated with the limitations of humanity (John 4:6, 19:28) and other times in the power of His deity (John 11:43; Matthew 14:18-21). In both, Jesus’ actions were from His one Person. Jesus had two natures, but only one personality.”

“The doctrine of the hypostatic union is an attempt to explain how Jesus could be both God and man at the same time. It is ultimately, though, a doctrine we are incapable of fully understanding. It is impossible for us to fully understand how God works. We, as human beings with finite minds, should not expect to totally comprehend an infinite God. Jesus is

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God's Son in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). But that does not mean Jesus did not exist before He was conceived. Jesus has always existed (John 8:58, 10:30). When Jesus was conceived, He became a human being in addition to being God (John 1:1, 14).¹⁰

Secondly, in addition to the hypostatic union, there is "kenosis."

Here are two points on Kenosis from Robby Dean which apply to the Hypostatic Union¹¹:

1. "The Son of God willingly veiled His preincarnate glory by restricting the outer appearance and privileges of God in order take on the form and function of a finite human body."
2. "Christ willingly submitted to the Father's will to restrict the use of His divine attributes in relationship to the tests, temptations, and struggles He faced in His incarnation."

More on this from Robby Dean below.

The important point to remember is that the two natures are integrated into a single being. This is perhaps something beyond what our human minds can fully comprehend. God has given us Jesus' interactions with others such that we can point that Jesus is fully God:

John 8: 58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."
(Expression of deity)

John 11:35 Jesus wept. (Expression of humanity)

¹⁰ <https://www.gotquestions.org/hypostatic-union.html>

¹¹ <https://www.deanbible.org/dbmfiles/slides/2022-Philippians-042c.pdf>

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Even the Devil likely had difficulty with this. You see, the Devil was familiar with demon possession. It is probable that Satan indwelt the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:11-19. Scripture says that Judas Ischariot was possessed by Satan. After Jesus had given Judas "the morsel" at the end of the supper, Judas could no longer turn back.

John 13:27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus *said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

As such, Satan would be familiar with the domination of the demon over the human soul in those cases. The Devil was no doubt familiar with the Angel of the Lord in which the second person of the Trinity took on human form. But in the hypostatic union, the two natures are integrated into a harmonious unity. This comes into play in the first challenge from Satan to Jesus.

Associated with the hypostatic union is the doctrine of Kenosis.

Doctrine of Kenosis. Again from Robby Dean:

"The second doctrine, also very complex, is what is called the kenosis. The word is used in Philippians chapter two to describe what happened when the eternal second person of the Trinity entered into human history. It says He took on humanity. It doesn't drop His deity; He doesn't leave out His deity; it doesn't diminish His deity in terms of its essence, but He adds true humanity to that. So the definition is that during the period of His incarnation Jesus Christ willingly restricted the use of His divine attributes so as not to use them to solve problems related to His humanity. Although Jesus is fully God He is not relying upon His deity to solve the problems in His humanity, because as the Messiah He is supposed to be fully human and the ideal King setting the standard of

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perfection as a man, not as God. God can easily do these things but He must do them as a man.¹²”

Somewhere I said that the solution to Adam's problem required God to provide the solution. But God could not accomplish this apart from a man. God could not judge Himself for mankind's sins. But a man with a sin nature cannot provide the solution. So the God man provides the solution. God provides the solution in the person of Jesus Christ.

Adam's testing and sin. Remember now that Jesus is the “last” Adam. The first Adam was tested and failed. As a result the human race acquired a sin nature through genetics, imputed with Adam's sin and produces his own sins. But he started out sinless.

The last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) also starts out sinless without a sin nature. That is the purpose of the Virgin Birth (Conception). The last Adam must pass a test similar to the First Adam. It is interesting to note that both tests had something to do with eating.

Jesus prepares for the examination by fasting. He becomes hungry and likely weak physically as a result of not eating food for forty days. It is like someone saying, “I'll fight you with one hand tied behind my back.”

Matthew 4:2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

Fasted. Robby Dean explains that a human cannot go very long without water. So Jesus' fast probably included sips of water, possibly from the Jordan River. But no food. Someone with only water but no food can last somewhere in the neighborhood of 40 days, perhaps a few more. Although intense hunger disappears after approximately three days, it

¹² <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/matthew-menuitem/message/13-testing-demonstrating-the-character-of-the-messianic-servant-b/read>

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comes roaring back after about 40 days. So Jesus knows hunger more than we could imagine. That is unless you have tried to fast for 40 days.

Matthew 4:3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

If. A first class condition. We learned a few weeks ago, that this doesn't say the statement is true, only that it is assumed to be true for the sake of this argument. We know this is actually true but the first class condition is couched within the argument. "Let us assume for this argument that...". Jesus knew this to be true. So did the Devil. But Satan is couching this challenge in the form of an argument. "Assume for the sake of this argument that you are the Son of God." It is said almost like, "OK, prove you are the Son of God." But the problem before Jesus, hunger, is a human problem that Jesus, based upon the doctrine of Kenosis, must solve from His humanity, not His deity.

Son of God. 2nd person of the Trinity. In other words, deity.

"During His trial before the Jewish leaders, the High Priest demanded of Jesus, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63). "'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matthew 26:64). The Jewish leaders responded by accusing Jesus of blasphemy (Matthew 26:65-66). Later, before Pontius Pilate, "The Jews insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God'" (John 19:7). Why would His claiming to be the Son of God be considered blasphemy and be worthy of a death sentence? The Jewish leaders understood exactly what Jesus meant by the phrase "Son of God." To be the Son of God is to be of the same nature as God. The Son of God is "of God." The claim to be of

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the same nature as God—to in fact be God—was blasphemy to the Jewish leaders; therefore, they demanded Jesus' death, in keeping with Leviticus 24:15-16. Hebrews 1:3 expresses this very clearly, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being."¹³

Leviticus 24:15 You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin.

Leviticus 24:16 Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

Let us look at the challenge from the Devil's perspective, keeping in mind what was just presented. What drove me to study this, in part, was why did Satan pick these questions. Where did they come from?

First, Satan caused Adam to fail his test. Now, Jesus, the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) is being tested. Jesus' first task is to go to the cross to be judged for the sins of the world. The focus from Jesus' perspective and Biblical prophecy was to solve the sin problem. By doing that He solves the dominion problem, the rulership over the earth.

Matthew 1:2 She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

There is an interesting parallel between Adam (1st Adam) and Jesus (2nd Adam). Adam was tempted to eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good

¹³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Son-of-God.html>

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and Evil. Here Jesus is tempted to create bread and eat. Both situations involved eating. Adam failed. Jesus did not.

Command. This is an imperative mood—a command. But the word is from the vocabulary word that means “to speak.” So a better translation might be “Speak.” Interesting that the Devil is giving Jesus a command to speak.

Let us go behind the scene. The LXX translates the description of what God did in Genesis chapter 1, as “God spoke” with the same verb used here in Matthew chapter 4. So the Devil is tempting Jesus to engage in a divine act of creation. The Devil purposely points Jesus back to creation and then the Garden of Eden. Jesus is here to redeem the human race by going back to the same type of situation as in the Garden and succeeding where Adam had failed.

Did the Devil consider that he himself was created? The word “arrogance” comes to mind. Just a thought.

Jesus is taking His place as the 2nd or last Adam. He is being tempted/challenged by the Devil. The expectation from the Devil’s perspective is that the deity will claim control over the hypostatic union.

Additionally, where does the Devil come up with “these stones?” Look a few verses back at John the Baptist’s response to the Pharisee’s and Sadducee’s desire to be baptized by John.

Matthew 3:9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

These stones. God can raise up children out from “these stones.” Then assuming for the sake of the argument that Jesus is the Son of God, God

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Himself, then it would be easier to create bread out of stones than living human beings. Argument from the major to the minor. The Devil has been observant and heard what John said.

When I first read Matthew 3:9, the phrase “these stones” intrigued me. If John is pointing to “these” stones what are they? It is as if they already know what John means by this.

Let us speculate a little. If these stones are in the Jordan east of Jericho, it is possible that they are stones placed there by Joshua's chosen men as a memorial.

Joshua 4:1 Now when all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying,

Joshua 4:2 “Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe,

Joshua 4:3 and command them, saying, ‘Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight.’”

Joshua 4:4 So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe;

Joshua 4:5 and Joshua said to them, “Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the

middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

Joshua 4:6 Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?'

Joshua 4:7 then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.'

Matthew never specifically identifies what “these stones are.” Yet, they are in the right place and it certainly sounds like Matthew is assuming the reader knows what “these stones” are. The memorial points to the fact that God did this.

From the Devil's perspective if the hypostatic union is like demon possession, then the divine being would take control and engage in an act of creation to provide bread for Jesus' humanity to keep him from dying. But that didn't happen. Jesus uses Bible answers to respond. Jesus did what you and I can and should be doing on a daily basis. Using Bible answers to answer the challenges of everyday life.

Loaves of bread. The Greek has a single word, “bread,” in the plural. In other words, “breads.” So loaves of bread is not a bad translation.

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Now, if the Devil is pulling up words from the Old Testament that are full of meaning, then “bread” is important. In Exodus 16, God provides “bread” for the children of Israel.

**Exodus 16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses,
“Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you;
and the people shall go out and gather a day’s
portion every day, that I may test them,
whether or not they will walk in My instruction.**

Here is a table where each word is full of meaning from the Scriptures.

Devil’s Challenge (Matthew 4:3)	Possible Reference (Divine Action)	Scripture
Speak	Creation	Genesis chapter 1
Stones	Crossing the Jordan	Joshua 4:1-7/Matthew 3:9
Become		
Breads	Mana	Exodus 16:4

Each of the events was accomplished by divine intervention. Jesus is not fooled by the Devil. Jesus responds by applying a Biblical principle to the situation.

**Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, “It is
written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but
on every word that proceeds out of the mouth
of God.’”**

Jesus does not respond from His deity. Instead He quotes from Deuteronomy. God has already provided food. There is no need for further action from God here.

**Deuteronomy 8:2 You shall remember all the
way which the Lord your God has led you in**

the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Deuteronomy 8:3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:4 Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

Deuteronomy 8:5 Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.

Deuteronomy 8:6 Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

By quoting this, Jesus acknowledges God's provision for man. The mana was provided to the children of Israel in response to their complaints and cries. Jesus' humanity operated in the realm of humility. Notice the vocabulary similarities: desert, testing and bread. Jesus is not using His deity to solve the problem. From Jesus' humility He depends on God the

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Father to provide for Him just like He provided for the children of Israel in the desert. This is something we can do. In humility we can claim a promise to orient our minds, to stabilize our thinking to solve problems. God provides. This concept also shows up in the New Testament for us.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Jesus says this again

John 4:34 Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

Matthew 4:5 Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

Matthew 4:6 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, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

Again, the Devil challenges Jesus, If it is true for the sake of this argument, you are the Son of God, God and the Messiah, prove it by fulfilling oral tradition. The people expect it. According to this tradition, the Messiah would arrive and stand on the top of the temple. Here is Robby Dean's explanation:

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“Again Satan recognizes that He is the Son of God and that this was a title for the Messiah. He is also appealing to a rabbinic tradition here that there would be a particular kind of sign that would indicate the Messiah. It was not in the Old Testament Scripture, it had become a rabbinic tradition. This is perhaps what is being described in John 6:30 when the Pharisees said to Jesus: "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?" According to rabbinic tradition there was the view that when the Messiah came He would stand upon the roof of the temple and this would then indicate that He was the Messiah. Jesus is not going to yield to this testing because He is going to demonstrate that He is the Messiah the way God has planned for Him and not for such a sign where He would be on the pinnacle of the temple.¹⁴”

Matthew 4:7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Jesus again answers from the book of Deuteronomy (6:16). But look at the context. That section of Deuteronomy includes the “Shema” (Listen).

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear (Shema), O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Sound familiar? Matthew 22:37)

¹⁴ <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/matthew-menuitem/message/13-testing-demonstrating-the-character-of-the-messianic-servant-b/read>

Deuteronomy 6:6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

...

Deuteronomy 6:16 “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

Deuteronomy 6:17 You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Deuteronomy 6:18 You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore to give your fathers,

Deuteronomy 6:19 by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has spoken.

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

Matthew 4:9 and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

For some reason, Luke and Matthew have these switched. It may be that one of them is presenting this in chronological order and the other in topical order. I don't have a conclusive answer for you. We are studying Matthew, so that is the order presented here.

Here we have confirmation that the Devil is the ruler of this world. He provides Jesus with a possible shortcut to regaining dominion over the earth that the 1st Adam lost. But that is not the plan of God. Let us go back to Matthew chapter 1 to find the real purpose for Jesus' mission.

Matthew 1:19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

Matthew 1:20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Jesus came to be judged for the sins of the world. Messiah's people will be those that believe. Yes, the sins of unbelievers are judged. But in the end, it doesn't keep them from the Lake of Fire. Their unbelief does. Their lack of life and righteousness disqualifies them.

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But Satan cannot offer judgment for sin. He is the reason for sin existing. All he can offer is to relinquish his control over the world. That is the most he can offer. What he asks Jesus to do is to engage in idol worship, the worship not of just demons but of Satan himself.

Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus *said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”

Again Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy. The same area of the last question.

Deuteronomy 6:13 You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.

Deuteronomy 6:14 You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,

Deuteronomy 6:15 for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Jesus passed the test/examination. He is qualified to start His public ministry as the Messiah.