



The Battle Against Temptation

Lenten Series 2026

Who are they?



Sun Tzu – 5th to 6th Century BCE



Chinese military general, strategist, philosopher and writer when lived during the Eastern Zhou period

Believed to have written the famous and widely referenced book “The Art of War”

“The greatest victory is that which requires no battle”

Carl Von Clausewitz – 1780 to 1831



Prussian major general whose philosophy and thinking shaped modern military strategy and concepts still widely used today

Wrote but did not finish “On War”, published posthumously

“To secure peace is to prepare for war”

Napoleon Bonaparte – 1769 to 1821



Brilliant military commander and later Emperor of France

Apart from warfare, he is most remembered for his legal and administrative reforms

“Courage isn’t having the strength to go on – it is going on when you don’t have strength”

Mark 1:12-13

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Mark 1:12-13

¹² *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.* ¹³ *And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.*

(1) Temptation is **Always Around**

¹² *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.*

- Not the devil but **the Spirit** that drove Jesus!
 - Greek word for “drove” is *ekballo* = expel, eject forcefully, drive out
 - Intentional for Jesus to be tempted
- What is a test for?
 - Licence
 - Confidence



(1) Temptation is **Always Around** (2)

¹² *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.*

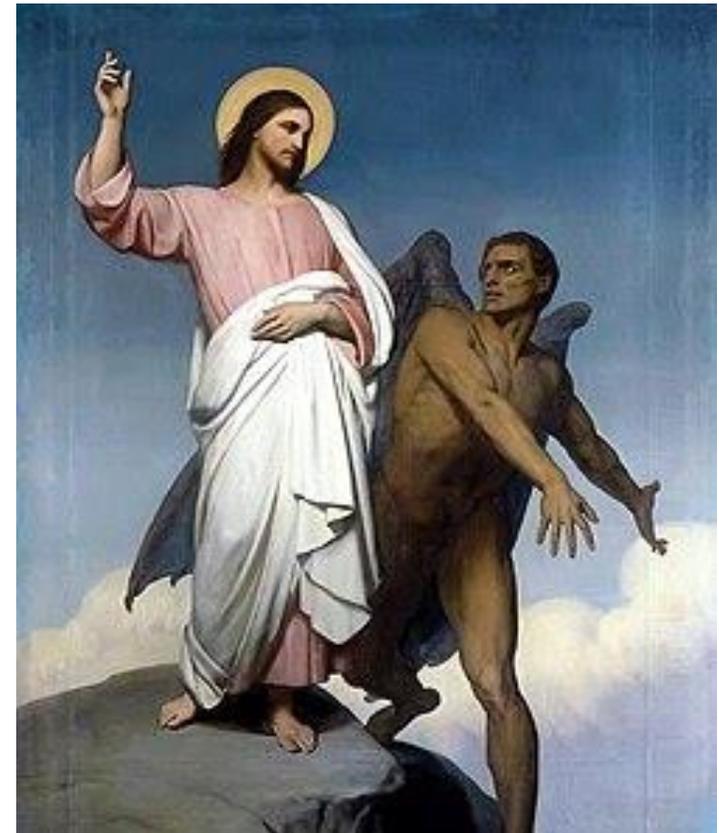
- **Immediately** after Jesus had been baptised and validated
 - Clausewitz: “... understand the kind of war you are in ...”
 - Temptation can come at any time!
- What is our “battle drill”?
 - **Avoid**
 - **Back off**
 - **Confront**



(2) Temptation Comes from an **Active Adversary**

13^a And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan

- There is an **enemy** who actively targets us, though his power is circumscribed
 - We are in a game with an opposing side!
 - # Athletics vs Boxing
- Sun Tzu: “All warfare is based on deception”
 - Satan is out to destroy us! Never for our good, though he may pretend to be ...



(2) Temptation Comes from an **Active Adversary** (2)

13^a And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan

- God is always for our good!
 - And He is infinitely more powerful!
 - He will even turn the tables from evil to good
- Satan opposes us because he wants to stop our advance
 - James 4:7 – When we resist, the devil flees!



(3) Overcome Temptation with **Assistance** from **Above**

*13b And he was with the wild animals, and **the angels were ministering to him.***

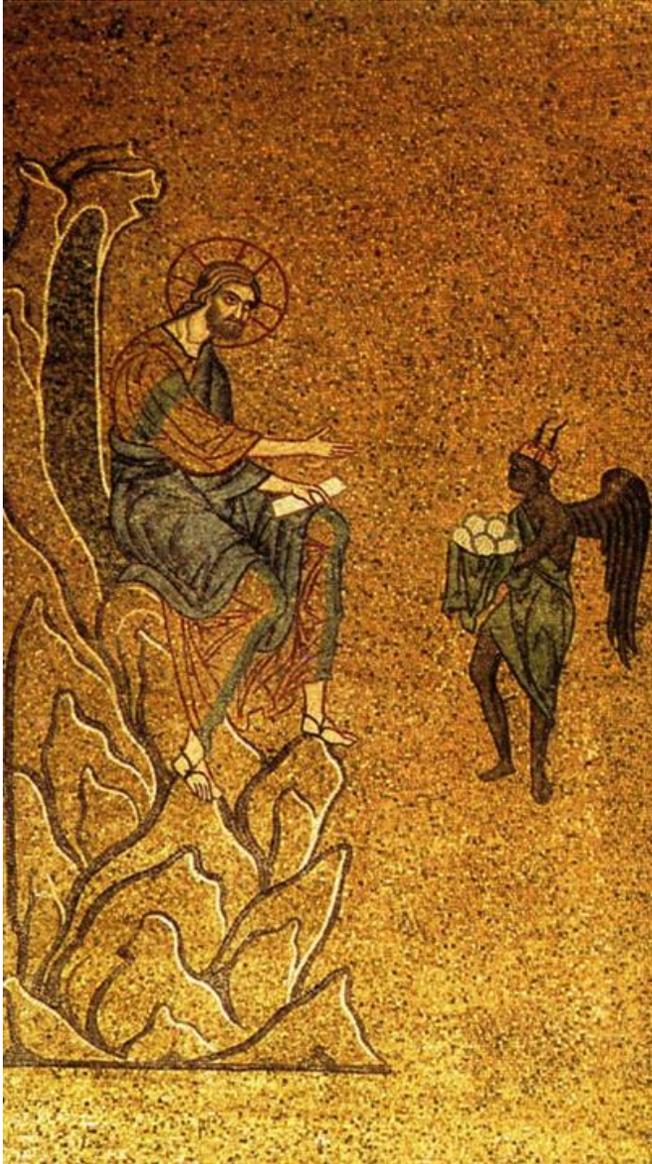
- We have divine assistance as God helps by sending **the angels**
- What were the “wild animals” of the Judean desert?
 - Greek word *therion* = beasts, often used to refer to agents of Satan
 - Physical and, especially, spiritual dangers



Temptations of Jesus (Ref: Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13)



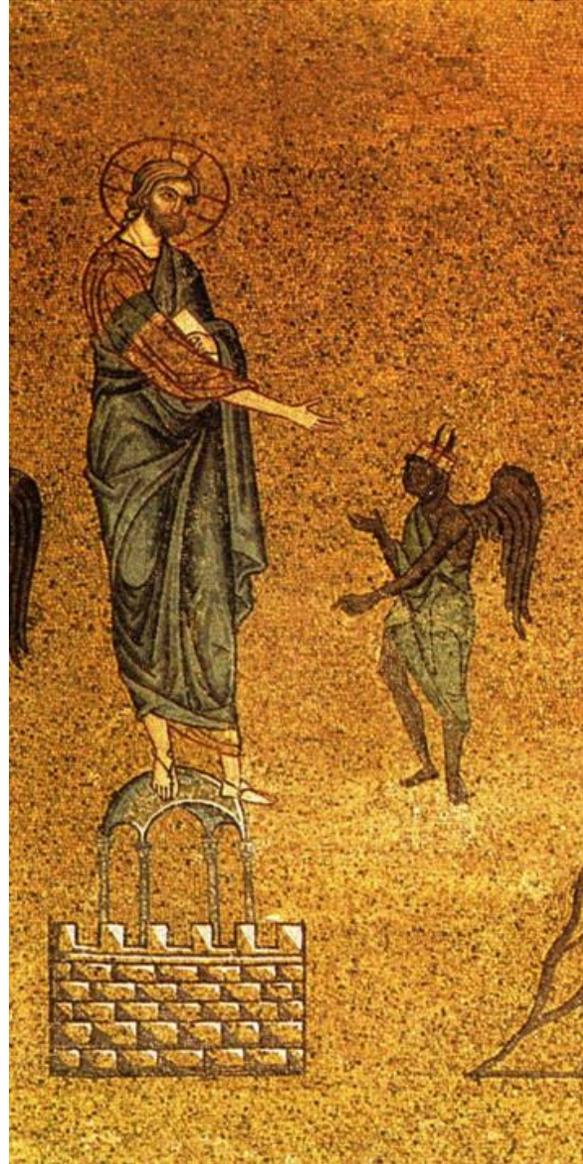
Temptations of Jesus (Ref: Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13)



Turn Stones into Bread

- Prioritising satisfying a physical need over following the teachings of God
- Appetite over trust

Temptations of Jesus (Ref: Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13)



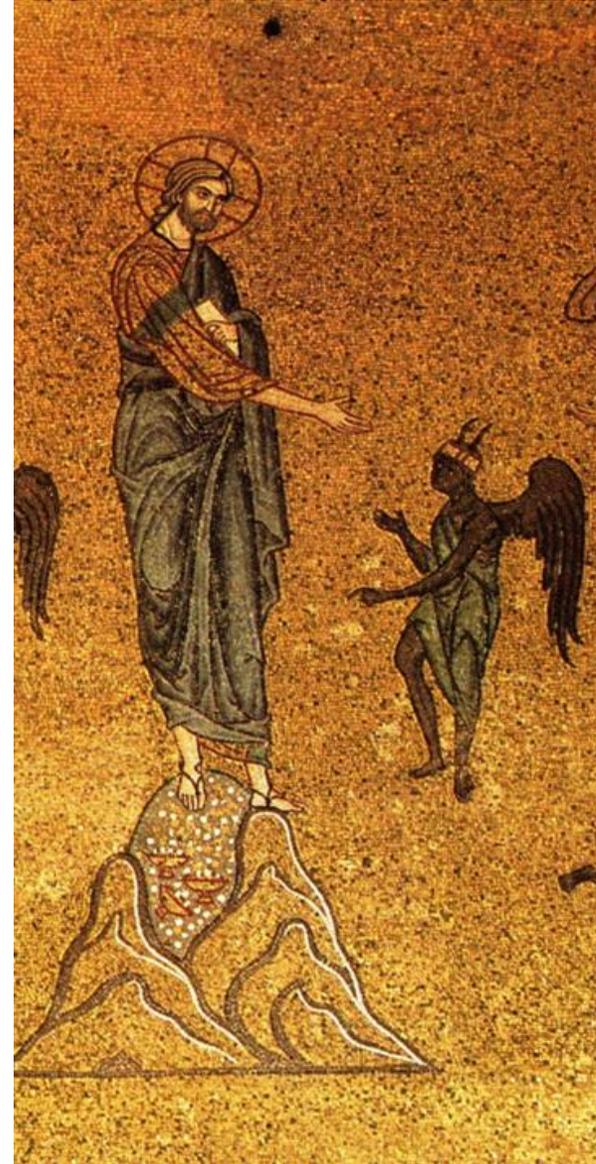
Jump from the Temple Roof

- Misusing God's miraculous power to prove Himself to an audience
- Pride, ego, presumptuousness

Temptations of Jesus (Ref: Matt 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13)

Worship Satan for
Power over Kingdoms

- Choosing an easier path of compromise instead of following God's plan
- Ends justifying means



(3) Overcome Temptation with **Assistance** from **Above** (2)

- Jesus shows how to overcome with divine help:
 - Using the **Word** of God
 - Submitting His **Will** to be aligned with God
 - Answering with **Wholehearted** faith & conviction
- It is good to be tested -> faith is a muscle that needs exercise
 - Submission and obedience are learnt
- Napoleon:
“There are two forces ... the sword and the spirit. In the long run, the sword will always be conquered by the spirit”



Conclusion

- Purpose of Lent
 - Reminds ourselves of the high price paid by Jesus on the cross
- Danger if we think there is no need to resist temptation or to repent
 - Cheapen the grace of God
 - Fall for the enemy's deceptions
- Outcome of war already settled – we won - but battles carry on
 - # Pilgrim's Progress "... there is a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven ..."
 - Need to battle to the end!

