

[Slide 1] Jesus in the Wilderness

Matt.3:16-4:11

Background question:

- Did Jesus know that he was Son of God before his baptism by John?

Question centers on the implications of Jesus' self-emptying (*kenōsis*)...

[Slide 2] Phil.2:5-7 Jesus' self-emptying

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷but **made himself nothing [kenō = emptied himself]**, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...

[Slide 3] = **God's divine self-limitation in the Incarnation** (what is involved in this?)

[Slide 4] Jesus is fully God, but lays aside his divine attributes = his human limitation in the Incarnation

- [Slide 5] Not **omnipresent** (had to go into Judea to bring healing to Lazarus – John 11:6-7, 21, 32 “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died”)
- [Slide 6] Not **omnipotent** (Matt. 13:58 “And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief”)
- [Slide 7] Not **omniscient** (Mark 5:30-32 Healing of woman with issue of blood)

[Slide 8] Healing of woman with issue of blood (Mark 5:30-32) – **Jesus doesn't know who was healed!** “kept looking around to see who had done it”)

[Slide 9] In the Incarnation, Jesus' divine power is limited to the capacity of Spirit-filled humanity:

- Does no miracle before his being filled with the Spirit (Matt.3:16)
- Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees the Father doing (John 5:19)
- Only reason that Jesus can say “the works that I do, you will do also” (John 14:12)

[Slide 10] Matt.3:16-17 Jesus' baptism: “This is my Son...”

[Slide 11] Significance of this...

- Heaven opened (*anoigō* = to be or stand open): Mark 1:10 more intense: uses same word (*schizō* = “torn open”) for this as is used for the rending of the veil of the temple (Matt.27:51, Mark 15:38 and Luke 23:45)
- Spirit descends and lights on him (Messiah = “anointed one”)
- [Slide 12] Voice from heaven (commissioning of Jesus to the work of the Messiah) = two Messianic prophecies combined
 - ✓ Ps.2:7 “You are my [beloved] Son”
 - ✓ Isa.42:1 “[My chosen one] in whom I delight [am well pleased]”

[Slide 13] Why did Jesus go into the wilderness?

- Jesus **driven out** (*ekballō*) into the wilderness by the Spirit
- Account of temptations comes from **Jesus himself** – why?
- **What kind of temptations were these?**
- [Slide 14] **Messianic temptations**, rather than temptations to sin (focus = “So you're the Son of God, eh?”: **not** a denial of Jesus' identity – cp. Demoniaics' confessions of Jesus' identity as Son of God)
- [Slide 15] Issue = **Jesus' Messianic strategy** rather than his **Messianic identity** (what kind of Messianic kingdom is Jesus going to proclaim and inaugurate? False expectations...)

[Slide 16] Temptation 1: Stones into Bread

- Temptation to tap into peoples' expectations of what the Messiah would do...
- 75% of Palestinian population at poverty level or below: expectations of Messianic abundance
- [Slide 17] **2 Baruch 29:5-8** (late 1st/early 2nd cent. CE); also in 1 Enoch [175BCE], Papias [130CE] and Apocalypse of Paul [379CE] – 550-year timespan)
- This is what the people are expecting: give it to them and gain immediate support...

[Slide 18] Feeding of 5000 (superabundance)

- Jesus then sends disciples away while he dismisses the crowd (Matt.14:22)
- Goes up mountain by himself to pray (Matt.14:23)
- Walks across water to disciples (Matt.14:25)

Why?

[Slide 19] **John 6:14-15** (feeding of 5000 provokes Messianic riot [= what was expected] – disciples sent away for their own safety)

[Slide 20] **Messianic Temptation 1: Stones into Bread** (what was the significance of this temptation?)

- Conflict between **Prophetic Principle** and **Popular Expectation** (what is **popular** or what is **true**?)
- **Socio-economic** element: “Meet people’s needs and they will follow you”
- [Slide 21] But whose agenda is being followed in this (“what you win them by, you have to keep them by”) – people’s expectations/ demands set the agenda of the Kingdom
- **Kingdom principle:** v.4 “Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (**God’s agenda**)
- Is the Kingdom about being **right** or being **popular**?

[Slide 22] **Messianic Temptation 2: On the Pinnacle of the Temple** = 450ft/140m drop into Kedron valley (Many Palestinians [Zealots, etc.] ready to follow a powerful Messianic figure)

- [Slide 23] Issues of **Power and Prominence**
- **Political** element: “Demonstrate your power to the people and they will follow you”
- [Slide 24] But “All power corrupts and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely” = presumption; exercise of power needs external constraints
- **Kingdom principle:** v.7 “Do not put the Lord your God to the test”
- Is the Kingdom about **self-initiated power**?

[Slide 25] **Messianic Temptation 3: The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory** (Can Jesus gain the world by bypassing the Cross?)

- [Slide 26] The Kingdom without the Cross
- **Religious** element: “Worship me and gain the world”
- [Slide 27] Easy way out to achieve ultimate goal (= “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever” (Rev.11:15))
- **Kingdom principle:** v.11 “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only”
- “The End justifies the means”: **does the “end” of the Kingdom justify the means by which it is gained?**

[Slide 28] To summarise:

- The Messianic Temptations are about the kind of Kingdom Jesus would proclaim
- That Kingdom is characterized by:
 - ✓ God’s agenda (doing God’s will)
 - ✓ God’s initiative (doing it God’s way), and
 - ✓ Following God’s call to take up the Cross (radical discipleship and self-denial)