

GOSPEL OF THE MESSIAH

Message 11

Text: Matthew 4:1-11

Date: 5/4/2014

INTRO: We are back in the four Gospels of the NT after having missed a number of Sundays. Let me just remind you where we have been. We have looked at the introduction of the Messiah to the world by John and Luke. We have also covered the point I called the introduction of the Messiah to the world. We looked at the accounts of both the conceptions and births of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. We looked briefly at the ministry of John the Baptist, and had just looked at the Baptism of Jesus Christ. Jesus is now about 30 years old, and His brief 2 year ministry is about to begin.

We are now going to make a transition in this message and the next section is a big one. Our transition is from the point of the Messiah's introduction to the world, to His authentication to the world. As I have outlined this third section, it will give to us four lines of evidence that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah. This is the authentication. The first one we will look at is Christ's authentication by His bloodline. The second is His authentication by testing. The third is His authentication by John the Baptist. The fourth and final authentication comes from His works and His words, and this is the biggest section. The very life of Christ Himself, what He did and what He said, gives the strongest evidence that can possibly be given.

Let me say this, the strongest evidence that we are in fact Christians is how we live and how we talk. And if we would teach others, it is most important that we first do what we are going to teach. Jesus said in Matthew 5:19, "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." When we put together what Jesus taught with how He lived, we have the strongest evidence that He was indeed the Messiah.

The Gospel writer Luke, who also wrote the book of Acts said in Acts 1:1, "The former account (i.e. the book of Luke) I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach..." And so, when we come to the fourth line of

proof that Jesus was the Messiah, we will have no options left but to say that Jesus is the Messiah. John said in John 1:34, "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." And when we are done with the life of Christ, we will have to say, "We have read what Jesus both taught and did, and we testify that He is the Son of God." These four lines of authentication will give us conclusive evidence that Jesus is the Christ, and will remove all ground of unbelief.

III. THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE MESSIAH TO THE WORLD

A. Proof of Messianic Right By Bloodline (Luke 3:23-38)

So we begin with Jesus genealogy in Luke 3:23-38. Before I mention the genealogy, let me make one note here regarding the very interesting wording of verse 23 in the KJV. It says, "And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age..." This is a most interesting verse and I may give a whole message on it on a separate occasion.

Well, in Luke 3:23-38 we are given a second genealogy in the life of Christ. Both genealogies claim to go to Christ through Joseph. This causes a serious question: How could Joseph have two different genealogies? Look at Luke 3:23 (read). Matthew 1:16 says, "And Jacob begat Joseph..." So was Joseph the son of Jacob or of Heli? It is generally agreed that in Luke's Gospel Joseph is the son of Heli by marriage. Heli is actually Mary's father. If this is correct, and I think it is, then we have Jesus' bloodline here.

We begin then with Luke's genealogy, for he goes back all the way to Adam. You see, if anyone of us could trace their genealogy back, we would all go back to Adam and Eve. And this is where Luke goes back to. We won't read the whole genealogy. If we go to the start from verse 38, we'll move back through the genealogy. The first very significant name we come to is Noah. We find him in Luke 3:36. We'll read 36-37 (read). Now all other genealogies up to that time came to an end there except one, that is the one that led to Noah. He is also one ancestor we all have in common. The flood happened about 1600 years after creation or

2400 years before Christ. Noah had three sons; Shem, Ham and Japheth. From Shem come the Semetic people, who are the Jews and the Arabs today. From Ham and Japheth come the Gentile people.

But if we want to find the line that will lead to Jesus Christ, we now follow Noah to Abraham (read vs. 34) . This is where Matthew's genealogy begins. Matthew only goes back to Abraham because the Messiah was Jewish and Abraham is the first Jew. And since Matthew presents Christ as the King of the Jews, his genealogy shows that Jesus' genealogy goes back to Abraham.

At Abraham, Luke's genealogy joins Matthews and now they travel the genealogy trail together up to King David. But we must make one stop in between. The genealogy from Abraham is; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (v.34). Isaac was born of Abraham and Sarah. That is crucial, because Ishmael was also born of Abraham, but not of Sarah.

Now, here enters a puzzle for me. Abraham's people were Semites, that is they came from Noah's son Shem. Today, people who are anti Jewish are called antisemitic. But the Arabs are a Semitic people as well as the Jews, but the Arabs, who themselves are Semitic are the worst of those who are called anti-Semites. How does that work? It is for me a puzzle. But by some strange means, since the late 1800's the term anti-Semitism has come to speak of those who are against the Jews.

Well, let us go forward again to David (read 31-32). Luke and Matthew have come here together from Noah. But now they will separate. Matthew will give Joseph's genealogy as coming from David's son Solomon. But Luke will follow Mary's line through Solomon's brother Nathan. Here they will separate for almost 20 generations and join again at Salathiel and Zorobabel (read 27). But having briefly joined here, they separate again after Zorobabel all the way to Joseph and Mary, where the two lines once more join. Now there are difficulties concerning some of these names. We will not go into those problems in these messages.

So we have here the first line of evidence that Jesus qualified to be the Messiah. In the genealogy of Mary we have evidence that Jesus qualifies to be the Messiah by right of blood-line. Many people in Jesus day would have qualified thus far as well. But they likely would have failed the other tests. But if Christ will qualify to be the Messiah, the test of bloodline to King David and the tribe of Judah He must meet, and He does. So we go to a second evidence that proves Jesus qualifies to be the Messiah. It is evidence born out of testing.

B. Proof Of Messianic Right By Testing

So the first evidence we have that Jesus qualifies to be the Messiah is that His bloodline can be traced back to King David. We go to Matthew 4 (read 4:1) for a second evidence. Here we have Jesus great temptation. In English we distinguish between being tested to see how trustworthy we are, or by being tempted to see how untrustworthy we can be made to become. When we are tested to see how untrustworthy we can be made to become, we call that a temptation. When we are tried to see how trustworthy we are or might become, we call that testing.

Our passage has raised numerous philosophical questions. Here is one; could Jesus really be tempted? James 1:13 says that God cannot be tempted. Since Jesus was divine, could He be tempted? Well, immediately we run into another point, one we also find hard to work through. It is this: Christ had two natures. He was both human and divine. So, could He be tempted in His humanity? Go with me to Hebrews 4:15 (read).

So, let me ask another question: Were Christ's temptations real? What I mean is this. One of the delicacies in the Philippines is cooked eggs that have been in the hatchery 10-14 days. Could I tempt anyone here with one of those eggs? You might say, "I am very tempted to box your ears for such an offer." You see, these eggs would be no temptation to you. So I ask, were Christ's temptations real? Was there any pull in Him? Was there any desire to fall for those temptations? And if we say there was not, then we ask, were His temptations real?

Well then, let me raise yet another question: If Christ could be tempted, could He have sinned? That is a scary question. When theologians speak of the peccability and impeccability of Christ, this is what they are talking about. He did not have a sin nature, but can someone who does not have a sin nature be tempted? Yes, Satan was and fell. The demons were and fell. Eve was and fell. Adam was without sin and fell.

Well, I do not know how to answer all those questions, but let me say this to the question whether He could be tempted: I believe His temptations were real. You see, to be tempted is not wrong. But our response can be wrong. But Jesus never responded wrongly.

And so, when we are tempted, right there we can learn how trustworthy or untrustworthy we are. We can learn right here how faithful, how trustworthy Jesus Christ was, and that He qualified to be the Messiah by His faithfulness under testing or temptation. So immediately after Jesus was baptized, He was led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted. Here in the wilderness He will be tempted by the Devil. This time lasted for 40 days and 40 is also the number of testing. Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus did not eat anything during this time and Mark's Gospel tells us He was there in the wilderness with the wild animals.

I believe God allowed Jesus to be tempted here, at least for two reasons. First, Jesus Christ could not fully appreciate man's desires unless He Himself experienced them in the flesh just like we do. Having been tempted and tested, He will then be able to fully sympathize with us. Second, God allowed Christ to be tested here, not only to prove that His Son could endure temptation, but to prove to us that Jesus was in fact the Son of God.

Now I conclude that the devil, in tempting Christ, knew he had to do so in Christ's humanity, not His divinity. And so Matthew and Luke tell us that after the 40 days of fasting Jesus was hungry. And no doubt He had a strong desire for food. And it is at this

time that Satan came. You see, Satan comes when we are weak. It matters not what the area of weakness is, it is there that he comes. And so, when Jesus was hungry, there is the devil watching Him, like a vulture over a starving child. And when he sees that the weakest moment has arrived, he flies to the prey.

So we begin this time in the life of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew, with 4:1-3 (read). Notice the word 'if'. And following this word *if* are these words, "if you are the Son of God." Now, you see, Christ in His humanity, like the rest of us, was made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 1). And this angel, though now the devil, says, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to be made into bread." I think what he is really saying is, "If you can do this, then maybe You are truly the Son of God."

And from Jesus' answer we can learn one of the most profound truths we can ever learn about dealing with Satan. He did not argue with the devil. He did not dialogue with Him. He answered him. And what is most profound is that He did so from the Word of God. You will find it most interesting that He meets the highest of all tests we will ever face as human beings from within the first few books of the Bible, the writings of Moses. Look at Matthew 4:4 (read). Jesus quotes here from Deuteronomy 8:3. You see, my dilemma in preaching through the Gospels is passing over verses in a few words when it asks for a whole message. But suffice it to say that God fed Israel with manna that they might learn that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. The word manna means, 'what is it?' That name is the first lesson in all good Bible study.

There are two things we can do that are absolutely devastating to Satan. One of those is prayer. But there is nothing quite so devastating to Satan and his efforts on us as when we know how to answer him from the Word of God. There were those among us who were not impressed with the messages I did on demonology. But a number of our folk learned to deal with the devil, using the Word of God. I am happy to tell you that we had proof that children can learn to withstand the devil in the name of Jesus Christ! The

Word of God is powerful. There were some in our midst who gained a whole new appreciation for the power that is in the name of Christ and His Word. If a Christian learns to use the Word of God he can beat the devil in every battle.

Let me add here as well that I am most encouraged at the number of people here who have read through the Bible, and the number of people who have read through a good number of times already. And there are parents with children who have read through the Bible with their children or who are presently reading through the whole Bible as a family. Parents have to read with care, and sometimes leave parts, you will understand. But knowing the Word of God is very key in our spiritual battle, and if we are truly born again, we are in that battle. And Dr. Job Martin challenged us with one other important matter: memorizing the Word of God.

Well, no doubt the devil drew on the fact that Christ was both human and divine. He said, "If you are the Son of God". There Satan questions Christ's divinity. The 'if' calls His divinity into question. And when he said, "command these stones to be made bread" here he appealed to His humanity. It becomes evident that if Satan could tempt Jesus into using His divinity to protect His humanity, he would have succeeded in defeating Christ. Esau sold his birthright for a bit of soup. Hunger can do incredible things to us.

When we come to the second temptation, Luke and Matthew give them in a different order. They both have the first one the same, but the second and third temptations are given in a different order. If we take Matthew's order, I see a progression in Satan's temptations. First he appealed to Jesus' humanity through His hunger. But Jesus said that man does not live by satisfying his hunger alone. He lives by every Word of God. And Satan thought, "Aha. So You want to appeal to the Word of God." So he took Him up to the highest point of the temple. It is uncertain exactly where the pinnacle of the temple was and it is not all that important. Josephus speaks of one area of the temple when you stood on top it made you dizzy. What is important is that if Christ had thrown Himself down, He would have been killed, unless He

used His divinity. And if He had done that for self preservation, under the sort of dare Satan put Him under, Satan would have defeated Christ.

Now it is questioned whether Satan took Christ up to the pinnacle of the temple. Was Christ actually physically up at this pinnacle. I cannot see otherwise than that is what happened. Christ was up there in His body. And Satan said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written in the Word of God that You have appealed to, that He will give His angels charge concerning You, and in their hands they will bear You up, lest You should dash Your foot against a stone." Right here we can learn an important lesson on the wrong use of Scripture.

The appeal of this temptation again is to Christ's humanity. Gravity had the same attraction on His body as it has on ours. And if you step off the pinnacle of the temple, the pull of gravity on the body is enough to kill you. If Satan could have destroyed the humanity of Christ, He would have won.

But look at Matthew 4:7 (read). The quote here is from Deuteronomy 6:16. That passage instructs Israel not to put God to the test as they did at Massah. Well, at Massah they were out of water. And the people came to Moses and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you tempt the Lord" (Ex. 7:1-3). Well, God is patient and He told Moses to smite the rock and He would bring forth water for the children of Israel. And in verse 7 it says, "So he (Moses) called the name of the place Massah and Meribah." Ryrie says that means 'tempted' and 'contention'. Now the verse says that Moses called this place by those names, and I quote, "...because they tempted the LORD, saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?'"

So if Jesus were to throw Himself down from the temple to see if God really meant what He said in the verses Satan quoted, He would be tempting God. It would be like saying, "Does the Lord really mean this?" At Massah the Israelis said, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

We might take warning here when we check to see how much we can get away with before the Lord does something to us. Could that not be a way of testing God?

Well, the third and last test according to Matthew's Gospel was this. Satan, the adversary, took Jesus up into a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And he said, "If you will fall down and worship me, I will give You all these things and the glory of them." What huge implications do such Scriptures carry. First, all the kingdoms of the world belong to Satan. Jesus did not argue and say, "Hey, just a minute. Not all these things belong to you." They did. You see, these are all the kingdoms of the 'world'. That word 'world' usually stands for all of lost mankind. That is why John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world..." That refers to lost mankind. The word *world* seldom refers to the earth. The earth is the Lord's; the world is Satan's.

And Satan said, "I will give You all these things if you fall down and worship me." Here is the test of all tests. Nothing has stronger appeal to man than this. Most do their utmost to get a small part of this world, never mind all of it. But not only that. Satan said, "I will also give you all the glory of the world, if you fall down and worship me." Many a man has sold his soul for just a small part of the glory of this world. It has a very strong pull on the human nature.

Now note that in the first two temptations, the 'if' was used to raise a question about Christ's deity. But Satan is no longer questioning that. What he is now after is Christ's worship. It causes me to shiver to think of this. You see, many people will sell their souls to get a little piece of the glory of the world; Christ could have had it all.

Now I cannot see other than that we have to ask this question: What is the glory of the world? It seems to me that the glory of the world is the fulfillment of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. That which satisfies those cravings results in the glory of the world, and unbeknown to

man, Satan is the recipient of that glory. Now I questioned if that could truly be called glory (Phil 3:19, whose glory is in their shame!).

Somehow to sin is to bring glory to the devil, and by sinning we serve Him. You see, in our passage both worship and service are involved. What we worship we also serve. And we could say that what we serve we also worship.

Now by offering Christ the glory of all the kingdoms of the world, we have to ask, what was Satan offering Him? Few commentators offer any help here. Gill says, "...by 'the glory of them,' is meant, the riches, pomp, power, and grandeur of them." But I believe it was the glory that comes through these riches and pomp and power through sin. Have you noticed how we can glory through worldly pomp? But it is sin! Satan receives such glory from man through sin. Let me explain it like this. When we do right, we bring glory to God. What does that glory do for God? Well, it is like it is for us when put our efforts into training our children to do right. If our children learn to live right in the midst of testing, it brings glory to us as parents. And just like that, when we live wrong, whom do we bring glory to? To none other than Satan Himself.

Now I have described glory as that which reveals some positive characteristic in a person. When something reveals something bad in a person, that is what we normally call shame. So it would seem that if Satan was glorified by sinning people, this would be shame. But could shame be called glory if that shame is something we get a thrill from? Take a gay pride parade, for example. Now what could be more shameful? But what if people get a thrill out of something so shameful? Well, in a sense it becomes their glory. Philippians 3:19 speaks of those whose glory is in their shame. And so, just as godly parents get glory from their children when they choose to do right; so Satan gets glory from people when they choose sin. And I cannot see other than that this is the glory he offered to Christ. Now this kind of glory should be repulsive. But to mankind living in sin, it can become the ultimate desire. The more man degenerates, the greater the sin he glories in.

So look at verse 10 to see how Jesus responds to this temptation (read). Now I do not find a clear reference in Deuteronomy that says, "You shall worship the Lord your God..." The references usually referred to here are Deuteronomy 6:13-14 and 10:20, though they do not clearly say what Jesus said. Exodus 34:14 does say, "You shall worship no other god..." However, it is the very clear teaching throughout the Scriptures that man is to worship and serve Jehovah God alone. In our passage both worship and service are mentioned. It is an interesting thing to find how many times the words *worship* and *serve* are used together in Scripture.

Well, the devil has been defeated. Matthew 4:11 says, "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." Let me tell you the picture I get, in the physical realm that shows what Jesus felt like when Satan was done with Him. If you have watched boxing, and have seen what it is like for those boxers when the bell rings after about the 10th round, that is the picture I get of how the Lord Jesus looked spiritually after the 40 days testing and the 3 major demonic temptations. There, spiritually battered and bruised and exhausted is the Lord Jesus. And then, suddenly the opponent is down for the count of 10. Then he drops his gloves and leaves. And for the boxer in a match, when the bell rings he sits down in the corner and the water bottle comes and the muscles are massaged and every luxury is heaped on the winner. That is the picture I get of the Lord Jesus here spiritually speaking! He has gone for 40 days without food. Then He has withstood every round with the devil and he has soundly defeated the devil. But He is still human, and the battle has taken a huge toll on Him. And when it is all over, the angels rush in to minister to Him. I ask you, if God sent the angels to come to minister to Him, were His temptations real? No doubt they were! In a brief day He faced more than any of us could stand up to. It has been exhausting. He has qualified by bloodline, but He now qualifies to be the Messiah by testing.

CONCL: So, we have seen that Jesus qualified to be the Messiah, both by bloodline and by testing. He will undergo

two more tests. John will give us the third evidence that Jesus qualifies to be the Messiah, and he will start us off on the fourth test and that will take a large section of the Gospels. And so, when we come to Matthew 4:11, Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:11 these three writers will fall silent for some time. John, who has been mostly silent up until now, will now step on the scene and fill in a very huge space left by the synoptic writers. And it seems that John's Gospel picks up the account of the life of Christ on the very day Matthew, Mark and Luke stop. We will begin in John in the next message.