

Matt 4:4 and its Relation to the Doctrine of Preservation

Introduction

Jesus statement in Matt. 4:4 “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” has often been cited as support for the doctrine of preservation. Specifically, the phrase “every word” has been frequently capitalized on to suggest not only that the passage teaches some kind of providential preservation of the Scriptural text, but that this preservation extends in fact to “every word” of the text. In other words, it has been asserted that we have here a promise of the verbal plenary preservation of Scripture in a particular text. In the textual transmission whereby the text of the Bible will be copied and passed down through the centuries, God will supposedly supernaturally superintend his will over that of all copyists, so that there will be none of the normal (and unavoidable) mistakes or alterations made in the copying of the sacred text. But is this actually what the text teaches in its context? To answer that question, we must zoom out to look at the larger section of which this statement is a part, then examine this statement in its immediate literary context, in its historical context, and finally note how the statement relates to the Old Testament quotation which it contains. Then we will be in a position to speak accurately to the meaning of the phrase and its relation to the doctrine of preservation.

The Broader Context of Matthew 3:1-4:25¹

Matt. 3:1-4:25 constitutes the first major narrative section of the gospel in the alternating narrative / discourse framework around which Matthew structures his gospel. This larger narrative section will then be followed by the first major discourse of the gospel on Kingdom Ethics, or what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). Following the infancy narrative and prologue of chapters 1-2, Matthew in this first narrative presents the preparation of Jesus for the ministry of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. The Sermon on Kingdom ethics (5-7) flows naturally out of that preparation. A brief survey of this larger section before we get into the details of the temptation narrative will help us to keep the larger context in mind.

The first part of the narrative (3:1-17) focuses on John the Baptist and his preparatory role in preparing a people for the Lord. He is presented as fulfilling the prophecy of Is. 40:3 as the forerunner who prepares the way for the Lord. His ministry, recounted in 3:1-12, climaxes in the baptism of Jesus in 3:13-17. At this baptism, Jesus is divinely authenticated by the heavenly Voice. The statement from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” is a compilation of two Old Testament quotations. It combines in an often unappreciated way the identity of Jesus as both the Son of God, the Davidic Messiah figure of Psalm 2:7 (the source of the first phrase), *and* the Suffering Servant of Is. 42:1 (the source of the second phrase). These two figures were not commonly connected in Second Temple Judaism. Judaism commonly held to rather triumphalistic notions of both an Aaronic and Davidic Messiah figure. Their messianic expectations were primarily of a political deliverer who would conquer Rome and deliver them from physical oppression. The Voice confirms to Jesus that while He is indeed the Son of God and the eschatological judge who will baptize with fiery judgment, He must first walk the way of suffering as the Servant of Isaiah who would bear the iniquities of transgressors (Is. 53:1).

¹ For the basic questions of introduction (Authorship, date, occasion, purpose, etc.), see the previous essays in this section.

This willingness to walk the way of suffering is precisely what is immediately tested in the next section (4:1-11) in the wilderness temptation of Jesus. In each of the three temptations that Jesus faces, he is entitled as Son of God to that which is offered by Satan, but his determination is to do the will of the father as an obedient son, and thus he embraces the way of suffering. He does as God's penultimate Son what Israel had always failed to do, and remains faithful to the Father. The temptation is seen as part of the Preparation of Jesus for his ministry. Having successfully honored his father, and shown his commitment to accept suffering as a part of his mission, Jesus is now ready to begin his public ministry.

Following the temptation narrative, Matthew (and the other Synoptics) seems to jump over the earliest phase of Jesus ministry (which seems to have been a relatively obscure year of river and Jerusalem ministry recounted in John 1-4) and moves immediately to the more popular phase which follows on the heels of the arrest of John the Baptist (4:12-17). Thus, Jesus returns to Galilee and makes Capernaum his new home base of operations. He launches his public ministry from that base. The message he begins to preach is summarized by Matthew as "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (4:17). This message is the capstone of the similar but preparatory one that John had preached (3:2), and in fact was the cause of John's arrest and ultimate execution, as Matthew will pick up again and explain in 14:1-12. Jesus will naturally face a similar fate. The Kings has indeed finally come.

Finally, Matthew concludes this narrative section by recounting the call of four of the disciples (4:18-22) and then summarizing the early ministry of Jesus, noting both his healing and teaching ministry. This of course opens the way for the Sermon on the Mount as the first major account of Jesus teaching.

The Context of 4:1-11 and The Temptation Narrative as a Whole

Overview

In 4:1-11, Matthew recounts Jesus facing with victory the temptations that Adam and Israel faced with failure. Specifically, his willingness to face the difficulties of filling the role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah are tested. He will face three temptations, and in each of them, we will recount elements of the story in Deut. 6-8 (heightening the parallels) to show that he will succeed where Israel failed. Matthew presents a slightly different order for the temptations than the parallel account in Luke (Luke 4:1-13). Scholars have occasionally argued variously for one or the other as being the historical order, (with the other being a modification of this order) but all such contentions are necessarily tenuous. Matthew is generally prone to a more thematic arrangement, so we might expect him to have rearranged the material, but we cannot say with certainty. But one might also note that in Luke's order, the quotations from Deut. are in chronological order. More importantly, Luke has a greater stress on the chronology of the event which seems most appropriate if he is maintaining the original order, which Matthew then thematically rearranges.

A Note on Source Criticism

While so-called, "source criticism" has sometimes been employed in ways destructive to the authors of the biblical text as inspired writers (and at times, in ways

destructive to the integrity of the text), there is nonetheless occasionally helpful information gained from such a perspective, when these extremes are avoided. And such analysis can often serve to bolster the historical claims of Scripture. Thus, a source critical analysis of the text should be at least briefly commented upon. At the level of the initial source, the recounting of the story surely goes back to Jesus himself. The Temptation account has all the earmarks of a private experience, certainly not witnessed by the disciples. Their only knowledge of it would have been Jesus' own recounting to them of his spiritual struggles with Satan. If there was an oral account which the disciples continued to disseminate, this could have led to the production of a written account, but such conjecture is just that –conjecture. Because Mark's own account (Mark 1:12-13) is so brief, and yet there is remarkable verbal similarity between Matthew and Luke, they must have shared a common source or sources distinct from Mark (some kind of "Q Material") or one of them must have had access to the other. One might simplistically suggest that Matthew shares the account from his memory of the story as Jesus told it to him (presuming he was present for such an accounting), but this still fails to account for Luke's knowledge of the event, who was a later convert and not an eyewitness to Jesus ministry (Luke 1:2), unless one suggests that Luke had access to Matthew. It seems much more likely that Matthew and Luke shared some common written source. The similarities in the account make this almost certain. The strong verbal similarity at least suggests that a shared source would have been written, though this is not certain. As we will note below, a "Q reconstruction" at this point is necessarily extremely tentative, and one must be immediately skeptical of any certain claims made in this regard.

Matthew's Intent for the Temptation Narrative as a Whole

Keener points out that the interpretations of the temptation narrative fall generally into three categories; 1. A Salvation-historical interpretation, 2. A Christological interpretation, 3. A paranetic interpretation. He suggests that "the narrative functions in all three ways."² That is, some suggest that Matthew is presenting Jesus as bringing Israel's story to its climax here. Some suggest that Matthew is showing Jesus' unique qualifications for Messiah-ship, and others suggest that Matthew is presenting the story as the penultimate example of how to face temptation with success. Informed by a robust understanding of Matthew's intention throughout his work, and leaning toward Keener's first category, (while also incorporating his second) Carson explains, "The Parallels with historic Israel continue. Jesus' fast (doubtless total abstinence from food but not from drink; Luke 4:2) of forty days and nights reflected Israel's forty-year wandering (Duet. 8:2). Both Israel's and Jesus' hunger taught a lesson (Duet. 8:3); both spent time in in the desert preparatory to their respective tasks. The main point is that both "sons" were tested by God's design (Duet. 8:3, 5; cf. Ex. 4:22), the one after being redeemed from Egypt and the other after his baptism, to prove their obedience and loyalty in preparation for their appointed work. The one "son" failed but pointed to the "Son" who would never fail (see comments at 2:15). In this sense, the temptations legitimized Jesus as God's true Son."³ Matthew is sharing the story in order to show that Jesus successfully resisted the temptations of Satan, and he is framing the story so that the Jewish reader cannot fail to

² Keener, SRC, *Matthew* pg. 137.

³ Carson, EBC *Matthew*, pg. 141.

hear echoes of the story of Israel in Jesus' own temptation. This has clear Christological implications (on the so called recapitulation theory in particular, in which this passages is of paramount importance). But while it might be said that everything Jesus does contains a model for Christian behavior (and thus, in a remote way, the temptation can function paranetically as a paradigm for resisting temptation in the life of the believer), paranesis is not Matthew's primary intention, which lies rather with the Christological and salvation-historical concerns.

Matthew has intentionally modeled the story after Israel's testing in the wilderness. His intention is to show Jesus fulfilling his role as Suffering Servant, succeeding where Israel had only ever failed. Just as God "led" the children of Israel in the wilderness, (Ps. 107:7; Is. 63:14, etc.), Jesus is "led" into the wilderness by the Spirit. Just as Israel had lived in an inhabitable location, dependent on God's sustenance, Matthew presents Jesus as entering the Judean Wilderness dependent upon God. Keener notes, "Apart from a few rugged people like John who has made the 'wilderness' between the Jordan valley and Judean Hills their home, it represented a dangerous and inhospitable setting. One had to return to the Jordan Valley for food and water, and the rugged terrain made injury easy."⁴ This becomes all the more clear when we understand the Jewish ethnicity of Matthew's audience (see previous essays). The memory of their past (repeated) failures in the wilderness lingered long in Israel's corporate memory, and the hope of a final victor could not but arise longing for a Messiah. "In this narrative Matthew presents Jesus as Israel's – and Jesus' followers' – champion, the one who succeeded in the wilderness where Israel had failed."⁵ The narrative falls into three basic parts;

4:1 – Setting

4:2-10 – Temptation

- 4:2-4 – Turn Stones to Loaves
- 4:5-7 – Throw yourself down
- 4:8-10 – Fall down and worship

4:11 – Conclusion

In 4:1, Matthew sets the stage, and presents the parallels to Israel's wandering. In 4:2-10, the temptations proper commence. First, in 4:2-4, Jesus is made hungry by his 40 day fast, and Satan tempts him in his hunger to rely upon himself (by employing his divine power) rather than to rely on the sustenance of God. Like Israel, Jesus as the Son of God was to be dependent upon God for his provision, and he resists Satan's suggestion by quoting Moses' statement (Deut. 8:3) to Israel that God would provide in the wilderness. He waits on the Father to provide for him.

Second, in 4:5-7, Satan tempts him to display his power to the world by throwing himself from the pinnacle of the temple. But God has called his servant to obedience, not arrogance. "The devil wants Jesus to presume upon his relationship with God, to act as if God is there to serve His Son, rather than the reverse."⁶ Satan employs a "proof text"

⁴ Keener, SRC Matthew Pg. 137, n. 190.

⁵ Keener, SRC Matthew pg. 138.

⁶ Keener, SRC Matthew pg. 141.

combining statements from Psalm 91:11 and 12, but ignoring the context of Psalm 91:1-10. The psalm in its context is a promise of protection from dangers that come against the righteous apart from their initiative, but Satan employs only a snippet from it as though it was an approval of testing God to see if He really will do what he says. Jesus counters with a more appropriate Scripture, directly forbidding what Satan has suggested. He again cites a section from Deut. 6-8, (Deut. 6:16). "Jesus understood Scripture accurately and alluded not only to the passage he cited but its context. When he warns against 'putting God to the test' (Deut. 6:13) He alludes to Israel's dissatisfaction in the wilderness (e.g., Ex. 17:2-3, 7). Although God was supplying their needs, they demanded more than their needs, forgetting how much God had delivered them from. Yet Jesus did not get himself into testing presumptuously; like Elijah of old, he did what he did at God's command (I Kings 18:36; Mt. 26:42). Jesus responds as Israel should have.

Third, Satan tempts him to worship him, taunting him with rule over the entire world. He takes him to a high mountain, and claims that he will give him rule over all the kingdoms of the world if he will only worship Satan. God has already promised his servant rule over the kingdoms of the world. What Satan is offering is this rule through a means other than the suffering of the cross. One can easily see the triumphalism suggested here. Later religious leaders will echo the same idea at the cross: If Jesus is the Son of God, let God rescue him from the cross (Matt. 27:4-43). Even Peter will allow such ideas of a triumphant messiah to seep into his thinking (Matt. 16:22). Jesus will rebuke him just as he does Satan. Keener notes that this test would have especially appealed to the disciples, who likewise wanted a Kingdom without a Cross. "Jesus' mission involved the cross (26:54), and so does the mission of Jesus' true disciples (16:23-26)."⁷ Jesus resists Satan's temptation by again invoking the Deut. 6-8 passage, this time quoting Deut. 6:13.⁸ Lying behind this is the command of Deut. 6:12 – don't forget what God has done for you, as well as the development in 6:13-15 – God is jealous of his people's affections. Jesus will not forget the gifts of the Father, and he will not violate the commandment to worship only God. While the Israelites repeatedly pursued other God's, Jesus will worship only the Father. And he will face the way of suffering.

Finally, in 4:11, Matthew concludes the narrative, noting Jesus' success. He has resisted the devil, who has thus fled (James 4:7). He has conquered, and as he will later

⁷ Keener, SRC Matthew pg. 142.

⁸ One should note that it is an odd interpretive move (yet one that has occasionally been made) that makes much of Satan "altering the text of Scripture" in the previous temptation, when Jesus own quotation here does not match the OT verbally. He has either supplied the "only" as an expansion, or (more likely, as he states that this is what "is written," and it doesn't seem likely that Matthew presents him as being less than truthful), he (or the Evangelists portraying him) is employing a form of the text (the "proto-Masoretic text" as it is sometimes called) which is textually different than the Masoretic Text behind the KJV OT. Matthew's text has Jesus say, "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But the KJV OT text reads, "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him____, and shalt swear by his name" without any "only." Erasmus had noted the distinction between the LXX and the Hebrew Masoretic text here, and explained that Jesus is quoting here from the LXX rather than the Hebrew (see his annotations on Mt. 4:4, 1516).

note, he has thus “bound the strong man” (Matt. 12:29). And with the successful resisting of Satan’s advances comes the provision from God for which Jesus has patiently waited. He has hungered for 40 days, but never has God been absent, and now God provides through angels the needed (and patiently waited for) sustenance. “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.” (Mat 4:1 KJV)

The Context of 4:2-4 – The First Temptation of Jesus in Particular

Synoptic Parallels

To zoom in and take a closer look at the initial temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:2-4; Luke 4:2-4) we will set the accounts in parallel and note the distinctions made by each evangelist, so that we can best appreciate exegetically the contributions and unique emphasis of each. Respect for the verbal inspiration of Scripture as the very Word of God means that such detailed analysis is warranted. To hear the Word of God we must hear the voice of each of the human authors and discover their intentions. Noting their unique use of selection, adaptation, and arrangement is essential to this task. Note that Marcan priority is presumed here rather than defended. We thus present each account (together with the Marcan parallel, which does not per se contain the temptation encounters) in a color-coded scheme as explained below,⁹ and then remark upon the exegetical significance of the analysis. Note that I have not highlighted distinctions in word order at all here, which could be seen as significant by some. They can be easily surmised by comparing the parallel **dark blue** and **bright blue** sections).

- **Black Bold is distinctly Marcan Material (Material Mt. and Lk. chose to alter or not retain)**
- **Green is Distinctly Mathean Material**
- **Red is distinctly Lukan Material**
- **Bright Blue is similar wording with a parallel but in a different form**
- **Dark Blue is verbally identical wording with a parallel**
- **Underlined Material is verbally different but conceptually identical (i.e., the same idea in distinctly different words)**

⁹ Note that I have not presented a Q reconstruction here, due to its more tenuous nature. For reference, Robinson’s reconstruction of Q (with his notational markings removed) is as follows; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος πειρασθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου. καὶ ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα ἐπείνασε καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος, Εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰπέ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται. καὶ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτὸ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Γέγραπται, ὅτι Οὐκ ἐπ’ ἄρτω μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος. (See, *The Critical Edition of Q*).

TR Texts in Parallel

<i>Matt 4:2-4 TR</i>	<i>Mark 1:12-13a</i>	<i>Luke 4:2-4 TR</i>
<p>Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς</p> <p><u>ἀνήχθη</u></p> <p>εἰς τὴν ἔρημον <u>ὑπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος,</u> <u>πειρασθῆναι</u> <u>ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου.</u> <u>καὶ νηστεύσας</u></p> <p>ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα <u>καὶ νύκτας τεσσαράκοντα,</u></p> <p>ὕστερον ἐπέινασε. <u>καὶ προσελθὼν αὐτῷ <u>ὁ πειράζων</u></u></p> <p>εἶπεν,</p> <p>Εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰπέ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται.</p> <p><u>ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς</u></p> <p><u>εἶπε,</u></p> <p>Γέγραπται, Οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ρήματι ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος Θεοῦ.</p>	<p>Καὶ εὐθὺς τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτὸν</p> <p>ἐκβάλλει</p> <p>εἰς τὴν ἔρημον.</p> <p>καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ</p> <p>ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα <u>πειραζόμενος</u> ὑπὸ τοῦ <u>Σατανᾶ,</u></p>	<p>Ἰησοῦς δὲ <u>Πνεύματος Ἁγίου πλήρης</u> <u>ὑπέστρεψεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰορδάνου,</u></p> <p><u>καὶ ἦγετο</u> <u>ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι</u> εἰς τὴν ἔρημον,</p> <p>ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα <u>πειραζόμενος</u> ὑπὸ τοῦ <u>διαβόλου.</u></p> <p><u>καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδὲν ἐν ταῖς</u> <u>ἡμέραις ἐκείναις· καὶ</u> <u>συντελεσθεισῶν αὐτῶν,</u></p> <p>ὕστερον ἐπέινασε.</p> <p><u>καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ διάβολος,</u></p> <p>Εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰπέ τῷ λίθῳ τούτῳ ἵνα γένηται ἄρτος.</p> <p><u>καὶ ἀπεκρίθη</u> <u>Ἰησοῦς πρὸς αὐτόν,</u> <u>λέγων,</u></p> <p>Γέγραπται <u>ὅτι</u> Οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ρήματι Θεοῦ.</p>

KJV Texts in Parallel

<i>Matt 4:2-4 KJV</i>	<i>Mark 1:12-13a KJV</i>	<i>Luke 4:2-4 KJV</i>
<p>Then <u>was Jesus</u></p> <p><u>led up of the Spirit</u> into the wilderness <u>to be tempted of the devil.</u></p> <p>And when <u>he had fasted</u> Forty days and forty nights,</p> <p>he was afterward an hungred.</p> <p>And when <u>the tempter</u> came to him, he said,</p> <p>If thou be the Son of God, command that <u>these stones be made bread.</u></p> <p>But he answered and <u>said,</u></p> <p>It is written,</p> <p>Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word <u>that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.</u></p>	<p>And immediately <u>the Spirit</u></p> <p>driveth him into the wilderness.</p> <p>And he was there in the wilderness forty days, <u>tempted of Satan</u></p>	<p>And <u>Jesus</u></p> <p>being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan,</p> <p>and <u>was led by the Spirit</u> into the wilderness,</p> <p>Being forty days <u>tempted of the devil.</u></p> <p>And in those days <u>he did eat nothing:</u> and when they were ended,</p> <p>he afterward hungered.</p> <p>And <u>the devil</u> said <u>unto him,</u></p> <p>If thou be the Son of God, command <u>this stone that it be made bread.</u></p> <p>And <u>Jesus answered him, saying,</u></p> <p>It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.</p>

A variety of exegetically significant points emerge from this analysis;

1. Each Evangelist has exercised his own stylistic preference in opening the account.¹⁰ Mark uses the standard *Καὶ*, Luke changes this to his characteristic *δὲ*, (used 538 times in Luke), while Matthew instead uses his much more unique *Τότε* (used 90 times in Matthew,¹¹ but only 6 times in Mark and only 14 in Luke). Each serves a similar transitory function, but with the particular stylistic color of the individual Evangelist.
2. Each Evangelist has used a unique way of describing how the Spirit brought Jesus to the wilderness. While all three mention the agency of the Spirit, Mark has Jesus much more forcefully (almost violently) “driven” into the wilderness. The word typically has connotations of being “forced out, cast out, or expelled” (BDAG). Both Matthew and Luke have (independently) softened this courser language to some form of the smoother “led.” The fact that they both have softened the phrase in a similar way, but have chosen different (though related) words to replace Mark’s suggests that this softening was not reflected in their shared (Q) material (otherwise they would likely have employed the same softened word). If one were to conjecture that one of their uses must reflect the text of Q, it would seem most likely that Matthew’s use is so unique that it originates with his source, not him. He employs his only use of the rare *ἀνάγω* (in form as *ἀνήχθη* here), used in this text and nowhere else in his work. Luke uses his typical *ἄγω*, (used 41 times in Luke-Acts,¹² but only 11 times in Matthew and Mark combined¹³), in its form here as *ἦγετο*, which is more likely to reflect his own stylistic variation.
3. Matthew alone adds, “and forty nights.” Clearly, if Jesus was there for forty days, he was also there for forty nights. But Matthew chooses to add the repetitive phrase, likely because it allows him to repeat the word “forty” again. He is highlighting even further the parallels between Jesus’ temptation by Satan for forty days and the wilderness wanderings of Israel for forty years. This would be especially important for his Jewish audience, for whom “forty” had taken on a sort of symbolic special significance (due to their past) that would be meaningless to a Gentile.
4. Matthew alone adds, “which proceedeth out of the mouth of” to the quotation of Deuteronomy, or, conversely, Luke omits it. Since Luke presents his quotation with

¹⁰ One should note that the distinction between Matthew and Luke has been obscured by the KJV at this and several other minor points, as one can see by comparing any place where the KJV parallels are identical but the coloring is different, or is bright blue but identical in English.

¹¹ Matt. 2:7, 16-17; 3:5, 13, 15; 4:1, 5, 10-11, 17; 5:24; 7:5, 23; 8:26; 9:6, 14-15, 29, 37; 11:20; 12:13, 22, 29, 38, 44-45; 13:26, 36, 43; 15:1, 12, 28; 16:12, 20-21, 24, 27; 17:13, 19; 18:21, 32; 19:13, 27; 20:20; 21:1; 22:8, 13, 15, 21; 23:1; 24:9-10, 14, 16, 21, 23, 30, 40; 25:1, 7, 31, 34, 37, 41, 44-45; 26:3, 14, 16, 31, 36, 38, 45, 50, 52, 56, 65, 67, 74; 27:3, 9, 13, 16, 26-27, 38, 58; 28:10

¹² Lk. 4:1, 9, 29, 40; 10:34; 18:40; 19:27, 30, 35; 21:12; 22:54; 23:1, 32; 24:21; 5:21, 26-27; 6:12; 8:32; 9:2, 21, 27; 11:26; 17:5, 15, 19; 18:12; 19:37-38; 20:12; 21:16, 34; 22:5, 24; 23:10, 18, 31; 25:6, 17, 23

¹³ Matt. 10:18; 14:6; 21:2, 7; 26:46; Mk. 1:38; 11:2, 7; 13:9, 11; 14:42

indirect discourse (adding the $\sigma\tau\iota$, or that), which thus somewhat frees him from verbal precision, it seems more likely that Luke has omitted it.

5. Luke's is the longest account. He alone adds that Jesus was "full of the Spirit" and that the time of Jesus' fasting was set (by the Spirit) and had "come to an end." He further adds the geographical timeframe that the temptation occurs when he had returned from Jordan. These each are peculiar to Luke's style, purpose, and audience. Luke has a special emphasis throughout his 2-volume work on the Holy Spirit, and in his gospel he has a unique emphasis on Jesus as empowered by the Spirit and fulfilling his will. Thus, whereas Mark had only mentioned that the Spirit was responsible for putting Jesus in the wilderness, Luke has expanded this to explain that Jesus was full of the Spirit throughout the event, and that his fast was (apparently) a set time-frame predetermined by the Spirit. He has also added geographical details that would not be needed for a Jewish audience already familiar with the terrain, but that would be helpful to a Gentile like Theophilus, who was not. It is also significant not to note that some see Luke's entire gospel as being arranged around a basically geographical scheme.
6. Mark initially uses the, "immediately" so characteristic of his fast-paced discourse,¹⁴ and Luke and Matthew both omit it as a peculiarity of Markan style. Mark also repeats the mention of the wilderness as he concludes the account, "And he was there in the wilderness." In one sense it would be accurate to say that both Matthew and Luke have omitted this phrase, since neither of them include a repetition of "in the wilderness" as Mark does. However, it is more accurate to say that it is precisely in this phrase that Matthew and Luke have found opportunity for expansion. They have a shared source (the so-called "Q" material) that has more details of the story, and Mark's terse phrase is the perfect place to insert it. In so doing, they also clarify Mark's ambiguous chronology. In Mark's account, using the participle, one cannot tell much about the tempting, but it seems to have been a forty day affair only, and on the surface would appear to have implied forty continuous days of tempting. Mark and Luke have both taken pains to explain that the expanded material they present (the three temptations by Satan) represent events that take place after the actual forty-day period of fasting ended. However, both Matthew and Luke still present the forty days of fasting as being a kind of "tempting" from the devil, thus maintaining consistency with Mark's account, but both present the encounter with the Devil as occurring after this period, and bridge into it with the understanding that Jesus' hunger (from the forty day fast) was the opportunity for the encounter. Luke is the most explicit in his chronology (as he is throughout the account), lending credence to the idea that his is the original chronological order.

Textual Issues

We will exegete and interpret only the text of the TR in these essays, but because the work as a whole deals with textual criticism at its core, a word about textual issues in the

¹⁴ 42 times in Mark, (Mk. 1:10, 12, 18, 20-21, 28-31, 42-43; 2:2, 8, 12; 3:6; 4:5, 15-17, 29; 5:2, 13, 29-30, 36, 42; 6:25, 27, 45, 50, 54; 7:35; 8:10; 9:15, 20, 24; 10:52; 11:2-3; 14:43, 45; 15:1) but only 26 times in Matthew and Luke combined.

passage is appropriate. There are a handful of minor textual variants throughout the passage, and one that is of more significance. One of the most common scribal variations (in the Byzantine manuscripts in particular) is the tendency to produce a fuller and smoother text. In the gospels, this most commonly takes the form of attempts to harmonize the various gospel parallels to one another. Thus, most of the more important textual variations are the result of scribes either consciously (or, more likely, unconsciously) harmonizing their texts to match one of the parallel accounts. Assuming for the sake of argument the accuracy of the text of the TR here, one can still see this undeniable scribal tendency at work. For example;

1. A few scribes have harmonized parts of the Matthean account to match the Lukan account at points;
 - a. Minuscule 1 omits “and forty nights” from the text of Matthew in harmonization to the Lukan account. Fortunately, Erasmus caught this error in his manuscript; otherwise it likely would have ended up in the TR and the KJV.
 - b. A few scribes, (1424 [9th century Byzantine ms], and 700 [11th century Byzantine ms]), have added the οτι (“that,”) unique to Luke, thus harmonizing the Matthean account to Luke.
2. Several Manuscripts have harmonized part of the Markan account to the unique features of the Matthean account;
 - a. For example, the “and forty nights” unique to Luke has been added to the markan account in; L019 (8th century Byzantine ms), minuscule 33 (9th century Byzantine ms), as well as family 13 (10th century Byzantine/caecarean group of manuscripts), minuscule 124 (11th century), 346 (12th century Byzantine ms), and minuscule 69 (15th century Byzantine ms), minuscule 579 (13th century ms), and M021 (9th century Byzantine ms).
3. Several scribes have harmonized parts of the Lukan account to match the Matthean version;
 - a. One western manuscript (D05) has harmonized the Lukan account to read “Satan” (like Mark) instead of “the devil.”
 - b. Several have omitted the οτι (“that”) unique to the Lukan account, thus making his quotation, (like Matthew’s) a case of direct discourse. This has been done by the Western D05, the Byzantine 1424, family 13, 700, 788, 1071, 346, and 69.
 - c. Several others have harmonized the Lukan account of the quotation to the Matthean expanded version. The “that proceedeth out of the mouth of” that is uniquely Matthean has been inserted into to the Lukan text by 1424(), 157(), 118(), 209(), 1071(),
 - d. Many textual scholars believe that the entire second part of the quotation in the Lukan passage “but by every word of God” is likewise yet one more harmonization of the Lukan account to match the Matthean. The tendency of scribes to such harmonization has already been evidenced here, and is undeniable even if one holds the TR text to be identical with the original autographs. The longer section of the quotation is missing entirely from several of the earliest witnesses (N, B), from the supplemental material to W,

and later from L019, 788, etc. Since the attempt to harmonize the gospels is common, these critics suggest that the Lukan version originally only read, “man shall not live by bread alone,” and that the longer expansion is a harmonization to the Matthean account. Robinson and other majority text advocates disagree, since the longer version is found in the majority of witnesses (and in this variant, the MT agrees with the TR). Exegetically, if the longer version of Luke is a scribal expansion, then Luke originally made his point apart from the longer ending “But by every word of God.” We will interpret here only the TR form of the text for the sake of argument. In either case, with or without the longer ending, Luke’s point remains the same – man should live dependent upon God. Israel failed to; Jesus will succeed in fully relying upon God for his sustenance, despite his intense hunger.

Interpretation

In many specifics, Matthew and Luke intend the narrative of the first temptation of Jesus by Satan to serve the same function for their readers. They are both showing that Jesus was tested by Satan at the beginning of his ministry. They are both showing that this took place under the direction of the Spirit. Just when Jesus is at his weakest (humanly) due to his hunger, Satan swoops in to take advantage. He tries to get Jesus to exercising his divine power, and to satisfy his hunger apart from reliance upon the Father for provision. Jesus responds by quoting the text of Deut. 8:3, invoking the message of Moses to the wondering Israelites that God desires his people to depend only upon Him for their provision. Jesus thus successfully resists the temptations of Satan, showing his Messiahship, and his qualification for the ministry of suffering (and ultimately, the cross) to which the Father has called him. Jesus is God’s true, and only obedient Son.

There is however at least one significant difference between them in how they employ the account. Matthew, writing for his Jewish audience, is especially strengthening the connection of Jesus with OT Israel. Israel failed as God’s son, but Jesus succeeds where they failed. Jesus is walking in the shoes of the wilderness wonderers who had such a history of failure in their own forty-year testing. Matthew intends his readers primarily to see flashbacks to that event. Luke, however, is writing for the Gentile Theophilus. His gospel is predominated by concern for the Gentile mission and the evangelization of the world. Gentile inclusion colors almost all that he writes.

This distinction between them can be illustrated by their handling of the genealogical material (which in turn colors their handling of the temptation narrative). In Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus is treated at the beginning (Matt. 1:1-17), following a typical Jewish pattern. Further, he has structured it to strongly make the Jewish connections, especially that of the Davidic messiah. He arranges the genealogy of Jesus into three sets of “fourteen generations” (Matt. 1:17). He does this because it allows him to subtly make a point beyond merely the recounting of a “royal lineage” for Jesus. Hebrew numbers are written with the normal letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus, many names in Hebrew have a sort of numerical equivalent, known to every Hebrew reader. Presenting a word as both name and number is a practice called *gematria*. The number fourteen, and the name “David” are written in exactly the same way in Hebrew. Thus, a threefold repetition of “14” in the genealogy structure is also a three-fold repetition of the name David. It is as though Matthew says, “He’s David – here’s proof; He’s *David* – here’s proof; He’s *David!* –

Here's proof." While some have pointed out that this might have been lost on a Greek speaking readership in a Greek text,¹⁵ many hold that it would still be perceived.

But Luke does something entirely different with his genealogy. He flips the order around, so that his genealogy goes backwards from the normal order. Thus, rather than ancestor-to-descendant, he moves descendant-to-ancestor. But further, Matthew begins his genealogy (out of order) by moving first Jesus-to-David, then develops it beginning with Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. For Matthew, Jesus is preeminently the King of the Jews. However, Luke traces his genealogy all the way back to the first man, Adam, the father of the Human race. For him, Jesus is Lord of the entire Human race, and all are invited into God's mission. This becomes patently evident specifically in where he places the genealogy. Moving it from its place at the beginning (as in Matthew), he places it just before the temptation narrative (Luke 3:23-38). And he reverses the order of the genealogy so that it ends with Adam. The reader is left with Adam on his mind just before he reads the temptation of Jesus.

Thus, while Matthew intends his Jewish readers primarily to see Jesus as standing in Israel's shoes, Luke wants Theophilus to see Jesus as a representative filling the role of Adam. The arrangement immediately evokes the image of the temptation in the garden. Satan's presence as tempter, and the failure of Adam are paramount then on the minds of the reader. But where Adam failed, plunging the human race into sin, Jesus succeeds, bringing victory and forgiveness for all who will accept it. He is thus presenting Jesus as the "second Adam." This is regularly known as a distinctly Pauline theme (see Romans five), but Luke has developed it with just as much skill, only in a more subtle way. Their long friendship and regular travels together might well have involved conversations about Jesus as the second Adam who delivers the human race, and they have each developed it in different ways. Paul is familiar with Luke's work (and even regards it as equal in authority to OT scripture), so one might suggestively conjecture that the theme originated with Luke, and was picked up and developed by Paul. Regardless of conclusions on the particulars it is clear that, for Matthew, as Jesus is tempted, Israel in the wilderness stands in the background; for Luke, while Jesus is being tempted, Adam in the garden stands paramount in the background. While every other human has failed to obey God, Jesus alone has remained obedient to the Father, and he alone can atone for the sins of others upon the cross.

A note should be said also about the historical origin of these comparisons. Accepting both Matthew and Luke as inspired biblical writers lends Divine authority to these comparisons (most specifically of Jesus-to-Israel) as part of Divine Writ, regardless of their historical origins. However, exegetically, one still must ask whether this analogy is drawn by the Evangelists themselves (as inspired writers) or whether they are merely repeating a tradition which they had received. Recognizing that they employ a shared

¹⁵ See France's caution along these lines in France, "*Matthew*" pg. 31, who notes how common the idea is, though he himself rejects it. He still explains that the three-fold division of Matthew's genealogy, which covers in its first section some 700-800 years, in its second only some 400 years, and some 600 in its third, has an unevenness that reflects Matthew's intention to focus on the Davidic dynasty. He explains at length the names Matthew has had to omit to make the scheme work, which still highlights the Davidic and exilic connection (pg. 28-30).

source, and noting some of the shared features of that source (see the blue sections above, and note a fuller synopsis for the broader text in parallel), reveals that this connection is not an innovation on the part of one of the Evangelists. Each Evangelist borrows the “into the wilderness” language of Mark, suggesting that the connection goes back at least to him (and a “second exodus” theme in Mark, with Jesus as the new Israel, is commonly noted in the literature). But in the material independent of Mark (the three temptations shared by Matthew and Luke), the same three quotations of the Deuteronomy material occur. Both have Jesus quoting in each temptation from the same section of Deuteronomy, drawing out the connection of his wilderness temptations to the wilderness wanderings of Israel. To make a historical jump from Mark and “Q” to the historical Jesus (which I will presume here rather than defend)¹⁶ shows that this connection goes back to Jesus himself. In other words, seeing in Jesus and his temptations the wanderings of Israel, and seeing Jesus as succeeding where Israel failed is not a later innovation of Matthew, Luke, or even Mark as inspired authors. Its source is rather Jesus himself. He quotes from these passages precisely because he saw himself as succeeding where Israel had failed. Contrary to many skeptics who wish to maintain that Jesus himself saw no redemptive or salvation-historical intent behind his life and actions (claiming that these are later innovations of later editors of our gospel accounts), Jesus from the very outset of his ministry understood himself as obeying the Father where Israel (and as Luke would note, all of humanity as well) had failed to do so. At stake in the wilderness is not simply a battle between Jesus and Satan – at stake is the very eternal destiny of the world. If Jesus fails, redemption is lost, and mankind’s very redemption is thwarted.

4:4 – Looking closely at “Every Word”

The OT Context of the Passage

It is apparent that the OT story, and Deuteronomy in particular, are essential for interpreting this passage to hear the intent of Matthew and Luke in the passage. Further, as Jesus himself is the one who makes this connection, it is essential to understanding Jesus’ own experience in the wilderness. In each of the three temptations, Jesus responds by quoting a passage of Scripture from the same section of Deuteronomy. Occasionally, an author will defend some form of the paranetic interpretation of the passage mentioned above. That is, that this is a “model” for how to fight temptation from Satan. But while there is some legitimacy in this application of the passage (simply on the level that everything that Jesus did is in some sense a model for those called to “follow his steps” – I Pet. 2:21), it is clearly not the primary intent of either biblical writer. Such an interpretation often seeks to make much of the fact that Jesus uses Scripture in each temptation. But it fails to see that the significance of this is not likely to be “therefore, you should use Scripture too.” If each passage from which Jesus quoted came from a different book of the OT, and if Matthew and Luke (as well as Mark) had not already (in their introduction to the accounts) made the connection with the OT wilderness wanderings, then such a broad generalization might be appropriate. Jesus quotes repeatedly from Hosea, Isaiah, Psalms, etc. throughout his

¹⁶ A defense would be built along the lines that both Mark and Q (independent sources) portray this connection (Mark in his presentation of the wilderness, Q in its repetition of the wilderness themes and its employment of the Deuteronomistic material).

ministry. Were there such a diversity in his quotations here, that might minimize the Deuteronomistic connections and legitimize to some degree a broad “use the Bible when you are tempted” sort of an intent on the part of the biblical writers. However, such a diversity is not present, and in light of the connections already made by each of the biblical writers, ignoring the OT context from which Jesus is drawing to allow such broad generalization is simply exegetical negligence. The connection to the account in Deuteronomy is among the most prominent features of the account in both Matthew and Luke.

Ironically, it is precisely a kind of atomization of Scripture as isolated verses that is often condoned in such paranetic interpretations (e.g., pull a verse out of the Bible, use it to fight a temptation, ignorant of its context, its intent, and the theology of the broader sweep of Scripture). But nothing could be further from what Jesus is actually doing here. Verse divisions were not a part of the original text at all. Quotations by biblical authors of a small section of the biblical text typically intend to evoke the entire context of the passage at hand. As noted above, while Satan grabs a verse and employs it entirely apart from its originally intended meaning, Jesus clearly has in mind the entire context of the longer passage in Deuteronomy, and is in fact employing each passage in direct accordance with Moses’ own intent in writing it. That is, Jesus is reading and using the Bible in its context, in accordance with the intent of the original author. Thus, to fully understand the significance of Jesus’ use here, we must examine the OT passages from which he quotes, and at least briefly comment on the intent behind them.

Deuteronomy in its Historical Context

Deuteronomy is the final book of the five books of Moses, known as the Pentateuch. While few subjects have been more discussed in biblical studies (and even fewer mined by skeptics) than the authorship and dating of the Pentateuch, we will precede upon the presumption of Mosaic authorship (and thus, the early date) in this essay, with only a single brief line of defense. Namely, Jesus himself repeatedly employed the Pentateuchal material, and assigned Mosaic authorship to that material.¹⁷

But the question of how Deuteronomy is intended by Moses to function still remains, and must be (briefly) explored. As the children of Israel came to the brink of the promised land from the south (having previously failed to enter at another point), Moses delivered a series of sermons to the people just prior to their entering the land. Deuteronomy is essentially the recounting of these “speeches” of Moses.¹⁸ They are

¹⁷ See Matthew 19, where he specifically refers to Deut. 24:1 as written by Moses; or Mark 7:10, where he does the same with material from Exodus and Leviticus; c.f., Matt. 8:4; 1:44; 10:3; 12:26; Luke 16:29, 31; 24:27, 44, where the same connection is at least strongly implied. While the issues involved are in fact infinitely more complex than this, in the end, for a Christian committed to following Christ (as the assumed reader of this essay) such a line of defense may allow us to proceed with integrity apart from a more sustained inductive defense of Mosaic authorship.

¹⁸ One should note also the equally important structuring of the book as a covenant modeled around the basic pattern of local suzerain treaties, with preamble (1:1-5), historical prologue (1:6-4:49), stipulations to the covenant (in the case of Deuteronomy, general stipulations in 5-11; detailed stipulations in 12-28), blessings and cursings for

recounted that later generations might still hear the words of Moses ringing in their ears so to speak. Thus, while in most of the rest of the Pentateuch, the pattern is God speaking to Moses; in Deuteronomy, the pattern is Moses speaking to the people.¹⁹ Thus, from the first words of the book, “These *be* the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness...” the reader is drawn back in time to that moment, standing there, listening to Moses preach.

The book’s content revolves around three “sermons” of Moses that are delivered to the children of Israel at the brink of Canaan just before they enter the land.²⁰ After a brief introduction (1:1-5), the book presents the first discourse (1:6-4:43), which recounts the history of their journey from Horeb, with an emphasis upon the providence of God for the people, then includes the long exhortation of Moses to not forget the lessons God had taught them (4:1-40). Building upon the first, the second discourse (introduced in 4:44-49; given in chapters 5-28, though some see 27 as a kind of instructional “interruption” of this discourse) is the central part of the book, falling naturally into two basic sections. The first section of this second sermon (5:1-11:32) gives an exhortation together with an explanation of the general principles of the covenant that had been given at Sinai. The second section (chapters 12-28) presents the more specific stipulations (case laws) in more detail. Moses’ third sermon comprises the material in 29-30. The book then ends with a final encouragement to the people, deposit of the law to the priests, and transfer of leadership to Joshua (31), the poetic song of Moses (31:30-32:44) and the final narrative of the blessing of Moses and account of Moses’ death (33-34).

The three passages from which Jesus quotes in the wilderness all come from the first section of the second discourse of Moses (Deut. 5-11).²¹ The quotations in the second and third temptations (following Matthew’s order) both come from Deuteronomy 6, the section of Moses’ sermon where he presents and expounds the *Shema*. This commandment became the theological center of Judaism, and Jesus repeatedly recognized its place as the central theological and ethical tenant of Judaism. When Satan presented his temptations, Jesus understood that he was not attacking a peripheral issue – he was mounting an all-out attack on the core of Jewish faith. Jesus in turn responded by invoking and reinforcing the monotheistic core of the faith long held. The Lord our God is one Lord. As He has revealed His character in His own self-identification, He alone should be worshiped, and He should not be tempted, as this amounts to an affront against that character. Moses had warned against three basic distractions that could deter Israel from wholehearted love of Yahweh;²² Deut. 6:10-13 explains the danger of forgetting God due to wealth (a theme picked up again in chapter 8), Deut. 6:14-15 pick up the danger of abandoning God due to idolatry, and Deut. 6:16 takes up the final danger of doubting God due to hardship. Jesus picked up elements from two of these three warnings (Deut. 6:13 and 6:16) in the second

following or breaking the covenant (27-28), and witnesses to the covenant (30-32). This is doubtless an intended parallel that shaped how Israel heard the book.

¹⁹ See Keil and Delitzsch, Vol. I pg. 270.

²⁰ See Driver, *Deuteronomy* ICC, pg. I; Keil and Delitzsch, vol. I pg. 271.

²¹ Or, on the understanding of the book as structured around suzerain treaties, from the section which gives general stipulations connected to the covenant between vassal and master (chapters 5-11).

²² See Wright, NIBC Deuteronomy, pg. 100-103.

and third temptation. However in the first temptation, the passage which is quoted by Jesus derives from Deuteronomy 8:3. Thus, a closer look at the context of chapter 8 in particular is in order.

Deut. 8:1-9

In chapter 8, Moses' sermon continues to expound on the covenant principles relating to God's provision. The point of chapter eight is that God is the source of all blessings. Israel should thus be reliant upon God for their provision. He is alone the one on whom they should depend. The wilderness wanderings were meant to enforce this lesson to them, and their time in the promised land would test this reliance in new ways. Hunger and desperation in the wilderness provided the context in which their trust in God's provision was tested in their past; abundance and blessing in the promised land would provide the context in which their trust in God's provision would be tested in their future. Moses' statement summarizes the lesson learned from the wilderness, and reinforces to them that they must depend on God as they have learned. He does this first by exhorting the Israelites to obey the covenant God has made with them. But this obedience is to be motivated by a remembrance of how God has already provided for them. Thus, in 8:1-2 he reminds them that their time in the wilderness had been used by God to teach them this lesson;

"All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

In verse 3-5, he points out that this testing by God had taught them provision upon him for food (in the manna), clothing (in raiment that waxed not old), and health (in their feet not swelling);

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. ⁴ Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. ⁵ Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee."

In verses 6-9, he reminds them of the great blessings that God will bring to them when they enter the promised land;

⁶ Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. ⁷ For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; ⁸ A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; ⁹ A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

And in verses 10-18, he warns them that just as hunger in the wilderness had been an occasion where their dependence upon God as the source of blessings was tested, so in a

very different way their abundance in the promised land would test their resolve to remain dependent upon God as the ultimate source of all blessings;

¹⁰ When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. ¹¹ Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: ¹² Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; ¹³ And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; ¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; ¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; ¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. ¹⁸ But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Finally in verses 19-20 he exhorts them to remember these lessons they had learned in the wilderness. Through much toil, struggle, and failure, they had been taught by God, as a loving Father painfully teaches his children, that God and God alone was the source of their blessing and their sustenance. In their hunger they were dependent upon him for food. In their nakedness they were dependent upon him for clothing. In their tired bodies they were dependent upon him for health. And in all their wonderings, they were dependent upon him for guidance. It was a long and painful lesson that should not be forgotten.

The Quotation itself in its Contexts - Deut. 8:3

Having looked more broadly at the OT context from which the quotation of Deut. 8:3 springs, we can now examine in more detail the specific phrase which is most relevant for this essay, and which is being adduced as support for a doctrine of verbal plenary preservation, that is, “every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD.” Specifically, the phrase, “every word” is typically pointed to as suggesting the verbal “word” and plenary “every” nature of preservation. Because so much has been made of this phrase here (in its context in Matthew especially) it is well worth looking at in more detail.

Duet 8:3 in the MT

The Hebrew of the Masoretic text²³ here involves two phrases;

עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִּי-יְהוָה

²³ See BHS, pg. 300; or in the second Rabbinic Bible (Jacob Ben Hayim) here;

<https://archive.org/details/RabbinicbibleotMikraotGedolotBombergshebrewtanach.jacobBenChaim.1525>

The first phrase has three elements; a preposition (by) followed by two nouns. Or literally, “by – all/every – that proceeds from.” The second phrase has the noun “mouth” in the construct relationship to “the Lord.” Thus, the text reads literally, “everything that goes out from the mouth of the Lord.” The Hebrew word, “*mowtsa*” or “going out” is the word we must notice with most astuteness. The word refers to a “going out” which can relate in turn to any of three basic notions; to a place of going out (or from which one goes out), to the act itself of going out, or to that thing which goes out. In this third usage, “that thing which goes out” the word then become a sort of technical term for a “pronouncement” or a “decree.” Thus, HALOT, the standard academic Hebrew lexicon, defines it as referring to a “pronouncement” and explains this usage by noting a variety of parallels. They seem to understand the usage of the word in Duet. 8:3 as having traditionally referred to the Word of God in general (noting that that tradition is influenced by Matthew 4:4), but they note that it more specifically is being used in our passage to refer to the manna created by God (the context in Deut. 8:3).

“**pronouncement**, דָּבָר **Da 9**²⁵, with שְׁפָתַיִם **Nu 30**¹³ **Dt 23**²⁴ **Jr 17**¹⁶ **Ps 89**³⁵, with פָּה (פִּי) מִ' word spoken at the creation, parallel with דָּבָר **Sir 39**¹⁷, מִפִּי י' הַלְקָחַם **Dt 8**³ trad. following **Matthew 4**⁴ of the word of God in general, :: הַלְקָחַם particularly the manna created by Yahweh.”

The older BDB lexicon defines it as an “utterance” and explains this third usage as follows; “*that which goes forth: a. utterance* of mouth or lips (esp. of solemn or formal speech), מוֹצֵא פִי־י' **Dt 8:3**; שְׁפָתַי מ' **Je 17:16**, **Psalm 89:35**; so **Dt 23:24**, **Nu 30:13** (P).”

The older (and generally less reliable lexically, but still respected by some) Strong's lexicon notes the same basic three-fold division of the word's usage as referring to the act, place, or product of “a going forth” when it notes, “**môwtsâ'**, mo-tsaw'; or מוֹצֵא *môtsâ'* *môtsâ'* corrected to *môtsâ'*; from H3318; a going forth, i.e. (the act) an egress, or (the place) an exit; hence, a source or product.” It then follows this general three-fold division with a few of the specific meanings the word has in the OT, “specifically, dawn, the rising of the sun (the East), exportation, utterance, a gate, a fountain, a mine, a meadow (as producing grass)” finally concluding its entry (following the typical symbol, :-) of all the ways the KJV translated the word, “brought out, bud, that which came out, east, going forth, goings out, that which (thing that) is gone out, outgoing, proceedeth out, spring, vein, (water-) course (springs),”

The phrase “that which proceeds from” could thus be a kind of technical phrase for a decree or utterance, which is clearly its usage here. One factor merits special notice; the word, “word” does not occur in the Hebrew text. The Hebrew word for “word” (*davar*) is in fact not found in Deuteronomy chapter eight at all. Not once, and certainly not as part of Deut. 8:3. This is why the KJV, though including the word, “word” as part of its text, has placed the word in italics. They are noting that it is a textual emendation that is not part of the Hebrew text. France notes, “‘Word’ is an LXX explanatory addition: the Hebrew simply

says ‘everything that comes from the mouth of the Lord.’”²⁴ For example, the same Hebrew phrase is translated in the KJV in Numbers 30:12; “But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them*; *then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips* concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her,” (though here “lips” are substituted for “mouth”). One can clearly see from the KJV translation that “word” is not part of a literal translation of the phrase.

One could perhaps translate the word as referring to a decree or a “word” and thus translate the phrase, “every word (i.e., utterance) from the mouth of God” or, more literally, as, “every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” but the phrase, “every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” would be a redundancy (essentially translating the same word twice) that is not reflective of the Hebrew text. So where does the word, “word” come from, and why is it in the KJV here, and what were the translators seeking to communicate by it? To answer this question, we must look to the previous translations that most impacted the KJV. They made special mention in their prefatory, “The Translators to the Reader,” of the Latin Vulgate and the Septuagint, as well as the English translations that had preceded them (see the history of the KJV in Part II, and the exposition of the Preface in part IV for details).

Deut. 8:3 in the LXX, Vulgate, and Earliest English Translations

The LXX had somewhat less literally translated the text as, “ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι τῷ ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ,”²⁵ (but by every word that issues from the mouth of God) adding the word, “ῥήματι,” or “saying” to their translation as a sort of explanatory addition. The Latin Vulgate had been influenced by this older translation, translating the phrase, “*sed in omni verbo quod egreditur de ore Dei,*” adding the “*verbo*” or “word” to the text of its translation which was not present in the Hebrew text.

When translations of the Bible began to first appear in English, the language of the Church had been Latin for over 1000 years. Therefore, the first translations were of the Latin text of the Vulgate. Thus, the Wycliffite versions in the 14th century had translated the phrase (from the Vulgate) as, “*but in ech word that cometh out of the Lordis mouth, that is, bi manna, that cam down at the heest of the Lord.*”²⁶ Several later English translations would still feel the influence of the Vulgate upon them here,²⁷ and in some ways the Vulgate and the LXX would both still sound echoes into all English translations for centuries to come (including the KJV) in many passages. In 1526, William Tyndale produced the first translation of the NT into English from the original Greek language, rather than from the Latin. Erasmus’ work had convinced him of the importance of going back to the source languages and translating them literally (but forcefully) into English. Tyndale began (but never finished) a similar project with the Hebrew Old Testament. He published his

²⁴ France, R. T. *Matthew*, pg. 131 f.n. 19.

²⁵ *Septuaginta, Editio Altera* pg. 301.

²⁶ Note that the Vulgate and its English translations expand the interpretation to explain that the “word that comes from God’s mouth” is simply a reference to the manna itself.

²⁷ Thus the Geneva Bibles, “*that he might teache thee that man liueth not by bread onely, but by euery worde that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth a man liue.*”

translation of the Pentateuch in 1530, doing for the Old Testament Hebrew text what his NT had done for the Greek, rendering from it (instead of Latin) for the first time into English so that people could read from the source rather than from a translation of a translation of it. His Hebrew was in fact even better than his Greek, and the sections of the OT which he completed are masterful works worthy of being read even today. His translation of the passage thus literally rendered the Hebrew text, *“He humbled the and made the hongre and fed the with man which nether thou nor thy father knewe of. to make the know that a man must not lyue by bred only: but by al that procedeth out of the mouth of the Lorde must a man lyue.”* This is perhaps the most literal and direct translation of the Hebrew phrase into English. Miles Coverdale had tweaked Tyndale in minor ways (and produced his own translation where Tyndale never finished) when he published the first complete Bible in English from the original languages. The Coverdale Bible thus read, *“He chastened the, and let the hunger, and fed the with Manna (which thou and thy fathers knewe not) to make the knowe, that man lyueth not by bred onely, but by all that proceadeth out of the mouth of the LORDE.”* The Great Bible had changed the text slightly, thus reading, *“He humbled the, and suffred the to hongre, and fedd the with Manna, whych nether thou nor thy fathers knewe of, to make the knowe, that a man doth not lyue by bread only: but by euery that procedeth out of the mouth of the Lorde, doth a man lyue.”* When the Bishop’s Bible was translated by the leaders of the Church of England in 1568, they had rendered the text, similarly, incorporating the addition from the Latin Vulgate or LXX, (something the Bishop’s Bible does on multiple occasions), but placing the addition in brackets to explain that it was not part of the Hebrew text, and had come from the LXX. They thus rendered the text, *“He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, & fed thee with Manna, which neither thou nor thy fathers knewe of, to make thee knowe that a man doth not lyue by bread only: but by euery [worde] that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lorde, doth a man lyue,”* The KJV was officially a revision of the 1602 revision of the Bishop’s Bible (see Part II for details) so they retained the addition from the LXX. However, while the Bishop’s Bible had employed brackets,²⁸ the KJV used italics to designate additions that were not a translation of the original language text. Thus, the KJV text is signaling by its use of italics here the addition to the text from the LXX or Vulgate (though one should note that they are not always consistent in italicizing emendations of the text by the LXX Vulgate or Targums).

Moses’ intent Behind the Phrase

One should thus understand that what Deut. 8:3 is teaching, in its context, is the importance of total reliance upon God as the only source of blessings. Moses does this by recounting the wondering in the wilderness and the time of hunger by the children of Israel, explaining that this was at the hand of God that they might learn to depend upon Him. Moses intends to enforce this lesson upon Israel just prior to entering the land, where they will face the related temptation that abundance brings. In the 2nd Temple literature, this is how the text continued to be employed in Judaism— as an exhortation to rely fully upon God for ones provision.

This is the interpretive milieu in which Jesus spent his childhood. He had clearly himself spent time reflecting upon the text of Deuteronomy, and when he faced similar testing in the wilderness (and specifically, similar hunger) he understood that like Israel,

²⁸ As had Tyndale on at least one occasion.

what was being tested was his reliance upon God. Thus, when Satan tempted him to satiate his hunger by his own divine power, he saw through Satan's ploy and realized what was being attempted, and what was at stake. He drew upon the text of Deuteronomy, reiterating as his strategy against Satan that he would trust God for his provision. He employed a form of the text which is either from the LXX, or from the so-called proto-Masoretic text agreeing with the LXX, and like a master warrior used it to effectively combat Satan's attack. Could Paul's later analogy of the Word of God as the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6) perhaps have been born by reflection upon the account drawn up by his friend Luke? Perhaps we cannot say for sure. What we can say for sure is how Moses intended the text to function, and we are confident that (as Keener noted above) Jesus is not misusing Scripture here. He is using the text in accordance with the intent of Moses in writing it, as an exhortation to trust in God's provision.

Matthew's Intent Behind the Phrase

Matthew employs in his text the quotation by Jesus of the Deuteronomy 8:3 text, in the LXX form,²⁹ Οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτω μόνῳ ζήσεται ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος Θεοῦ. (Mat 4:4 SCR). The phrase "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" is thus worth looking at in detail within the text of Matthew itself, especially the phrase "παντὶ ῥήματι," translated in the KJV, "Every word." πᾶς is simply the adjective meaning "each, every, all." The word, "ῥήματι" differs slightly from the common Greek word "λογος" in its nuance. It refers to "that which is said, *word, saying, expression, or statement of any kind*" (BDAG). The older Strong's Lexicon gives the etymology of the word, "ῥῆμα *rhēma*, hray'-mah; from G4483;" then defines the word as follows, "an *utterance* (individually, collectively or specially); by implication, *a matter or topic* (especially of narration, command or dispute); with a negative, *naught whatever*," noting finally the ways the word is translated in the KJV, ":-+ evil, + nothing, saying, word."

Note that in no part of the Strong's definition is there any particularly verbal focus. The word is often translated as "saying" in the KJV,³⁰ which well captures its essence. It is also often translated, "word" as in the text here. But one must understand what the translators meant by such a translation. Translating the word "ῥῆμα" as "word" does not in any way demand a verbal focus. The word "word" in English does not necessarily demand a particularly verbal focus. It can certainly have that meaning, but this is not the common way it is employed in the KJV. It simply refers to a short discourse, as a saying, or an utterance. Thus, "And Peter remembered *the word* of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly," (Mat 26:75 KJV) where a whole sentence is the single "word" Peter remembers. (C.F. Mark 14:72). Or "Then remembered I *the word* of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," (Act 11:16 KJV) where again a whole sentence or saying is the singular "word" John had spoken. Or in Acts 28:25, "And when they agreed not

²⁹ The one slight distinction between the standard printed LXX form and the form quoted by Matthew is the presence of the article τῷ before "proceeding." Interestingly, the KJV translates the participle as a substantive (as though the article were present). However, different LXX manuscripts contain both forms; some have the article and some don't (see *Septuaginta Editio Altera* pg. 301, apparatus note).

³⁰ Mark 9:32; Luke 1:65; 2:17; 2:50, 51; 7:1; 9:45; 18:34.

among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken *one word*,” where the KJV translators intend Paul’s “one word” to refer to the whole utterance of Acts 28:25b-28. Thus, the word typically has reference to a particular “saying” or “utterance” or short discourse. There is nothing about the word that demands reference to one particular (verbal) “word.” The Webster’s 1828 explains the varying ways the English word can be employed;

“WORD, noun [G., Latin , to speak. A word is that which is uttered or thrown out.] **1.** An articulate or vocal sound, or a combination of articulate and vocal sounds, uttered by the human voice, and by custom expressing an idea or ideas; a single component part of human speech or language. Thus a in English is a word; but few words consist of one letter only. Most words consist of tow or more letters, as go, do, shall, called monosyllables, or of two or more syllables, as honor, goodness, amiable. **2.** The letter or letters, written or printed, which represent a sound or combination of sounds. **3.** A short discourse. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two? **4.** Talk; discourse. Why should calamity be full of words? Be thy words severe. **5.** Dispute; verbal contention; as, some words grew between us. **6.** Language; living speech; oral expression. The message was delivered by word of mouth. **7.** Promise. He gave me his word he would pay me. Obey they parents; keep thy word justly. **8.** Signal; order; command. Give the word through. **9.** Account; tidings; message. Bring me word what is the issue of the contest. **10.** Declaration; purpose expressed. I know you brave, and take you at your word **11.** Declaration; affirmation. I desire not the reader should take my word **12.** The Scripture; divine revelation, or any part of it. This is called the word of God. **13.** Christ. John 1:1. **14.** A motto; a short sentence; a proverb. A good word commendation; favorable account. And gave the harmless fellow a good word. In word in declaration only. Let us not love in word only, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:18.”

While Webster’s 1-2 definition may be the most commonly employed in the English language as a whole, they are some of the least commonly employed in the KJV translation. By far the most common usages of the word in the English KJV are senses 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 14. Sometimes a verbal focus may be in view, but it seems unlikely at best that such a focus is in view in the English translation of Matt. 4:4. Such a verbal focus is even less likely in the Greek text of Matt. 4:4. Such a verbal focus is simply not present at all in the Hebrew text of Deut. 8:3, which lacks the word “word” altogether. It is an expansion of the LXX form of the text, quoted in its expanded form by Jesus, translated in that expanded form by the KJV, none of which intended to say more than the Hebrew text, or to create a “verbal” focus not present in its origins.

The Relationship of the Text to the Biblical Doctrine of Preservation

So what relevance does the phrase in Matt. 4:4 have for the doctrine of verbal preservation? Does this statement that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by ever word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” intend to teach that the written text of Scripture would be verbally preserved by God’s Divine providence? We have seen several factors that

must be considered. First, one must contend with the original historical context of the temptation event itself. There is simply no understanding of the temptation of Jesus which can make good sense of this phrase as teaching the preservation of the written text of Scripture. As we have seen, the temptation to turn stones to bread may be interpreted in a variety of different ways, and there may be slightly different nuances possible for each of those interpretations. But under no plausible understanding is it possible to suggest logically that the temptation to turn stones to bread could be countered by an assertion of the verbal preservation of written Scripture. Even if we didn't recognize the statement of Jesus as a quotation of an OT text, it would be clear from the immediate context that Jesus is asserting by the phrase that he intends to depend fully upon his Father's care, and trust himself fully to his Father's will, even if that will entails the forsaking of physical sustenance and endurance of hunger.

In what bizarre world could a statement meaning "the written text of Scripture is verbally preserved" be seen as a victorious response to the command to "turn these stones to bread?" Just try to play that out in your head. "Come on Jesus, you're hungry – turn these stones to bread." "Sorry Satan, God promised that scribes wouldn't make errors when they copied the text of Scripture, and the Holy Spirit will providentially ensure that the text of Scripture is never lost or corrupted in any way." Huh? It's something like saying that when being tempted to lie that the correct response would be "no, I can't, because fuzzy cats have fur." It may be an entirely true statement, but it has zero relationship to the temptation at hand. Such an understanding of the phrase simply wouldn't make sense on any level. Saying that the response of Jesus to Satan's ploy was to assert the verbal preservation of Scripture may in fact be to suggest that Jesus never successfully countered Satan's attack at all. Biblical Christology, and the plain sense of the historical context compel one to say otherwise.

Perhaps one might point out that in the next temptation Satan himself quotes Scripture, and one could suggest that Satan intends to change the text of Scripture, and so misquotes it, and thus Jesus is asserting that Scripture cannot be changed in response to this misquotation. There are several problems with such an idea. First, if Satan is guilty here of "changing the text of Scripture" then so is almost every NT author who quotes the OT at points. In fact, Satan's "change" in this case is a relatively minor offense compared to those committed by Paul, Hebrews, and Jesus himself in other places (or even the textual difference in Jesus own quotation in this very passage of Deut. 6:13; see footnote above noting Jesus' use of the LXX form there verbally different from the MT). Satan's quotation of Scripture is obviously not the problem. His misapplication of it to this situation and perhaps interpretation of it is where he errs. Even more to the point though, Satan doesn't actually quote Scripture at all in the temptation to turn stones to bread. His only quotation of Scripture comes in the temple temptation. To take an element unique to the temple temptation and read it back into the temptation to turn stones to bread is to act as though after being tempted yesterday to lust, one can conquer today's temptation to be angry with ones coworker by reminding oneself that lust is wrong. It would be akin to giving mathematical proofs in response to the questions on a history exam, or like writing out the periodic table when asked to write an essay on how Abraham Lincoln died. Teachers rarely give much credit to a student who does such things, and Jesus would no more have "passed" such a test than our student would pass his history exam.

Beyond the historical context of the temptation, one must also wrestle with the literary context of this Pericope in 4:1-11. If we are committed to Scripture as inspired Revelation, then the concern foremost on our mind must be Matthew's own intent in telling the story. What is Matthew saying to his Jewish-Christian readers through this account? It seems on any account that he is describing the preparation of Jesus to succeed where Israel and Adam and every other human has failed; to remain loyal to His Father's mission, despite the suffering it would bring, and to fully represent humanity by being fully and totally human for every step of his chosen path. Matthew is showing that Jesus is our representative. What does Matthew intend for this story to accomplish in his readers? Most likely, he intends their adoration and respect for Jesus to grow as they realize that he has succeeded where they had failed. Yet despite that successfully lived life of perfect conformity to the Father's will, he would bear the suffering of a Servant punished for iniquities not his own, even to the point of the cross. He would fully represent them. In what way could this intent have to do with the verbal preservation of Scripture? That Scripture, (specifically the OT passage of Duet. 6-8), plays some role in the account is obvious on even a cursory reading. But to suggest that Matthew has some kind of bibliological intent instead of the clear Christological and salvation-historical one is surely to miss Mathew's point altogether.

Thirdly, one must reckon with the context and intent of the OT passage which is here quoted. Our phrase is undeniably a quote by Jesus of the text in Duet. 8:3. To suggest that the phrase is teaching preservation of any kind is to ignore the context of the Old Testament passage itself (Deut. 6-8 specifically, and all of 5-11 as well). The intent of Moses there is clearly to teach that God's people should be dependent upon him for their provision. As we have seen, this is the point not only of the entire section which is so dominant in the temptation narrative, it is the point of the historical event of the wilderness wanderings of Israel, and it is the clear intent of Moses in retelling that narrative in the passage at hand. Further, this is clearly how the text is understood in Jesus own time, as we have seen from the usage of the text in second temple literature. It is clear that Jesus understands the text this way, which is what makes the text the perfect response to Satan's temptation. To suggest that Matthew is using that passage to teach something which is contrary to what Moses intended is to suggest that Matthew is mishandling Scripture. This might in theory be possible, however far this usage might be removed from authorial intent. But if this is the case here, because the usage of Scripture is placed on Jesus' lips as his own response to Satan, and because we accept Matthew's account as historically accurate, we cannot say that Matthew is ignoring the historical context of Scripture here unless we are willing to charge Jesus with the same. Matthew is simply recounting Jesus' own statement. Surely, whatever one thinks about Matthew's use of Scripture, this is less acceptable to anyone who holds together both a high view of Jesus, and high view of Jesus' own attitude towards Scripture.

But finally, to suggest that the passage is teaching some kind of verbal preservation based on the phrase "every *word*" in Mat. 4:4 is to fundamentally miss the point that this word of the phrase is not itself a part of the Hebrew text of Deut. 8:3. It is an addition from the LXX translation of the Hebrew text into Greek. To take an instance where the OT Hebrew text has been changed in translation, which translation is then quoted in the NT, and then to use that very change itself as the basis of a doctrine which asserts that the text

could never be changed is beyond absurd. Absurd is probably too kind a word. It is in fact the very definition of shooting oneself in the foot.

To summarize, taking the phrase "*but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" in Matthew 4:4 as a promise of the verbal preservation of Scripture is to ignore the historical context of the temptation itself, or perhaps even to assert that Jesus was less than successful in thwarting Satan. It is to ignore the intent of Jesus in recounting the story to his disciples, and to contradict Matthew's intent in recounting the temptation of Jesus. It is to ignore or contravene the context of the OT text of Deut. 8:3, and to suggest that either Moses, Jesus, or Matthew poorly misuses that text here. It is to argue quite oxymoronically that a change in the wording of the OT text is proof that the wording of the OT text has never been changed. It is not all that different in character or result from promising a jury that you will produce proof that no murder weapon ever existed, only to uncover in their sight nothing less than the proverbial smoking gun itself.