

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY ON THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS IN  
MATTHEW 4:1-11 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY CHURCH  
LEADERS AND INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS

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BY

ADIO, DAVID OYEKOLA

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## ABSTRACT

There is no escape from the challenges of temptation; it is the fact of life. There is no life of a minister of God that can experience fulfillment except he passes through temptation victoriously. The misconception and mishandling of temptation has played devastating roles on the church leaders and individual Christians. No believer will record victory until Christian leaders and individual Christians learn from Jesus' pattern of temptation, which is our perfect example and standard of hope for Christian. In contemporary time Christian and church leaders have been eroded seriously to take the worldly means as an alternative means to gain success and many prefer short-cuts to divine principles. As a result, the church is weak, ineffective and unable to represent the true image of God here on earth. This work presents the meaning of temptation, the general and biblical scholarly perspectives and what it means in the bible by exegetically looking at Jesus' pattern of temptation as recorded by Matthew 4:1-11. It also provides some implications of the exegetical study for church leaders and individual Christians as well as recommends some useful tips as suggested by Jesus in the text as antidotes for temptation.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

The Almighty God has always shown displeasure over ignorance and careless attitude of Christians towards handling temptation. It is much more devastating to His glorious name when Christian leaders become victims of satanic snares because of their

misconception and disloyalty. Individual Christian and church leader should be careful of their attitude towards pleasure, power and politics knowing fully well that the enemy can use everything at his possession to fight God and His people. Hence, God dares to present Jesus as the Standard of victory. This implies that church leaders and individual Christians must be such that will offer their lives sacrificially, humbly and be focused to the purpose of their calling.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Jesus gave four imperatives about handling temptation, they are: watch, pray, practice scripture and resist the devil with one addition from Paul which is “flee”. Wayne says that temptation is a time of decision and destiny but we shape our own destinies by the decisions we make. Temptation presents us with alternative ways of action. The most basic set of alternatives is the kind of God or gods we choose to serve. As Martin Luther says “Temptation teaches us the use and meaning of the first commandment, which none without afflictions and temptations shall rightly know or understand” (Commentary on the Psalms 27). When temptation comes, four actions are required whoever dares to take it will also share victory with Jesus. It is hereby recommended that believers should:

#### A. Watch

Jesus admonishes us to exert this same watchful discernment and vocation, lest we enter into temptation Nehemiah set watchman on guard (4:9:7:3). Christians need to be watchmen always in order to sound warning if an enemy approaches (2 king9:17, Ezek 33:2-3) (1660).

## B. Pray

The second admonition of Jesus is that Christian should be prayerful without ceasing. The place of prayer in Jesus' life and ministry cannot be over-emphasized because He prayed at all time and in all situations and even gave the pattern to His disciples. Prayer forces attention upon God and away from our desires. As Gerald said "For me, the energy of our basic desire for God is the human spirit planted within us and nourished endlessly by the Holy Spirit of God" (Addition and Grace 92). This centre of our desires upon God dislodges and decentralizes attachments, fixations, and compulsions to and toward the additions that bests us.

Further more, prayer becomes a thinking upward way of life because it consists of repeatedly asking for God's perspective on the tempting force at hand. Thus, we are not alone in a mere dialogue between contending forces shut up in our own mind, but in a dialogue with God. Holy Spirit is our Teacher, bringing back to our memory all the things Jesus has taught us. Rend Hatchet said prayer will lead to greater communion with God and a greater understanding of God's will. (1322). Also, prayer is crucial to continuing in the Christian life (Rom. 12:12). Contemporary Christians and church leaders need to consciously prepare and plan to pray personally and congregationally for in it lies the victory.

## C. Practice the Scriptures

The Holy Spirit does not bring to our memory something that was never there in the first place. Jesus facing his temptations in the wilderness was equipped with a thorough knowledge of Old Testament scriptures. He was able to understand Satan's deceptive actions through the scriptures. The church leaders and Christians should give



topmost priority to the study and meditation of the word of God because it is God's presence that is highly exulted in us. The topmost weapon of victory is scripture in practice not in mental knowledge.

#### D. Resist the Devil

Toleration of the Tempter can be dangerous for Christians. They should always be ready to resist devil in their daily dealings, this also will lead to victory over Satan. Oates says "One of the most effective ways of resisting and overcoming temptation is to pay attention to the demands of growing up and marshalling the courage to put away childish things" (38). The opposite of this is to give in to the fear of change and shrink back from the claims of maturity. This also can be juxtaposed with the suggestion of Paul that says flee the appearance of all evil.

Christians and church leaders will do well to always learn from the victorious life of Jesus so as to live victoriously in this world.