



REFLECTIONS

March 15, 2020

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan!"

Matthew 4:10

Journey to the Cross—Venture into Public Life

After formative years in a loving and growing home, and more years in preparation, Jesus ventured into for public life. God sent someone to prepare the way.

John's message of repentance drew massive crowds to the Jordan. One day Jesus emerged among them. John expected him. *"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."* (John 1:26-27)

The next day John saw Jesus coming to be baptized. *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"* (John 1:29-30)

At first John tried to dissuade Jesus, *"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"* Jesus replied, *"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."*

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

Likely heartened by the baptism of the Spirit and his Father's encouraging words, Jesus followed the Spirit's direction into the desert. As so often happens at high points of life, Jesus faced a stern test. Satan waited for the right moment.

After fasting forty days and forty nights Jesus was hungry when the devil approached him with a tantalizing offer, *"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."* Jesus firmly answered, *"It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* But the devil hadn't finished. He took Jesus to the highest point of the temple in the holy city to challenge his identity. *"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, /and they will lift you up in their hands, /so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"*

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Next Satan took Jesus to a high mountain overlooking all the kingdoms of the world. He offered them all to Jesus, *"if you will bow down and worship me."*

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan!" ...Then the devil left him. (Matthew 3:13-4:11)

In this early venture into public life, Jesus stood firm with John to be baptized. And He stood firm against Satan's temptations. Jesus lived what He taught us.

*"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*¹

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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¹ John 16:33

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