



Temptation of Christ, temptation  
of mankind

Matthew 4:1–11

by Father Vidal

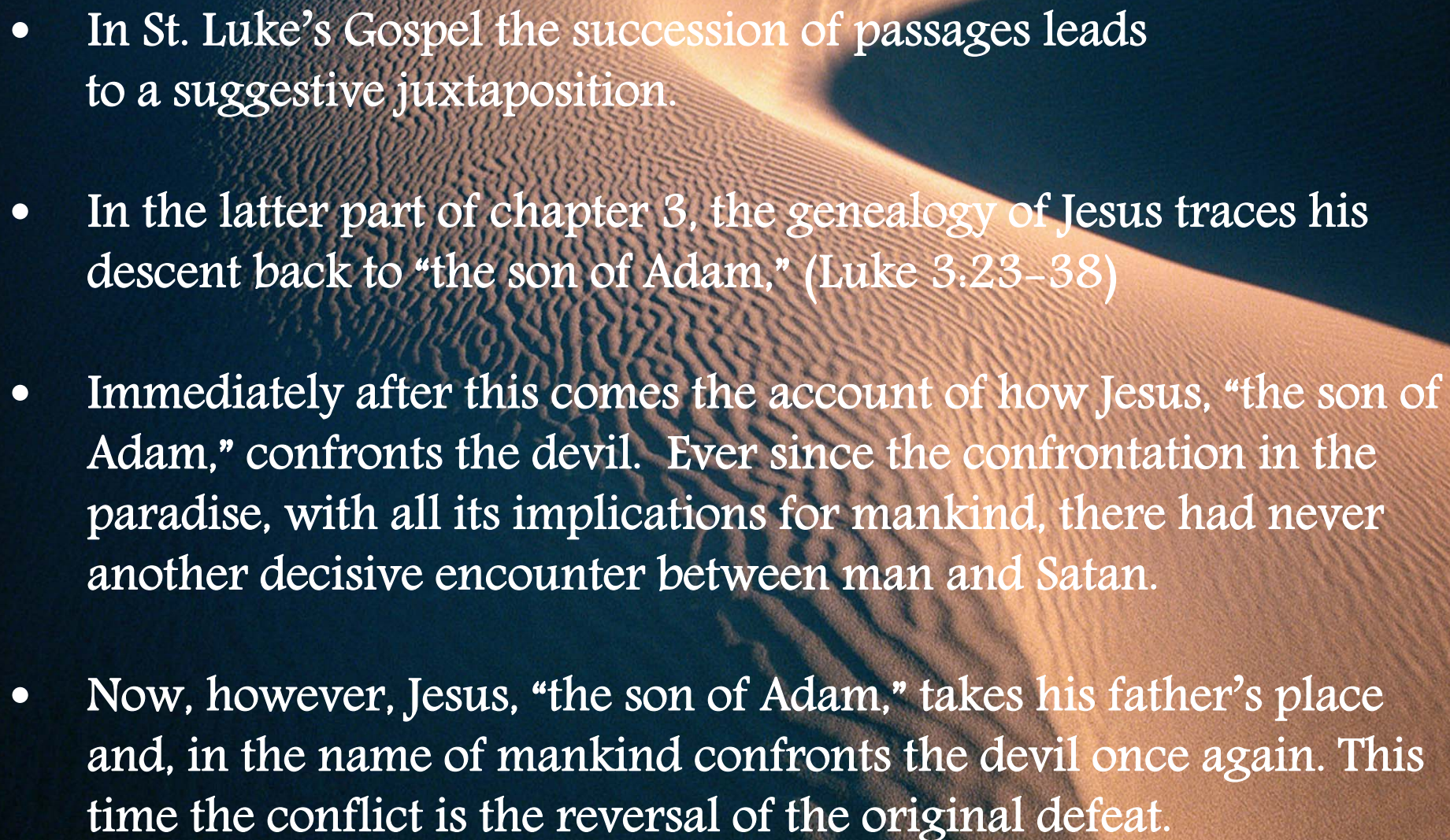
# Temptation of Christ, temptation of mankind

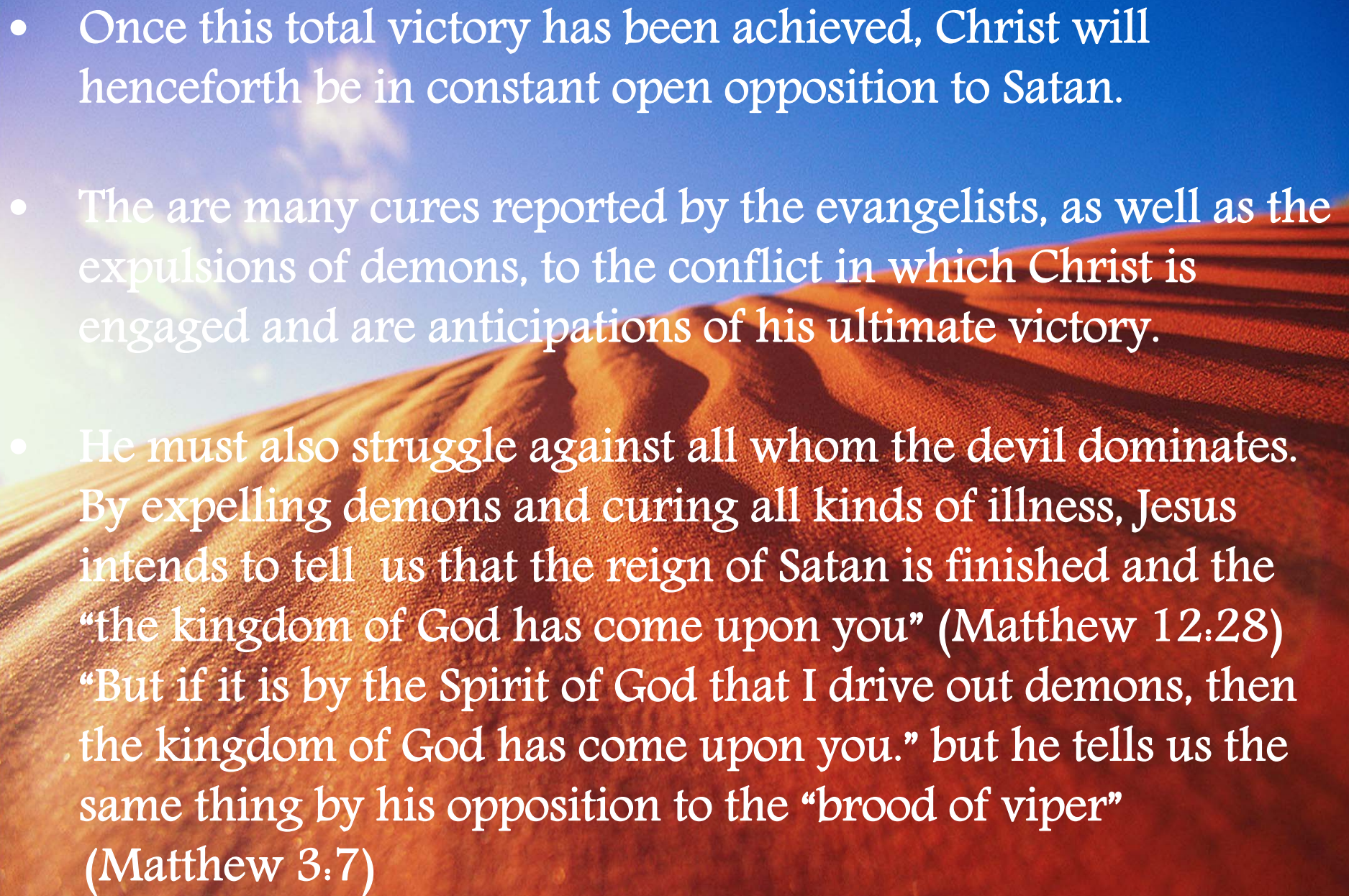
## Matthew 4: 1-11

- This opening day of the great catechesis shows the Church preoccupied with two main concerns.
  - She has in mind the essential attitude that must be impressed on the souls of the catechumens;
  - She also is attentive to the basic reactions that must be awakened in the souls of the faithful.

## The Mission

- The Mission of Jesus began, with a victorious struggle. It took place in the desert during his forty days of fasting.
- After his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
- From the beginning the Spirit has a very specific activity. Just as he presided over the creation of the world, so he gives rise to the new creation and leads Christ into the desert in order to subject him to a conflict which, unlike that of Adam, will end in victory.

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- In St. Luke's Gospel the succession of passages leads to a suggestive juxtaposition.
  - In the latter part of chapter 3, the genealogy of Jesus traces his descent back to "the son of Adam," (Luke 3:23-38)
  - Immediately after this comes the account of how Jesus, "the son of Adam," confronts the devil. Ever since the confrontation in the paradise, with all its implications for mankind, there had never another decisive encounter between man and Satan.
  - Now, however, Jesus, "the son of Adam," takes his father's place and, in the name of mankind confronts the devil once again. This time the conflict is the reversal of the original defeat.

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- Once this total victory has been achieved, Christ will henceforth be in constant open opposition to Satan.
  - There are many cures reported by the evangelists, as well as the expulsions of demons, to the conflict in which Christ is engaged and are anticipations of his ultimate victory.
  - He must also struggle against all whom the devil dominates. By expelling demons and curing all kinds of illness, Jesus intends to tell us that the reign of Satan is finished and the “the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28) “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” but he tells us the same thing by his opposition to the “brood of viper” (Matthew 3:7)

## The temptation of Jesus

- Matthew 4:1 “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.” Jesus is proclaimed Son of God at his baptism. When Jesus is tempted by the devil, he is to be a rebel against his Father’ will. (Dt. 8, 3:6, 13, 16)
- Matthew 4:2 “He fasted for forty days and forty nights,” The same time as that during which Moses remained on Sinai (Ex. 24,18). The time reference, however, seems primary intended to recall the forty years during which Israel was tempted in the desert (Dt. 8,2).

## The temptation of Jesus cont...

- Matthew 4:2 “Forty days and forty nights” the same time as that during which Moses remained on Sinai(Ex 24, 18). “But Moses passed into the midst of the cloud as he went up on the mountain, and there he stayed for forty days and forty nights.
- Matthew 4:3 The tempter approached and said to him. “If you are the son of God, command that these stones becomes loaves of bread.”
- Matthew 4:4 Jesus said in reply, “It is written: ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God’.” Dt. 8:3. Jesus refuses to use his power for his own benefit and accepts whatever God wills.

## The temptation of Jesus cont..

- Matthew 4:5–7 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you’ and “with their hands they will support you.”
- The devil supports his proposal by an appeal to the scriptures, Ps. 91, 11a, 12. Unlike Israel (Dt. 6, 16), Jesus refuses to “test” God by demanding from him an extraordinary show power.

## The temptation of Jesus cont..

- Matthew 4:9 The devil said to Jesus, All these I shall give to you, if you prostrate yourself and worship me.” The worship of Satan to which Jesus is probably intended to recall Israel’s worship of false gods. His refusal is expressed in the words of Dt. 6, 13.