SYNOPSIS The temptation of Jesus parallels the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Jesus is the second Adam, the second official representative of the human race set in a second pivotal moment. If Satan can tempt Jesus to sin, then all will be lost. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but to fill that role, he must be without sin. There is no Plan B. This is a tense winner-takes-all moment.

Matthew 4
Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 Then the tempter approached him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” 4 He answered, “It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: He will give his angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” 7 Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God.” 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him.

Parallels:
Mark’s Gospel only states that Jesus was tempted, but does not detail the temptations.

Luke’s Gospel gives a different order: stones to bread, the kingdoms of the world, and the pinnacle of the temple.

Notes:
Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness as it was here that he would demonstrate his loyalty to God and make the critical decisions that would impact the rest of his ministry. Jesus countered each temptation with Scripture. The implications of each temptation are as follows:

1. Stones to Bread: Jesus would not use the power God gave him for his personal interest, even to help his physical hunger. He would set spiritual matters above all material concerns.

2. The Pinnacle of the Temple: Jesus would not distort the Scriptures for his own purposes, nor would he rely on other people’s affirmation to advance his ministry. (Note here that the devil quotes Scripture.)

3. All the Kingdoms of the World: God sent Jesus into the world to establish the new kingdom of God, which supersedes all the material kingdoms of this world combined. He is fully committed to the Father’s purpose above all worldly advancement.

The angels came and began to serve him:
God will bring relief after we pass through the time of temptation.

APPLICATION As Jesus countered each temptation with Scripture, so we also should learn the Scriptures and set them to heart. / We should be aware of our own physical weakness, as this is when we are most vulnerable to temptation. / Jesus spent time in the wilderness considering what his future ministry would be; so can we. / We can follow the pattern of Jesus’ decisions, setting spiritual things above material things, being careful not to distort the Scriptures, and giving our loyalty to God alone. / Whenever we say, “...in Jesus’ Name,” we are claiming to act as servants to whom he has entrusted his authority. / After a time of temptation, God will bring relief.