

Sermon Discussion Questions: The Serpent Conquering Son of God

Mark 1:9–13

The following outline and discussion questions have been prepared to accompany the sermon from January 20, 2019 “The Serpent Conquering Son of God.” These questions can be used for discussion in small groups, family devotions, or for personal reflection.

Main Idea: Jesus is the Spirit-empowered Messiah and Son of God who will defeat Satan and bring salvation to the people of God.

Outline:

- I. The Previous Pattern: Failure
- II. The Seminal Test (Mark 1:12–13)
- III. The Path to Victory (Psalm 91)

Discussion Questions:

1. If we consider the pattern of “sonship” in the OT, what is the single theme that unites their collective failures?
 - How is this theme manifest in each “son’s” actions (Adam, Israel, the Davidic Kings)?
 - How do these failures help us better identify areas where we have failed in the past and might be failing today?
2. How can the fact that the Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan himself better understand the Holy Spirit’s function and purpose in our life? How can this understanding bolster our faith when we are struggling with temptation or facing difficult times (Cf. John 16:7–15)?

NOTE: I suggested in my sermon that Mark wants us to understand Jesus’ temptation through the lens of Psalm 91—Biblical scholars call this an *allusion*—and I realized that I did not define it in the message. G. K. Beale helpfully describes the nature and essence of these allusions.

An allusion may simply be defined as a brief expression consciously intended by an author to be dependent on an OT passage. In contrast to a quotation of the OT, which is a direct reference, allusions are indirect references (the OT wording is not reproduced directly as in a quotation)... The telltale key to discerning an allusion is that of recognizing an *incomparable or unique parallel in wording, syntax, concept, or cluster of motifs in the same order or structure.*¹

¹ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 32.

The central issue I want to emphasize is that allusions are *not generated* by creative pastors and scholars but *discovered* as these interpreters wrestle with the message and structure of the text in order to faithfully understand the Biblical author's main point.

Read Psalm 91 as a group before answering the following questions.

3. According to verses 1 and 2, who is the person that enjoys God's sheltering protection?

- How does this contrast with path to protection and victory over temptation expose the failures of Adam, Israel, and the Davidic Kings?
- How do these two verses help us see Jesus is "playing by the rules;" facing his Satan in his humanness and not leveraging his divinity?
- How can the promise of Psalm 91:1–2, the failure of the "other sons," and Jesus' victory over Satan help us as we face temptation in our life?

4. According to Psalm 91:14, help us see that Jesus' trust in God (Psalm 91:1–2) is motivated by something more than legalistic duty or intellectual knowledge?

5. In light of this passage, Deuteronomy 6:4, and Matthew 22:35–39; how do our affections for God serve to fuel our trust in God.

6. How do we cultivate these affections for God?

7. How is Jesus sinless perfection an encouragement and not an indictment? (Cf. Hebrews 4:15–16)

8. How can you use these truths to encourage someone in your circle of influence this week?

9. How can these truths fuel your love for God and help you trust him more this week?

10. How can these truths help you overcome current patterns of failure in your life today?