

4:1-8

'The Devil' doesn't exist as a fallen Angel or evil cosmic being- see the "Doctrinal Summary".

Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4:15), and: "every man is tempted... of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14). We are tempted by the "devil" of our own mind, and so was Jesus. We are not tempted by an evil being prompting us to sin - sin and temptation come "from within, out of the heart of man" (Mk. 7:21).

The temptations cannot be literal:

4:8 implies that Jesus was led up a high mountain to see all the kingdoms of the world in their future glory "in a moment of time" (Mk. 4:5).

There is no mountain high enough to see all the world- the earth is a sphere.

- Comparison with Luke 4 shows that the temptations are described in a different order. Mk. 1:13 says that Jesus was "in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan", whilst Mt. 4:2-3 says that "when he had fasted forty days... the tempter (Satan) came to Him...". Thus these same temptations kept repeating themselves- e.g. to turn stones into bread.

- It's unlikely the devil led Jesus through the wilderness and streets of Jerusalem and then they scaled a pinnacle of the temple together, all in view of the inquisitive Jews.

- If the devil is a physical person who has no respect for God's Word and is interested in making people sin, then why would Jesus quote Scripture to overcome him? According to the popular view, this would not send the devil away. Jesus quoted a Bible passage each time. Ps. 119:11: "Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin".

- Jesus was "led of *the spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil". How could the Spirit of God lead Jesus to be tempted by a superhuman being existing in opposition to God. He had just received the power of the Spirit (3:16). Now He was tempted to use it to turn stones into bread, jump off buildings unharmed etc.