

# Invocabit

## St. Matthew 4:1-11

February 21, 2021

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Max Lucado—a prominent evangelical author and preacher—recently apologized for a sermon years ago where he said that homosexuality is a sin. Actress Gina Carano was fired from her show for saying that hating people for their political views is dangerous, likening it to the complicity of the German people in the holocaust.

The views expressed by Lucado and Carano are judged to be on the “wrong side of history.” That kind of language—being on the wrong or right side of history—reflects the idea that the world is inevitably moving towards the progressive utopia.

This is incompatible with the Holy Scripture’s meta-narrative of history. When the first man rebels against God, all of mankind falls. God’s Word addresses each of us as “son of man,” “son of Adam.”

After the Fall, fallen man then breaks into two camps, two cults. Here I’m using cult not in the sense of a weird, sinister religious group, but in the old sense of the Latin *cultus*, “worship.” It gives us words like *cultivate* and *culture*.

There are many world religions, and a seemingly infinite number of things and experiences for people to worship. But when you look at the cosmic picture, there are just two cults, two worship groups. Genesis 3 was read this morning. When you get into chapter 4, you have the two groups embodied in the two sons: Cain and Abel. Cain murders his brother and is exiled.

Cain's descendants worship their own name. Seth, the next son of Adam, teaches his sons to call upon the name of the LORD. These are the two cults, the two worship-groups: one calls on the Name of YHWH; the other rebels against that.

You see this repeat in Gen. 11-12. Men build the Tower of Babel why? To make a name for themselves. Abraham in ch. 12 leaves the place of idolatry, builds an altar to YHWH, and calls on His Name. So which group are you in?

In his book *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, Peter Brunner puts it this way:

**The door leading to a genuine, legitimate worship of God and communion with God was open also for fallen man.... But man slams the door shut because he will not acknowledge that there is someone above him before whom he must fall down and to whom he is "indebted" for everything. Man proves himself a true son of Adam.... [He] shows himself the rebel who rejects the hand extended to him in compassion by God.**

Today, the man Jesus is put to the test. Will He show Himself the rebel? Or will He cling to God's promises? In the temptations, the fallen world is presented as a pleasure-palace luring man away from trusting God and His Word. Food and bodily lusts, power, fame, wealth, politics – everything you desire is offered, for just one little act of worship away from God.

Every time you choose to break the Ten Commandments, you repeat the Fall all over again. As did the serpent to our first mother, every day the devil, the world, and your own sinful nature lie to you.

They say, "You're on the wrong side of history. Offer a pinch of incense to Caesar. Post the trending hashtag. Abandon that antiquated Bible."

But to every temptation Jesus replied, **"It is written, it is written, it is written."** God's Word is not just the right side of history. It shows us the entire arc of history. What is our history?

Desiring someone to love and bestow gifts upon, God creates the world. He plants our first parents in paradise, and unites them—one man and one woman—in holy matrimony. By their rebellion, the world becomes steeped in corruption and death. History can only go one direction now: down into *Sheol*, down to death. Life becomes a living hell.

But God saw our wretched state, and entered Himself into creation. The Creator becomes a creature to ransom creation. He moves history in a different direction. To every word of God where we said, "No," Jesus said, "Yes!" Going through the paths of the dead, the Crucified One rises.

That is historical fact. But it is also the Church's future.

When [*You were / Luke Thomas was*] baptized, joined to Christ [*you were / he was*]. His death becomes your death. His resurrection becomes your resurrection. History is moving towards the judgment of this world and the regensis of this world.

Today 18 of our little brothers and sisters receive their first communion. More than a rite of passage, it is the food of forgiveness, the medicine of immortality, the vaccine against death's power. Today, the living body of Christ nourishes and transforms your dying body. Today, the blood of Jesus cleanses you from all sins.

Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return. But remember, O man, that Christ, the Crucified One, is risen. Satan is put to flight. Death is trampled down.

Death is history. The future is life. The future is Christ's. You are His disciples. Follow Him. He will not leave you in the wilderness to die. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, He is with you. He is a veteran of that battle. The devil flees at His name.

Flee the world's cult. Take up your Bible. Make the sign of the cross. Follow Him.

*In the Name of Jesus.*

*The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

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