

Preface

This book has its origins in two things. The first was a comment made by the late George Caird, my *Doktorvater*, to the members of the Theology Faculty of the University of Oxford when, in the spring of 1983, I was being interviewed for the Hall Houghton studentship in the Greek New Testament: namely, that my doctoral work on the Synoptic stories of the temptations of Jesus might result in resolving the long-standing and continuing debate over the meaning of the “temptation” petition in the Lord’s Prayer. The second was the question posed to me on a wintry day by Robert (Bob) Jewett on what I thought the meaning of the temptation petition was, a question for which at that time I had only the vaguest of answers. In a very real sense, what I have written here is an attempt both to live up to the evident confidence that George had in me, to produce what he generously thought my doctoral work would lay the groundwork for, and to provide a better answer to what Bob asked of me than the one I initially gave him. So I must express my deepest thanks to them for providing me with the impetus to examine that aspect of the Lord’s Prayer in depth, and then, as now seems inevitable, to branch out into a full-scale exploration of the meaning of the rest of that prayer.

But this exploration might never have come to fruition had it not been for the gentle but persistent nagging of my longtime friend Paul Griffiths to see it through. All too often I put the project aside. But every time I did, I always heard his voice echoing in the corners of my study to get on with things and complete what I had started. I owe him more than he knows. So I wish to dedicate this book to him. I hope he will receive it as a token of gratitude for his friendship over the years since we first met late in 1975 at Trinity College, Oxford, where we were undergraduates together.

Thanks too must be extended to teachers and friends and colleagues with whom I mooted, discussed, and debated the ideas fleshed out here, among them Norbert Schedler, Trevor Williams, Robert Morgan, Ed Sanders, and John Muddiman (who set me on my path of formal New Testament studies and also ended up with the task, after George Caird's untimely death, of supervising me as I completed my doctoral thesis), Tom Wright, Richard Pervo, Mark Goodacre, Stephen Carlson, James McGrath, Jimmy Dunn, Loren Rosson, Gail Dawson, Gordon Raynal, Carl Conrad, Troy Martin, and the members of Crosstalk: The Historical Jesus Discussion Forum and other online discussion lists, of the Chicago Society for Biblical Research, and of the Synoptic Gospels section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

Special thanks must also go to my editor, Neil Elliott, for his thoughtful suggestions for improving what I had set out in the initial drafts of this book. Any faults of grammar, explication, argument, and citation (or lack of it) that remain in the following pages are hardly his. I also thank copyeditor Jeff Reimer.

And finally I must acknowledge my immense debt to a person who in theatrical circles would be known as an “angel,” my long-standing patroness, Margaret (Peggy) Pendry. Without her continued support over the years I would never have been able to have had the

conference-based discussions with colleagues about the materials now included here that I have been privileged to enjoy.