

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS – Part 1

Luke 4:1-4

INTRODUCTION

One of the dynamics of human affairs that has been around from ancient times and forward, is the idea of a battle settled by **selecting representative champions**

For example:

- **David** vs. **Goliath** in the Valley of Elah
- **Hector** vs. **Ajax** (fought nearly to the death of both)
- **Frazer** and **Ali**
- **Gracie** and **Shamrock**

In Luke 4:1-3 we have:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| <u>The Greatest Battle Ever!!!</u> | vs. | <u>The War of Ages</u> |
| The Prince of this world | | The Prince of Peace |
| The Father of Lies | | The Father of Love |
| Our Accuser | | Our Advocate |
| Our Enemy | | Our Friend |

This is Hell's attempt to thwart Heaven's purpose.

READ Luke 4:1-13

Matt – records this temptation in 11 verses

Mark – records this temptation in 2 verses

Luke – records this temptation in 13 verses

Proposition: 2 Thoughts I want you to leave with this morning: **Intensity** and **Sufficiency**

I. The **Intensity** of His Temptation

II. The **Sufficiency** of His Word

So That: Our Savior can't be a Victim. Our Savior must be a Victor.

I. The **Intensity** of His Temptation 4:1-2

Point – Some will ask ... well ... since Jesus is who He says He is ... was He really tempted? I mean, it wasn't anything like the temptation I face. You know what? ... They are exactly right. Jesus' temptation wasn't anything like the temptation you face or the temptation I face.

His temptation was vastly greater and more horrible.

His temptation was far, far greater and worse than what you and I could possibly imagine.

→ This is the unmitigated assault of Hell.

Consider the promise from God in **1 Cor 10:13** – “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.” → Now consider what Jesus was capable of? Far more than you and I!

His temptation was vastly greater, far far greater and worse than what you and I could ever possibly imagine.

Only a sinless individual can know the full Intensity of temptation.

Application – Now, there are great lessons for us here. And I am going to give you some. But make no mistake about it. The point of this passage is not object lessons for you and me. The main point doesn't have to do with you and me, it has to do with Jesus Christ.

Illustration– Consider the heresy of the Example Theory of the Atonement. This heresy of understanding the work of Jesus Christ at the cross says wait a minute ... isn't Jesus death an example. Well, yes. But it is far more than merely an example. This heresy denies substitutionary atonement.

In the same way, we can take example object lessons from this. But that is not the main point.

Proof – “^{1a}**And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,**” – only Luke, among all the gospel authors, uses this phrase in the New Testament (Paul uses it in Eph 5). It is one of Luke’s favorite phrases – perfectly equipped in His fellowship with God, through the Holy Spirit, for everything that lays ahead.

Old Testament:

Bezalel (craftsman) – Exo 31:3

Joshua – Deut 34:9

Micah – Mic 3:8

Already in Luke:

John the Baptizer – Luke 1:15

Elizabeth – Luke 1:41

Zacharias – Luke 1:67

Acts:

All the Apostles – Acts 2:4

Peter and John – Acts 4:8, 31

Stephen – Acts 6:5

Barnabas – Acts 11:24

Paul – Acts 13:9

The disciples – Acts 13:52

→ You! → Eph 5:18

As a man, there is no quenching of the Spirit. He is truly full of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has all of Him.

John 5:19 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever *the Father* does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”

John 5:30 – “I can do nothing on My own initiative ... I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Application – John 15:5 – “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

“^{1b}returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness”

Jordan and **Spirit** – connects with His Baptism. Mark tells us that He immediately went into the wilderness. Jesus leaves the Father’s pleasure to go to the Enemy’s attack.

Now, **Jesus** was already in the wilderness when He was baptized by **John**. The Spirit drives Him to a more remote, more barren, more hostile environment.

He was even farther removed from the comforts of civilization than John the Baptizer was → Desolate, Barren, Wasteland

Deut 8:15 – “He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.”

There are wildernesses ... and then there are wildernesses. I mean ... this is the Delaware of wildernesses ☺

Beloved, understand this – the initiator of this encounter, this battle, is not the Devil.

This tells us that the initiator of this battle is God.

This timing is not the timing of Satan

This timing is the timing of God.

Jesus, you see, is not in the wilderness by accident.

Jesus is not someplace where He’s not supposed to be.

2 Environments → “**was led about**” – grammatically: imperfect tense – literally means “was being led in the Spirit in the wilderness”

Turn over to **Mark 1:9-12** – “impelled Him to go out” ... that seems a little stronger than “He was led about”

Illustration – Consider Gary and I relating to you a description of the same incident. Gary might say, “Tim urged him to go.” This would be perfectly accurate. Perfectly true. Perfectly appropriate for the occasion and purpose at hand. I might have a different occasion and purpose to share the same incident. And I might give a fuller description, “Tim urged him to go mightily! With great force! He urged him to go like an impassioned man with life and death on the line!”

Both are true. Both are accurate.
Both are right for the occasion at hand.

In the same way, **Luke** and **Matthew** – “The Spirit led Him into the wilderness.” **Mark** – “Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness.”

Mark adds great intensity with his choice of word → “**impels**” – strong word from the original Greek word ἐκβάλλω – it is translated in English as “cast out”. The same word is used in the same chapter in Mark 1 for Jesus **casting out demons**.

This same Greek word is also used later in the gospels when Jesus will cleanse the Temple and **drive out the greedy moneychangers**.

Jesus immediately goes from God’s smile to Satan’s smite.

We are in this situation because of our disobedience.
He is in this situation because of His obedience.

“^{2a}**for forty days, being tempted by the devil.**” – forty days is used in Scripture as a period of testing and preparation

Gen 50:3 – 40 days were required for embalming.

Exod 24:18 – Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.

Num 13:25 – returned from spying out the land, at the end of 40 days

1 Sam 17:16 – Goliath came forward morning and evening for 40 days

1 Kings 19:8 – Elijah went 40 days and 40 nights to Horeb

Jon 3:4 – 40 days and Nineveh will be overthrown.

Acts 1:3 – To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days.

“**being tempted**” – to learn the nature or character of something by submitting it to thorough and extensive testing.

2 Cor 13:5 – “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves”

The only appearance of this original Greek word outside of the New Testament and the Septuagint is in a medical discourse where it is used of experiments on diseases → diagnostic

There is a distinction...a VERY BIG distinction between being tested and winning and being tested and failing the test by giving in to the sinful desire

Temptation becomes sin in 3 stages:

1. Suggestion
2. Delight
3. Consent

Jesus had the full onslaught of the first.

God tests for strength. God NEVER tempts to sin.

“**tempted**” – grammar: present participle → this went on for the entire 40 days

Illustration – These are not 3 darts at the end of 40 days of fasting. This is a constant barrage of spears, knives, and darts ... for 40 days and 40 nights ... while fasting.

He was tempted (just like you and me) continually for 30 years. The temptation is cranked up a notch for 40 days. These 3 are the Blitzkrieg of temptations ... against the backdrop of the rising crescendo of temptations.

“**the devil**” – Greek word *diabolos* – accuser, slanderer

The **Evil One**, The **Tempter**, The **Accuser**, The **Father of Lies**. He is wicked, evil, vicious opposer of God. He is deceptive. He is hostile. He is wicked. He is a liar. He is a killer. We know this from Scripture.

“^{2b}**And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry.**”

Literally it says “He hungered” – “**became**” is not good translation - should be in *italics* because it is not in the original language.

Why does it say He hungered? I mean ... isn't this obvious? After 40 days of fasting, of course He is hungry. Beloved ... remember ... the Word of God is never superfluous.

There are constant reminders, constant hints throughout the gospels of the Deity of Christ and the humanity of Christ.

He is a son of Adam, but He is far beyond Adam.

The Gospel authors make it very clear throughout that He is fully human. But they also make it very clear He is not merely human. → Meekness and Majesty

This is here to remind us that Jesus, the son of Adam, the Son of God, is very human. And to guard against the fallacious thinking that His temptation was no big deal. This is very real hunger, in this very real temptation, of this very real man.

→ He has an authority that not only comes down from Heaven, but is born out of human experience!

God will taste poverty and death before “Take and eat” become verbs reminding us of salvation.

Jesus turns these words of temptation into words of salvation by His perfect obedience, by His resistance to temptation and

by His dying the death on the cross in our place.

Note! It was in the area of hunger and eating the 1st Adam was tested and failed.

In every case, Jesus feels the full force of each temptation, far more real and far stronger than you and I could ever imagine.

Since this happens to our Master, should we be surprised when it happens to us, His disciples?

Application – You can be in the center of God’s will. You can be doing exactly what God commands you to do and right there, encounter your greatest trials, your deepest sorrows, and your most challenging testing.

You may find yourself in the wilderness of the Heartbreak of His Providence.

The rescue of God may come in the form of suffering and death. My beloved was rescued through her suffering and death.

Sometimes God snuffs out the brightest candles.
The darker the night, the brighter the stars.
The hotter the fire, the purer the gold.

Richard Baxter – *“Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die. Then that set me on studying how to live.”*

Application - Beloved, even when you are in the valley of the shadow of death, He is there with you.

The **Intensity** of His Temptation, ...

II. The Sufficiency of His Word 4:3-12

Point – Satan begins his temptation by challenging the Word of God in **3:22**

Proof – “³And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.’”

When you see the word “if” – it could/should be translated in the first-class condition as “since”.

The devil never questions the Deity of Jesus.

Demons never question the Deity of Jesus – **Luke 4:34; 8:28; James 2:19.**

→ Liberals, cults, and pagans question the Deity of Jesus.

God fed the doubting, sinning, complaining idolatrous people wandering in the wilderness with manna.

In a sense, what Satan is saying is like this – ‘Here You are, the Son of God, and You’re hungry.’ Satan is tempting Jesus to question the goodness of God.

Sin **defies** the Word of God, sin **distorts** the Word of God, sin **denies** the Word of God

→ Satan attacks the **authority** of God (v.4). Satan attacks the **integrity** of God (v.5).

The real issue is the impatience of unbelief that makes us resentful and questioning the wisdom and goodness of God.

Temptation to dissatisfaction, to impatience, to self-will

Isn’t this the way it happens? God speaks ... and then we doubt.

The ultimate end question ... who speaks the word of truth? God or the Devil?

“⁴And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone.””

Grammatically - perfect passive – “it stands written” – abiding value; enduring

Deut 8:3 – “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.”

In Scripture, there is a dichotomy between the bread that we eat with the mouth into the stomach ... and the bread we read with our eyes and hear with our ears into the heart.

Illustration – Remember – Noah wasn’t safe because he was in the Ark. Noah was in the Ark, because he was safe. In the same way, you don’t live because you eat. You eat, because God lets you live.

John 14:30 – “the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” → There is nothing in Jesus in which the devil can hook a temptation and make it successful. All temptation that comes at Jesus comes from the outside. None of it comes from the inside.

John 4:34 – “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”

Beloved, the vast majority of time when faced with temptation you’re not going to have time to pull out a concordance.

Application – The point is to have Scripture so saturated into your heart that you have it ready that you are armed and ready.

Illustration – Jesus didn’t reach into His satchel and pull out a scroll. → He was standing with His sword was out of its sheath. He is armed and ready!

Biggest problem for most believers with the Bible is not that it is too intellectually challenging, it is not that it is too difficult to understand, the biggest problem for most Christians with the Bible is it stays shut.

Application – You need to fight fire with fire. Don't let those deadly temptations percolate in your heart.

Application – **James 4:17** – “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” How does Jesus resist? To the Word!

Application – There is no freedom from temptation in this life, on this side of glory. There wasn't for Jesus and there isn't for us.

Beloved, when Scripture becomes the satisfying authoritative antidote to temptation, the Tempter moves on.

Adam was in paradise. Jesus is in the wilderness.
Adam had everything. Jesus has nothing.

Jesus hits the target.
He meets the standard.
He fulfills the requirement.
He wins.
Jesus Christ is the Promised One.

Finally, the Victorious One has arrived.
➔ This is the message of the Gospel!
➔ This is the kick off to the Ministry of Jesus

CONCLUSION

Heb 2:14-15 – “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

Heb 2:18 – “since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

This is the Jesus who is standing in the shadows of your life and says, “If no one else understands, I understand. I have been there before. And I will be with you.”

Heb 4:15 – “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.”

Application – Heb 4:16 – “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

That is the powerful charge. That needs to be our heart prayer moment by moment, day by day.