

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

January 9, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

*The Temptation in the Wilderness*

Topics – Luke 4; temptation in the wilderness; temptation of Christ; the devil; Satan

Text – Luke 4:1 – 13 (Parallel passages – Matthew 4:1 – 11; Mark 1:12 – 13)

### Introduction

*"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

*"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)*

*"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James 1:13)*

### Introduction

The account of the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ by the devil in the Wilderness after His baptism is found in all three of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). It is not found in John's gospel because John portrays Jesus as God, with the emphasis placed on His deity, not His humanity. As God, Jesus *cannot be tempted*. In other words, if Jesus is God, there is no way possible that Satan could be victorious in this temptation. However, as man, God allowed Jesus to be put to the test in order to prove that He was and is who He claimed to be. (Illustrate – test pilots)

This brings us to the question, was it a real temptation, or a real test? It really depends on how you look at it. From God's perspective, it was not. God, of course, knew that Jesus could not be induced to do wrong, because He is God; but that was His point in allowing this temptation in the first place. Through this temptation, He could prove that Jesus, in fact, is God. However, if we examine Satan's perspective, I believe we will realize that he was genuinely trying to get Jesus to yield to his tempts. Why?

- 1 Perhaps Satan thought Jesus gave up some of His deity when He became flesh. Perhaps, He underestimated the power of God incarnate.
- 2 Perhaps he deceived himself into thinking that he could actually conquer the God man.

Let's examine how the words, *tempted* and *tempt* are used in the Scripture.

**Strong** - tempted **G3985** – πειράζω - peirazō (*pi-rad'-zo*)

From **G3984**; to *test* (objectively), that is, *endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline*: - assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt (-er), try.

**G1598** - ἐκπειράζω - ekpeirazō (*ek-pi-rad'-zo*)

From **G1537** and **G3985**; to *test thoroughly*: - tempt.

**Webster – TEMPT**, v.t. [L. tento; teneo; Gr. The primary sense is to strain, urge, press.]

1. To incite or solicit to an evil act; to entice to something wrong by presenting arguments that are plausible or convincing, or by the offer of some pleasure or apparent advantage as the inducement.

*“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed.”* (James 1:14)

2. To provoke; to incite.
3. To solicit; to draw; without the notion of evil.
4. To try; to venture on; to attempt.
5. In Scripture, to try; to prove; to put to trial for proof.

*“God did tempt Abraham.”* (Genesis 22:1)

*“Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God.”* (Deuteronomy 6:16)

*“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* (1Corinthians 10:13)

### **Facts About the Temptation**

1. He was led into the Wilderness immediately after his baptism. (Mark 1:12)

Note – Satan will often attack after a great spiritual victory.

- a. This place was uninhabited.
- b. There were wild beasts there.

c. There was no water or food there. Just as the Israelites were led to a place in the Wilderness where they would find no water, so was Jesus. Jesus waited on God’s provision instead of commanding stones to produce water or food.

2. He was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1); led by the Spirit (Matthew 4:1); driven by the Spirit (Mark 1:13).

3. He fasted there for forty days. The Bible does not specifically mention water, only food.
4. It is apparent that the test began at the end of the forty days.
5. The Bible tells us that when the devil left him, the angels came and ministered to Him.
6. The Bible says that the devil only departed for a season.

### **Let’s consider Each Temptation in comparison with 1 John 2:16**

*“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”* (1John 2:16)

*"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2Corinthians 4:4)*

**And let's compare it to Satan's first temptation of Eve and subsequent temptations of us.**

**I The Lust of the Flesh (Luke 4:3 – 4; Matthew 4:3 – 4)**

This first temptation was an attack in the weakness of His flesh. He was fasting for forty days; he was fully human, and he was hungry.

Satan told Eve that the fruit was good to eat.

Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3:

*"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."*  
(Deuteronomy 8:3)

**II The Lust of the Eyes (Luke 4:5 – 8; Matthew 4:8 – 10)**

Notice - the order is reversed in Matthew and Luke.

Notice - Satan has authority over the kingdoms of the world.

Notice – Satan offers a kingdom without a cross.

The Bible tells us that Eve "saw"

Jesus was already the possessor (or would be the possessor) of what Satan offered him:

*"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."* (Psalm 2:7-9)

*"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."* (Daniel 7:13-14)

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* (Matthew 28:18)

Satan often tries to tempt us with something that God has already promised us, if we are just patient enough to wait on the Lord.

Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20:

*"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." (Deuteronomy 6:13)*

*"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." (Deuteronomy 10:20)*

### III The Pride of Life (Luke 4:9 – 12; Matthew 4:5 – 7)

Notice – Satan misquotes Psalm 91:11 & 12:

*"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Psalm 91:11-12 KJV)*

Satan told Eve, "Ye shall be as gods"; "make one wise"

Jesus fought back each temptation with the Word of God. "It is written". We are powerless to fight the temptations of the devil because:

- 1 We don't know enough Scripture to fight back with.
- 2 We lean unto our own understanding instead of "acknowledging Him". We like to get the credit: we say "I think" instead of "God says".

Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:16:

"Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah." (Deuteronomy 6:16)

### Conclusion

Chuck Swindoll put it well, when He stated:

Just like temptation today, that first temptation involved four distinct phases:

**The Appeal:** Something forbidden promises fulfillment apart from God's provision.

**The Struggle:** Tension builds between the appeal of sin and belief in God's goodness.

**The Response:** A decision is made either to disobey or to wait on God.

**The Aftermath:** The consequences of sin breed despair; the fruit of obedience multiplies blessing.<sup>1</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said:

In our members there is a slumbering inclination towards desire which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power desire seizes mastery over the flesh. All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames. It makes no difference whether it is sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money, or, finally, that strange desire for the beauty of the world, of nature. Joy in God is in course of being extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the creature. At this moment God is quite unreal to us, he loses all reality, and only desire for

---

<sup>1</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Luke (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 3) (p. 103). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

the creature is real; the only reality is the devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God. And now his falsehood is added to this proof of strength. The lust thus aroused envelops the mind and will of man in deepest darkness. The powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us. . . . It is here that everything within me rises up against the Word of God.<sup>2</sup>

Illustration – As painful as it might be, think back to a time when you were tempted, and you fell for the temptation – hook, line, and sinker. Against all that you knew to be right; against the wishes of your parents, perhaps, or against the wishes of somebody else’ you made the dumb decision to go against God, and do your thing. Think about the consequences of that decision; the pain that was caused. Think about how life would be different, if you had decided differently.

Here are some practical thoughts:

1. The devil will usually come after you, when you are weak.
2. If you resist him, he may try again with a different approach.
3. If you continue to resist him, he must flee.

*"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7)

---

<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: Temptation* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 132.