

Resisting Temptation (Luke 4:1-13)

Summary: As Jesus is baptized, the Father announces that Jesus of Nazareth is “My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.” This speaks to both the eternal and temporal pleasure of the Father in the Son. The incarnation has not compromised the unity of the Trinity.

As Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends on Him as a dove and will empower and direct his life. Before Jesus enters public ministry, He must grow in maturity.

Luke has informed the reader of Jesus’ divinity (3:22) and His humanity (3:23, 38). Jesus is truly God and truly Man. Luke will demonstrate Jesus’ humanity through an onslaught of temptations.

Jesus, as the obedient second Adam:

1. Trusted in the Father’s Provision (v.3-4)

- The same Spirit that hovered over Him (1:35) and rested on Him (3:22) now fills Him and directs Him (4:1).

The length and location of the testing/temptation are an allusion to:

- Israel’s forty years of wilderness testing (Numb. 14:34; Deut. 8:2-3)
- forty days of fasting by Moses (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:9)
- forty days of fasting by Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-8)
- Just as Israel was called God’s son (Ex. 4:22-23) and led in the wilderness, so was Jesus.
- Jesus was tempted more than three times over a forty-day fast. Jesus was “being tempted” by the devil for forty days.
- The devil had met Him there since day one, and Jesus eventually became “hungry”.
- How does the devil know that Jesus is the Son of God? Is the third-class conditional statement “if” a question? or rather, a comment meaning “since”? The devil tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread and operate outside of the Father’s direction.
 - Satan is subtly questioning the care of the Father. After all, God gifted the complaining Israelites in the wilderness with quail and manna (Ex. 16; Num. 11; Deut. 8). The Father hasn’t provided for His own Son. Where is the care and love of the Father?
- The devil unleashed the same temptation on Eve, questioning the goodness of God (Gen. 3:1-5).
- Jesus would have been killed if He had turned the stones into bread and consumed solid food. After forty days of just drinking water, the body can only metabolize liquids.
- Jesus replied, “*man* does not live on bread alone.” He identifies as a man because He is a man. Man must live on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:2-3). Jesus acknowledges Israel’s historicity and the transcendent moral principle of living according to God’s word.
- While Jesus will not perform a miracle on behalf of Himself, He will work for others. He will not override his human hunger with a divine miracle. He must become like one of us (Heb. 2:18; 4:15). He will depend on the Father’s provisions alone.

2. Trusted in the Father’s Power (v.5-8)

- The devil “took Him up” (v.5), which indicates a “dragging or leading”.
- We are unsure whether the devil came to Him in some form, but we know that the devil spoke to Him and “showed Him” the “kingdoms of the world” in a moment. This may have been all the land of the Holy Roman Empire or some vision.

- This is reminiscent of Moses, who was taken to Mount Nebo to be shown the “whole land” inherited by those who would enter the Promise Land shortly before his death (Deut. 34:1-14).
- The devil “offers” Him these kingdoms. Does the devil have the authority to relegate this authority? No.
 - The devil (Satan) is referred to as the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), “the prince and power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and “the prince/ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
 - Satan operates under God’s providential jurisdiction and is ultimately a servant of God. There is no authority except what God has instituted (Rom. 13:1). God alone raises kingdoms, and He tears them down (Jer. 1:2; Dan. 2:21).
- Jesus again quotes Scripture in its proper context for the second time (v.4, 8) and will not worship any other god, which would violate the first commandment (Deut. 5:7).
- The devil was offering Jesus an alternative political kingdom exempting suffering and pain. We are unsure as to what degree of knowledge and understanding the devil had regarding the mission of the Son.
- Jesus does not debate with Satan over his authority, for it is ultimately a moot point.

3. Trusted in the Father’s Protection (v.9-12)

- Satan took Jesus up to Jerusalem and placed Him on the “pinnacle” of the temple. This may have been the Royal Portico which overlooked the Kidron Valley (450-foot high).
- The devil will quote Scripture with Jesus since Jesus is committed to Scripture (v.4, 8).
- While the devil and Jesus quoted Scripture in this last temptation, only One will use the correct context and application of that Scripture.
- Satan uses the third-class conditional statement “if” as he did in the first temptation. “Since” or “assuming” You are the Son of God, “jump down from this cliff. God will send His angels to catch You, as Psalm 91:11-12 says.”
- By misapplying Scripture, Satan attempts to drive a wedge between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. True faith is content with the ordinary. Jesus will not test the Father (Deut. 6:16).

All three temptations mirror the temptations Israel experienced in the wilderness. Unlike Israel and Adam, Jesus persevered in the power of the Holy Spirit and perfect love and submission to the Father. The three temptations also fit the three types in 1 John 2:16: “the lust of the flesh” (stones into bread), “the lust of the eyes” (kingdoms of the world), and “the pride of life” (forcing the angels to protect Him). These three also modeled the temptation of Eve: the fruit was seen as “good for food” (lust of the flesh), “pleasing to the eye” (lust of the eyes), and “desirable for gaining wisdom” (pride of life).

Jesus is greater than Adam:

- Adam faced temptation in a world without sin, while Jesus lived in a sinful world.
- Adam’s stomach was perpetually full, and walked with God in a garden ripe with every seed-bearing tree and plant. Jesus, however, was fasting in the wilderness.
- Adam had a helpmate with him. Jesus was alone.
- Adam’s disobedience cast him from the favor of God, bringing death, while Jesus’ obedience, as the second Adam, brought life and reconciliation with God to all who believe.

While tempted, Jesus did not exploit his divinity to compensate for any human disadvantage or deficiency. He relied entirely on the Father and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to live victoriously as the greater, second Adam.