

Message #16

Luke 4:1-13

There is not a person here today who hasn't been tempted in some area as a believer who hasn't given into the temptation. In some way, at some time, every one of us has been tempted and failed. You may have been tempted to say something about someone you know you shouldn't and you said it. You may have been tempted to brag about something, knowing it was pride and you did it anyway. You may have been tempted to shade the truth, knowing it was a lie and you did it anyway. You may have been tempted to look at something you know you shouldn't and you looked anyway. **That is the truth about us, but that was not the truth about Jesus Christ.**

If your goal in life is to actually do the will of God, in every area of life, Satan and his forces are out to stop you. He will send something into your life to try and get you off track. It may be something physical, financial, emotional or spiritual. Your temptation to move away from God's will may come through a person, a promotion, prosperity, pleasure or prominence. Satan knows how to use your flesh and this world to come at you from some angle. He will offer you his way, which is the instant gratification, easy wrong way.

Just after Jesus Christ had been publicly ordained and introduced as the Messiah by His dramatic baptism, which featured the voice of God the Father and the visible display of the Holy Spirit, **verse 1** says that Jesus was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness. **He was led straight into the wilderness and straight into Satanic temptation by the Holy Spirit. In fact, there is a double reference and mention of the Holy Spirit in verse 1 to establish this point.** Christ is not led into this temptation by His own doing, this is all of God.

Verse 1 says, He "returned from the Jordan," which probably means He returned to the Galilean area from the Jordan River area. The shortest distance between the Jordan and Nazareth would be about 20 miles, but depending on where Christ was, it could be a considerable distance back to Galilee and you would have to travel through wilderness areas. In fact, **verse 1** says He was led into the wilderness.

Now most times when Jesus Christ goes into the wilderness alone, it is so that He may be alone with God in some isolated retreat. But that was not the case this time. **This wilderness experience is for the specific purpose of doing battle with Satan.**

It is important to see that this is Spirit-led, not flesh-led. Christ is not being led into temptation by a sin nature, like us; He is being led into temptation by the Holy Spirit to prove He is not like us.

What Satan was trying to do was to stop Jesus Christ from accomplishing His mission, which included Him dying on a cross so that sinners could be saved. Satan knew the ramifications of that baptism with and for sinners. He knew that Christ was going to nail the condemnatory law and the condemnatory sin to that cross and he was out to stop it.

Verse 2 says that this temptation went on for 40 days. The number 40 is an interesting Biblical number. There was 40 years of Israel's wandering (Num. 14:33; 32:13; Deut. 8:2). The most a person could be whipped was with 40 lashes (Deut. 25:2). The judgment of the flood was for 40 days (Gen. 7:4, 12). The amount of time before Nineveh would be destroyed was 40 days (Jonah 3:2). The period of uncleanness after birth was 40 days (Lev. 12:1-4). The length of time that Moses was alone with God to get the law was 40 days (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:9). **So this number clearly is connected to legal judgment.**

Satan is trying to do anything he can to keep Christ from being the perfect sacrifice. He is trying to stop Him from accomplishing His Divine mission as God/Savior/Messiah/King. It is a masterful temptation, but it didn't work. Christ did not and could not give in. What Jesus Christ displayed to us here is this:

THE KEY TO VICTORY OVER SATANIC TEMPTATION AND TESTING IS KNOWING GOD'S WRITTEN WORD AND APPLYING IT TO SPECIFIC SITUATIONS OF TEMPTATION.

Make no mistake about this point. **You and I would have failed this temptation. In fact, this temptation is designed to show that Jesus Christ is the only ultimate victor.**

This temptation proves that Jesus is God and He cannot fail. Jesus is the second Adam and He needs to be tempted to prove He cannot fail. This battle between Satan and Jesus will show up often in Luke's gospel.

I watched a program on the making of a Rolls Royce automobile. Every part of the car was hand crafted. After the car was completely built, it was put through a series of special tests to show that this was a car that met the Rolls Royce specs. The test was not designed to show that the car was inferior; the tests were designed to show that the car was superior in every way. Had there been anything inferior, it would have never passed this test because the purpose is to show it is a superior car.

That is what this test is for Jesus Christ. It is designed to show His superiority in Deity and Quality. No one else measures up to Him. No one else could pass this test. This is why the Spirit of God led Him into it.

Now as near as we may determine, there are three temptations that Satan himself presents to Jesus Christ. He comes at Him from three different angles:

TEMPTATION ANGLE #1 – Satan comes at Jesus to tempt Him to use His power to meet His own Personal Needs. 4:2-4

During the 40 days, Jesus did not eat anything and at the end of the time He was hungry. This was not a legal fast, but apparently one Jesus did to be alone with God. Satan knew He would be hungry.

Now hunger is a legitimate personal need and Satan knows it is a legitimate human need so when you get one who is hungry, it is a good time for a Satanic test.

In this test, Satan comes at Jesus through legitimate personal needs and he tries to sell Him the philosophy that the end will justify the means so He should use His miraculous power to meet a real personal need.

Now the “if” clause is a critical clause of reality. It is a first class conditional clause. **Satan does not doubt Jesus is the Son of God; he is encouraging Him to use His miraculous power since He is the Son of God.**

Satan knows Jesus Christ is God and he knows He has miraculous power as God. So he says to Jesus, You are the Son of God so tell this stone to become bread. Both stone and bread are singular. So Satan is not asking Christ to create an entire restaurant menu, he simply says why not turn one stone into a loaf of bread.

Satan knows about the creative power of God. He knows that God can speak things into existence. That is how Jesus Christ created the world (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:13-16). So speaking to this stone and turning it into a loaf of bread would be nothing for Jesus to do.

At surface level this appears to be a relatively harmless suggestion. You are alone in the wilderness so who would care, who would see or even know that You turned this stone into bread? It appears to be no big deal.

But the real issue here is the purpose of the Divine miracles. Christ was launching into His public ministry and He would perform many miracles the purpose of which, as clearly seen in the first one He did, was to manifest His glory as God (John 2:11). He did miracles as a means of proving His Deity.

Jesus Christ never did any miracle for self-gain or self-fulfillment. He always did miracles for God’s glory.

In **verse 4**, Jesus answered Satan. He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3. The context of the quote is that Moses was reminding the children of Israel that God is the one who sustains life and provides. God promised Israel that He would supply all her needs and at just the right moment the manna was there. Israel did not survive by bread alone; she survived because God provided the bread and spoke it into existence.

What Jesus is saying is meeting My needs does not come from bread, it comes from God. Christ is informing Satan that God has promised that He will care for the needs of His people. **This key to victory was Jesus’ knowledge of the written Word of God.**

Satan will try to get people to believe that you better look out for yourself because you cannot depend on God or His Word.

Satan will try to get God's people to think that God is not really caring for you or your needs so you need to figure it out. It is a lie. You can trust God and trust God's Word.

TEMPTATION ANGLE #2 – Satan comes at Jesus to tempt Him to worship him to gain worldwide political power. **4:5-8**

Verse 5 says that in one moment Satan led Jesus up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. Now the place where Jesus got this view was “up.” Matthew says He was taken up on a very high mountain (Matt. 4:8).

We know that there is no physical mountain in existence that could enable you to see all the kingdoms of the world. What is clear here is that Jesus actually had a view of all earthly world powers.

By saying this occurred in “a moment of time,” we learn that Jesus and Satan are not traveling around the world looking down on things from various locations. This was some very high place that enabled Jesus to see all world powers.

We learn from Scripture that Satan controls the political powers of the world. Jesus Christ, Himself, testified of this (John 12:31; 14:30). The Apostle Paul also testified of this (II Cor. 4:4). The Apostle John also testified of the same thing (I John 5:19). As Frederic Godet said, “Satan reigns over the whole extra-divine sphere of human life, and can raise to the pinnacle of glory the man whom he favors.”

I want to interject a contemporary political point here. Satan still controls world powers and political leaders. The ultimate satanic leader is yet to surface. But what happened in 2016 is that Christians in the United States prayed and asked God to put a person in office who would defend Jesus Christ, who would protect Christian rights, who would support Israel and not support abortion. God answered that prayer. This is why you see such hatred and an attack of this President. God has upset Satan's world power appcart. We are living in a very unique moment of history in which a President and Vice President are not Satan's puppets.

Now in **verse 6**, Satan made it clear to Jesus Christ that he was prepared to give Christ all of these world kingdoms, if Jesus would worship Satan (**verse 7**). That word “worship” is one that means to reverence or pay homage to something as superior. The pronoun “me” is emphatic. Satan emphatically wanted Jesus Christ to worship him.

Satan has always wanted to be worshipped as God (Is. 14:14). So if Jesus Christ were willing to worship Satan for one moment, it would mean that the second member of the Trinity is worshipping him.

At first glance this request seems to be a ridiculous temptation, which is no temptation at all. But we need to understand it. According to Isaiah 9:6-7, the Messiah would someday have total and complete universal political power and reign over everything and everyone.

The entire governmental system of the universe will be on His shoulders. There will come a day when Jesus Christ will rule the world. Satan knows that and he is trying to circumvent the process.

It was also predicted in Isaiah that before this would happen, the Messiah would suffer (Is. 53). So what Satan is doing here is saying to Christ, “I am prepared right now to give you all worldly universal power if you will worship me and you won’t have to suffer and go to the cross.”

There is no question that two reasons people do worship Satan is for power and money. Satan does have great worldly power and can give great wealth and power to those who worship him. **What Satan is doing in this temptation is offering Christ the easy way out. He is saying I’ll give you all the world power now and you won’t have to suffer on Calvary later.**

Jesus’ response was straight out of the written Word of God in Deuteronomy 6:13. Jesus said it is written that “you shall worship the LORD your God and serve Him only.”

TEMPTATION ANGLE #3 – Satan comes at Jesus to tempt Him to prove His identity based to experience Angelic deliverance. **4:9-12**

Satan decided to come back against Christ with one more temptation. Of all of the temptations, this is perhaps the trickiest because Satan is very carefully and craftily misusing and misapplying the Word of God in an attempt to get Jesus Christ to doubt His relationship with His heavenly Father.

Satan took Christ to Jerusalem and took Him to the top of the Temple (**4:9a**). He invites Christ to jump off the roof so that the angels would usher Him right into His throne in the temple (**4:9b**). Carefully observe that Satan acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God and Satan quotes Psalm 91:11 (**Luke 4:10-11**) as proof that God promised to send His angels to carry Him to safety. In fact, at the Baptism of Christ, some 40 days earlier, God the Father literally announced that point from heaven (Luke 3:22).

But the one part of the quote that Satan purposely leaves out is the prepositional phrase “in all your ways” (Ps. 91:11b). In other words, God had promised that His angels would take care of the Messiah in all of His Messianic ways. Simply stated, every prescribed action of the Messiah had God’s angelic protection. Jesus Christ would perfectly fulfill everything and there was an angelic host protecting Him making certain that would happen.

What Satan is doing here is trying to get Christ to doubt God to the point that He will do something not prescribed for the Messiah to do.

Jesus quickly picked up on this when He said, “you shall not put the LORD your GOD to the test.” The test would be whether the angels would protect Him if He chose to do something non-Messianic.

This is the greatest tactic of Satan. He is a master craftsman when it comes to fragmenting and mispresenting the Bible. He is very skilled at using isolated texts and out of context verse to trick people and keep them doubting and not knowing for sure the Word of God.

Notice **verse 13** says that Satan left Jesus for a while. Satan's attack of Christ was not over. But what we learn from this is that the key to victory is knowing and applying God's Word.