

**THE SON OF MAN'S VALIDATION**  
**LUKE 4:1-13**

In Jesus' ministry, several times people questioned Jesus' ability to speak or act — even questioning His nature and character:

- ✓ When he healed and forgave the lame man who was let through the roof, the Pharisees asked, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" (Lk. 5:21)
- ✓ When the sinning woman washed His feet with her tears and anointed His feet with perfume and He forgave her, the attendees at the meal asked, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" (7:49)
- ✓ When He stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples asked in amazement, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (8:25; Mk. 4:41)
- ✓ When Herod had John the Baptist beheaded but he kept hearing of the work of Christ, he was perplexed (had John been resurrected?) — "who is this man about whom I hear such things?" (9:9)
- ✓ At the triumphal entry, the crowd worshipped — and also wondered, "Who is this...?" (Mt. 21:10)
- ✓ When Jesus told the crowd after the triumphal entry, "the Son of Man must be lifted up," they were confused and asked, "Who is this Son of Man?" (Jn. 12:34)

Throughout His ministry, there were ongoing questions about the identity of Christ. In the opening sections of Luke, the historian answers those questions by presenting Christ and providing His background and His authority to serve as the Son of Man and Messiah of Israel. The temptation of Christ (4:1-13) is the final of his validations. The point of this passage is *not* "how do we defeat temptation?" (though there are certainly implications for us); the point of the passage is to exalt the nature of Christ and lead us to worship and submit to Him. The temptation of Christ (Lk. 4:1ff) teaches:

**JESUS CHRIST DEMONSTRATES HE IS THE SON OF MAN BY HIS RESISTANCE OF EVERY TEMPTATION.**

This section is the last of the preludes to Jesus' ministry (the end of the "introduction"); the temptation of Christ serves as the culmination of: OT prophecy of the Messiah, the birth of Christ, the baptism of Christ, and the genealogy of Christ. They all affirm that He is the Son of Man. They all provide credibility for His public ministry that will begin in 4:14. The temptation particularly validates His authority as Savior.

In Christ's temptation, notice **two reasons for His resistance of temptation**... How is He able to resist the most powerful temptations ever offered to any man/Man?

1. **Jesus is the Son of Man Who is Filled with the SPIRIT (vv. 1-2)**
2. **Jesus is the Son of Man Who Follows the FATHER (vv. 3-12)**
  - ✓ **He Resists the Temptation Concerning the Father's PROVISION (vv. 3-4)**
  - ✓ **He Resists the Temptation Concerning the Father's PRIORITY (vv. 5-8)**
  - ✓ **He Resists the Temptation Concerning the Father's PROTECTION (vv. 9-13)**

- Many commentators discuss the question of whether or not Christ as the God-Man was *able* to sin. But that question is not addressed by Luke; he emphasizes the reality of the temptation, the power of the temptation, and the sinlessness of Christ.
  - ✓ Luke is not concerned to present the impeccability of Christ.
  - ✓ Luke *is* concerned to address the worthiness of Christ to be the Son of Man.
- There is also an implied contrast between Christ and Adam. Christ as a real man and as the second Adam does what Adam did not do in addressing Satan's temptation.

"As the perfect Man, Jesus had to triumph where the first man failed. The contrast between this temptation scene and that of Genesis 3 is striking. Adam had everything in his surroundings, it would seem, conducive to victory. He was dwelling in a lovely garden with every need abundantly supplied. Yet he disobeyed God and yielded to Satan. Jesus was tempted in a 'waste howling wilderness.' He was surrounded not by tame creatures, but by wild beasts. He was not well fed, but weak and hungry after forty days of fasting. Yet He triumphed utterly over the devil." [Luck]

### 1. Jesus is the Son of Man Who is Filled with the SPIRIT (vv. 1-2)

- Following His baptism, Luke notes that Jesus **returned from the Jordan**. He means us to connect this incident to the baptism. This is another manifestation of the worthiness of Christ who is **well-pleasing** to the Father (3:22). It is a further introductory defense of His position as the worthy Son of Man.
- One way that He is well-pleasing to the Lord is that He is **full of the Holy Spirit**. What does that mean?
  - ✓ It is a phrase that Luke (and other NT writers) uses to indicate the spiritual/godly condition of people (cf. 1:35, 41, 67; Acts 6:3, 5; contrast with Acts 5:3).
  - ✓ Fundamentally, the word **full** means to be under the direction and control of someone/thing.
  - ✓ So for Luke to say that Christ is full of the Spirit means that the Spirit is controlling the actions and life of Christ. And he emphasizes that with the second statement in this verse: **led...by the Spirit**. He is being governed by the Spirit (as all believers are, Rom. 8:14).
  - ✓ Luke doesn't amplify what filling means, but from Paul we understand that filling of the Spirit means to be controlled by and submissive to the Word of God (Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16).
  - ✓ He also means us to understand not just that Christ was submissive to the Spirit (which He was), but that He also used the Spirit's means for resisting temptation.
    - While Christ is full deity and as God is incapable of sinning, He did not resist temptation because of His deity (He didn't say, "Satan, you can't tempt me because I'm God...").
    - He resisted temptation the same way we do — by the ordinary means of grace: the Spirit of God and the Spirit's Word. In that sense, then, He is able to come to our aid (Heb. 2:18; 4:14).

- The Spirit is directing Jesus *in the wilderness* — this was an area in Judea not far from the Jordan. It is a small rugged and desolate area of about 600 square miles where rain is typically blocked by a mountain range to the west, keeping vegetation from growing. It was typically inhabited by rebels, zealots, and even monks and hermits.
  - ✓ The Spirit had Jesus in that region for **40 days** (which some suggest corresponds to Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after the Exodus). The temptation persisted for those 40 days...
  - ✓ During that time, **He ate nothing** — He fasted (Mt. 4:2) for the purpose of dedication to the Lord. (This may also parallel Moses' 40-day fast after the golden calf incident, Ex. 34:28).
  - ✓ He fasted all those days because He was regularly (daily/constantly?) **being tempted by the devil**.
    - The name **devil** refers to one who is slanderous; it is our adversary who lies and murders (Jn. 8:44); he is an accuser of the righteous (Rev. 12:10) and the god of this world (Jn. 12:31).
    - This devil was seeking to slander, accuse, and destroy the testimony of the Son of Man.
    - The **temptation** most simply means to refer to an enticement of sin and evil. However, the word also refers to a test/trial that authenticates the validity of an object (like a gold coin).
    - Both senses are meant here — Satan wants to entice Christ with sin, but the Spirit means these confrontations to be an authentication of the Son of Man and His nature.
- So Luke is also means us to understand that when the Spirit is directing Jesus that the confrontation with the devil is a God-ordained and planned confrontation to reveal the sinless perfect righteousness of Christ. The entire Triune God worked to bring about this temptation; it was no "accident." The Spirit and Christ *wanted* this confrontation and Satan almost certainly did not want it.
- He is the Son of Man but He also has experienced temptation while also maintaining perfect holiness.
  - ✓ We need to remember that because Christ is God, He could not have an internal desire and inclination for sin, so the temptation is only external. But Satan's temptation was an appeal to a sinful desire ("don't you want...") — He was offering the opportunity for Christ to have that desire.
  - ✓ While there was no internal longing for sin, Christ experienced the full onslaught of Satanic force to entice Him to sin; and He did not sin.
  - ✓ And Satan tempted Him in all the typical ways of temptation (which we will see), so that Hebrews can say that "He has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Even as the Son of Man, He knows the forceful power of temptation that we know, and using the means of grace that are accessible to us, He never sinned. He indeed is the worthy Son of Man.

## 2. Jesus is the Son of Man Who Follows the FATHER (vv. 3-12) —the temptations and how He resists

- These temptations were likely the final three temptations and serve as a "culmination" of the 40 days.
- Mark does not specify them (1:13); Luke reverses the order of the last two temptations from Matthew. Luke probably has the one in Jerusalem last because much of this book's narrative is in Jerusalem.

- He Resists the Temptation Concerning the Father's PROVISION (vv. 3-4)

- ✓ When the devil says ***If You are the Son of God*** He means, “since You are...” He is not suggesting Christ isn’t the Son of God (a term of deity); he is agreeing that Christ *is* deity.
  - “Son of God” can refer to a specific office (Messiah).
  - But it can also refer to relationship — “Since You are in relationship to the Father as His Son...”
  - The temptation he makes is to ***tell this stone to become bread***.
    - ... Could Christ do this? Certainly. Satan knew of His acts of creation of all things. Making bread out of stone was nothing difficult for Christ (He would later multiply a couple of loaves to feed thousands of people).
    - ... Is there anything wrong with transforming something into bread to eat? No — again the stories of the feedings of the 5000 and 4000 men demonstrate that.
    - ... Is there anything sinful about eating? No. God gave us food to enjoy (1 Tim. 4:3). Even in the Garden of Eden God gave food to eat (and He made us dependent on food).
  - The sin of the temptation is not eating. And the sin is not the creation of food.
  - Part of the sin in this temptation is that the miracle is for self-serving purposes.
  - But even more, it is an enticement for the Son to think unrighteously about the Father. Remember that the devil emphasized the relationship between the Son and Father (***aren’t You the Son...?***) — there is an enticement to think that the Father hasn’t loved the Son and hasn’t provided for the Son and hasn’t cared about the Son.
    - ... The temptation is an enticement to dissatisfaction and impatience with God’s plan — “You have the power of creation — why should you have to endure this hunger...?”
    - ... The emphasis of the temptation is to question the character of the Father — to question His love (cf. **3:22**), to suggest that God has abandoned Him (why else was He hungry?), and to question the Father’s wisdom in the plan of incarnation and redemption. “Act for Yourself...”
    - ... This is the same kind of temptation that Satan offered Eve in the Garden — God is withholding something good from you and you need to eat what He said not to eat.
    - ... Where Adam and Eve failed in the Garden, Christ succeeded, knowing God would provide (for both Him and for His people in the redemption).
- ✓ Jesus’ answer is immediate and without hesitation: “Obey God” (and trust God)
  - ***It is written*** = “It has been written and *stands* written.” God said it and it was and remains true.
  - The phrase points to the power of the Word and that it is the final and lasting authority. I.e., “what is important is not that I eat but that I submit to what is revealed...”
  - To what did Christ appeal as authoritative to refute the devil? **Deuteronomy 8:3**.
    - ... The passage is important in Israel’s history; it is part of Moses’ commentary after the re-giving of the 10 commandments in Dt. 5:1-21.

- ... A consistent theme is the need to be obedient and to follow what the Lord has commanded (e.g., 5:32; 6:1; 7:12). That theme dominates the immediate context of 8:3 as well (cf. v. 1).
- ... The reason they are to obey is so they will experience God's blessing (v. 1b).
- ... They had just come out of 40 years in the wilderness (v. 2) as test to see what was in their hearts (if they wanted to obey); God let the Israelites be hungry and gave them manna so that they would understand "that man does not live by bread alone..." (v. 3).
- ... The gift of manna and food is to remind God's people that as powerful as the inclination of hunger is, there is something more essential — the food of God's Word *and obedience to Him*.
- ... This temptation from Satan is exactly parallel to the test that the Lord gave the Israelites; and where they failed, Christ was righteous and obedient.
- With these words, Jesus affirmed that He refused to operate independently of the Father and that He believed in the love and provision of the Father for Him. A temporary hunger did not mean that the Father did not care for Him. *He is the perfect Son of Man*.

- **He Resists the Temptation Concerning the Father's PRIORITY (vv. 5-8)**

- ✓ Having failed in the first of the final three temptations, the devil **led Him up** (to a high mountain, Mt. 4:8). [Notice the difference between the leading of the Spirit (v. 1) and the "leading" of Satan (v. 5).]
  - While they were in a high place, it was not high enough to see everything in the world physically. It was some kind of vision of the world and its kingdoms.
  - **World** refers to the inhabitants in the world — the vastness of all the people of the world. The King of Glory had "nothing" on this earth and He is about to be offered "everything."
  - The **devil** ["deceiver"] offered Jesus, **"I will give You all this domain and its glory..."**
    - ... Note that the Father had already promised redeemed people and a Kingdom to the Son (Jn. 6:37ff; Dan. 7:13-14). The temptation is, "I know You will get a Kingdom, but You don't need to go to the cross..."
    - ... Did Satan have authority to give this kingdom? Yes. Kind of. He does have authority over the world (Eph. 2:2; Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), but he does not have ultimate authority; his "authority" is only over those who surrender their wills to him and engage in his evil.
    - ... The heart of the temptation is revealed in v. 7 — **if you worship me**. Satan's rebellion in Heaven was a quest to sit on God's throne (**Is. 14:13**); this is the same quest to supplant God.
    - ... The temptation is an enticement to subvert God's plan for redemption — "I know You are promised a people to worship You; I will give you the people if you worship me..."
    - ... Ultimately the temptation is an enticement to subvert God's priority as that only One to be worshipped. "If you defect from God, I'll give you what He promised (in an easier way).
  - Note the parallel to the temptation in the Garden — Adam and Eve had dominion over all things yet Satan "offered more" ("you can be like God," **Gen. 3:5**).

- ✓ Jesus did not debate, or contest with Satan; He merely offered the definitive Word of God — ***it is written***, as in v. 4, it is permanently and finally written. It is fixed. And He quotes Dt. 6:13.
  - You might recognize Dt. 6 as one of the most important OT texts — “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart” (Deut. 6:4-6).
  - The nation was about to go into the Promised Land and God was going to give them “instant prosperity” and the temptation would be to forget God (6:1-3, 12). This temptation was a similar enticement for Jesus to forget God; but because He is the most monotheist Being in the universe, He could not be dissuaded from the worship and priority of God.
  - Dt. 6:13 (like 8:3) follows the second giving of the Law (Dt. 5); where the Israelites had failed to worship the Lord previously, now Christ preserves His righteous worship and is unwilling to offer ungodly worship — no matter the “benefit” that might be offered to Him by the devil.
  - He is the Son of Man who is righteous in His allegiance to God’s priority of worship.

• He Resists the Temptation Concerning the Father’s **PROTECTION** (vv. 9-13)

- ✓ Here is one final temptation: at ***the pinnacle of the temple*** the devil exhorted Him to ***throw Yourself down...*** and then he quoted from Psalm 91:11-12 as a justification.
  - ***The pinnacle*** may have been the **SW corner of the temple** that was over a cliff and approximately 450 feet to the bottom of the ravine.
  - As in v. 3, the devil again affirms the deity of Christ — ***Since You are the Son of God...*** The appeal is to the relationship as a means of protection. “The Father will not let You be harmed.”
  - “Surely if God will rescue anyone, He will rescue You and wouldn’t it be appropriate to do it at the temple where He is said to dwell?” [Bock]
- ✓ There are at least two temptations with this suggestion:
  - If He were to fall to the ground He would certainly die, which He had indeed come to do. Yet the time of His death was wrong and the manner was wrong; He needed to die an atoning (sacrificial death in fulfillment of Law) — it was another shortcut to the purposes of God.
  - An even more insidious temptation is that in vv. 10-11 Satan quotes the OT and offers the same temptation as he did to Eve in the Garden — “You will surely not die...” (Gen. 3:4).
    - ... The devil was denying what God had purposed Christ to do at the cross.
    - ... And even worse, the devil was suggesting that if Christ died (here or at the cross), the Father was not protecting the Son; the Son surely cannot die.
  - But Satan is grossly misusing Psalm 91 —
    - ... In Psalm 91 the unnamed psalmist affirms the comfort and protection that comes from seeking refuge in YHWH (cf. vv. 1, 2, 9). He is a deliverer (v. 3), protector (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10),

and just judge (v. 8), so that the follower of YHWH is not fearful (v. 5); nothing harmful will happen to him (v. 10).

... The psalmist then offers the statements about protection that even comes through the ministry of angels (Ps. 91:11-12) that the devil quotes. It is true that angels do protect God's people from physical harm, but sometimes the protection given is through death and being taken to God's Kingdom. And in Christ's circumstance, it was through death and resurrection. If salvation would be accomplished, the cross could not be avoided.

- ✓ Jesus answered (v. 12) similarly — *You shall not put the Lord to the test* (quoting Dt. 6:16).
  - Deuteronomy 6:16 reminds the nation not to repeat their test of God that they committed at Massah, complaining that they shouldn't have left Egypt (Exod. 17:1-7).
  - "Jesus is comparing the devil's offer to such a test. It says in effect, 'I do not think you will take care of me as Son, so to be sure I am going to place you in a situation where you must take care of me now and on my terms.'" [Bock] He will not rebelliously presume on God's protection.
  - Instead, Jesus affirms that God's trustworthiness is to be believed, not tested and tried. He is faithful, and we should rest in that (the correct interpretation of Ps. 91); we don't attempt to prove the trustworthiness of God by challenging Him. The answer also infers that Christ was content with God's plan for the incarnation (the cross) and God's timing for the cross.
- ✓ This **finished** the devil's 40 days of temptations; Christ is validated as the Son of Man.
  - There would be more temptations/attacks against Christ (4:33ff; 8:26ff; 11:14ff; 22:3).
  - [That there were more is a warning for us as well — the devil is always working against us.]
  - Jesus was always victorious and always acted righteously and fulfilled the Law's demands. We have a worthy Son of Man as our Savior and King.

### Lessons from Jesus' temptations

- ✓ The devil is a *crafty liar* — not every lie is a "complete" lie — he is a twister of truth.
- ✓ No matter how attractive it appears, every temptation to even the slightest sin is evil and destructive.
- ✓ Temptations are matters of the heart and about our concept of God.
- ✓ Christ is *infinitely* superior to Satan in every way.
- ✓ What we could not and cannot do in resisting temptation, Christ has done for us.
- ✓ Jesus, as the second Adam, did what the first Adam did not do.

**BENEDICTION:** Hebrews 2:17-18