

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

A Sympathetic Savior

Luke 4: 1-13

Introduction: All three of the Synoptic Gospel writers tell us something about this next event in Jesus' ministry: His wilderness temptation experience. It is helpful to consider these parallel versions together because they each serve to give a composite "best picture" of what this experience consisted. Aside from the many lessons we will learn in studying this passage, it serves to prove the point of Hebrews 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.

I. The Preface to the Wilderness Experience

- A. The composite story revealed by the verbs in the opening verse:
 - 1. Matthew and Luke choose the same root verb, ago, but while Matthew simply reports the fact (aorist), Luke indicates that the entire experience was under the leadership of the Holy Spirit (imperfect: was being led around by the Spirit)
 - 2. Mark uses a different verb, ekballo, with the implication of be cast out or impelled to go into the wilderness
- B. The purpose of the experience was to face the devil head-on and to deal with him in terms of Jesus' humanity
 - 1. Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (NASB, 1995)
 - 2. Mark uses a verb tense that indicates persistent and on-going temptation
 - 3. Mark also mentions that Jesus' was in company with wild beasts

II. Significant Implications and Lessons from the Wilderness Experience

- A. Being led by the Holy Spirit does not preclude being led into a place of danger
- B. Being led by the Holy Spirit does not exclude being led into a place of temptation
- C. Note the critical distinction: He was tempted by the devil, not by the Holy Spirit. Even though Jesus was purposefully directed to a place of severe temptation, it is never God Who tempts: this was a battle between the Second Adam and the Serpent of Old.
- D. Note that not all temptation arises from the flesh or within ourselves:
 - 1. Some comes directly from the enemy
 - 2. With both Adam and Jesus temptation came in the absence of a sin nature
- E. Note that despite the trials and temptations as well as the dangers of the wilderness that Jesus was cared for and ministered to by the angels. We are never led by the Holy Spirit to any place where we are beyond the Father's care and protection, whether we are aware or not.

III. The Wilderness Temptations Serve Multiple Purposes

- A. In the next study we will focus on the nature of the temptations themselves, however a brief preview is of value here:
 - 1. The greatest temptations came at the end when Jesus was most vulnerable
 - 2. The nature of the three special temptations parallel our own experience
- B. Jesus faced these temptations in His human nature and defeated the devil in His human flesh.
- C. Jesus demonstrated to us in these experiences, and many others like them throughout His life, that He understands our weakness (not a failure thing but an adequacy thing) and is able to help us.

Conclusion: Some people think that Jesus is too Holy and too removed to be able to be directly approached or to have sympathy for our plight; they advocate appealing to Mary or other mediaries who are closer to our own nature. Nothing could be further from the truth! We are invited to come directly to Jesus with boldness to find help precisely because He does understand our nature and our need.

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. ³ And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." ⁴ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" ⁵ And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." ⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" ⁹ And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; ¹⁰ for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' ¹¹ and, 'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" ¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Luke 4: 1-13(NASB)

Memory Verse

⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Luke 4: 8 (NASB)

