

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

## *A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God*

### *The Wilderness Temptations: The Nature of the Appeal*

Luke 4: 1-13

**Introduction:** In last week's study we focused on the humanity of Jesus and the reality of His temptations in the wilderness experiences. We dispelled some widely held beliefs about temptation in general and about how Jesus was tempted in particular, including the environment, the dangers, the weakness of fasting, and the timing of the final three special temptations. In this study we will consider the nature of the three special temptations and in the next study we will see how Jesus fulfilled the role of the Second Man and the Last Adam in this confrontation with the devil.

#### **I. Turn these stones into bread (Luke 4:3-4)**

- A. The initial approach—questioning Jesus identity and relationship with the Father
- B. The timing—Jesus became hungry, the devil waited until He was most weak & needy
- C. The nature of this temptation—the lust of the flesh (I John 2:15-17)
  - 1. The need is natural and normal, nothing sinful about it
  - 2. The return of hunger underscores the urgency of meeting this need
  - 3. The essence of the temptation is to meet His own need apart from the Father's provision and independently of the Father's will
- D. The sinful appeal to the flesh is to meet legitimate physical needs in ways that go outside of the Father's will and provision. Among followers of Christ the seeds of doubt are often planted relative to our relationship with the Father and His care for us.
- E. Jesus responded with Scripture that truly expresses the deepest need of all people

#### **II. Worship before me and it will all be Yours (Luke 4:5-8)**

- A. The nature of the temptation—the lust of the eyes (I John 2:15-17)
  - 1. God placed us in a material world and, since the fall of Adam, we need a certain amount of *things* (Matthew 6:31-34)
  - 2. The possession of *things* is not evil in and of itself but, once held, compete with God for worship and affection (Matthew 6:24-30, *esp.* v.24)
  - 3. The accumulation of *things* brings a false sense of comfort, security, and independence—once again it is the self-sufficiency or independence that is the root of the sin of materialism
- B. Jesus is destined to be King of Kings & Lord of Lords upon this earth, the kingdoms of this world are rightfully His and He is the rightful Lord, but the path is long and arduous, filled with His own sufferings and the sufferings of the saints. The temptation is to by-pass the process and obtain the world's kingdoms independently of the Father's plan. (Heb 2:8-15)
- C. Jesus responded with Scripture that exalts God and warns of idolatry

#### **III. Jump from here and everyone will follow You in awe and devotion (Luke 4:9-12)**

- A. The nature of the temptation—the boastful pride of life (I John 2:15-17)
  - 1. We were originally designed to have benevolent dominion as stewards of a world designed for our pleasure and God's glory
  - 2. The desire to lead and to exercise rightful authority is built into the heart of every person as a human being made in God's image
  - 3. The *benevolence* was removed from the dominion as soon as the heart was corrupted by the fall, replaced by the desire to rule and to have power and control
  - 4. *To be in charge* is to remove God from the equation and to assert independence
- B. Jesus is appointed to redeem lost humanity and to lead in triumphant glory those who are saved by restoring them to their original majesty in God's image. The path to glory was through the cross (where sin was removed) and the resurrection (where death and hell were defeated) (Hebrews 2:6-18). The temptation here is to by-pass the cross and the long millennia of redemptive work in every tongue and tribe and nation and instead to become an instant celebrity and popular ruler
- C. Jesus responded from Deuteronomy 6:16 (see context) that we should not try God's patience with our rebellion

**Conclusion:** Jesus faced the same kinds of temptations we face. In every case He chose to believe God and supported His decision with Scriptural truth. Every temptation is a choice between faith and unbelief: to doubt God's love, care, and kindness and to seek independence or to believe His Word and to trust Him by faith.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 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. "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 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; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' and, 'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Luke 4:1-13 (NASB)

#### **Memory Verse**

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

Luke 4: 8 (NASB)

