

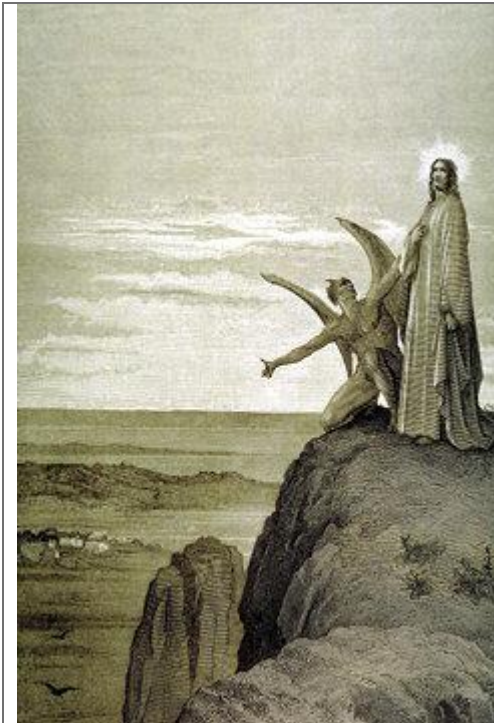
CONCERNING THE WAY

January 17, 2012

LESSON 125: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



Chapter 4



In this chapter Jesus begins His ministry to the “lost sheep of Israel”. But there was something God wanted Him to do first, something which confirmed his humanity and identified Him with each of us, He had to be tempted by Satan. The “Temptation of Jesus” is a fascinating encounter between Jesus and the Devil. In His temptation, Jesus demonstrated not only His ability to resist the devil, but also His allegiance to God. It also gives some insight into the methods Satan uses against us and what we can do to resist him.

Was there ever a chance that Jesus would have succumbed to temptation? If not, then why did God allow it?

Luke 4:1-2 Then Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, (2) where he was being tempted by the devil for forty days. During those days he ate nothing at all, and when they were over he was hungry.

- The traditional location of this event is in a barren area northwest of the Dead Sea.
- Notice Jesus was “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness. God orchestrated this event – it was a test, and it was symbolic. We’ll discuss this later, but what event in the beginning of Genesis does this recall and why is it important? *Ans. – the temptation of Adam & Eve*
- The number 40 is one of those numbers you see repeated over and over in the Old Testament (Genesis 7:4; Exodus 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8; Jonah 3:4).
- Another famous “40” is Israel’s wanderings and temptation in the desert which lasted for 40 years. Watch for more parallels with that time.
- During the 40 days Jesus ate nothing at all. That’s about the limit of how long a human being can go without food. And while He was fasting He had to be clear-headed and strong enough to deal with the devil. Just try to imagine that!

Luke 4:3-4 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread." (4) Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One must not live on bread alone, but on every word of God.'"

- Since Jesus was so hungry it's not surprising that the first temptation was about food. Satan likes to try to hit us where we are weakest.
- Jesus answers by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. Here's the full verse, and this is Moses speaking to the people of Israel during their 40 year wilderness wandering:

Deuteronomy 8:3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

- Moses was reminding the people of the manna which God had provided for them. This was a test of faith for the Israelites - they had to believe that God's Word was trustworthy for their existence. If it was not God's will for them to live they would have died; so they did not live by bread alone, but by trusting God's promise that He would provide for them.
- Knowing this was what was on Jesus' mind, what was the test for Him and the lesson for us? *Ans – to learn dependence on the Father. Jesus was trusting in the Father and His Word for sustenance. He knew God had a plan for Him and He would let Him die in the wilderness. We also need to learn to trust God for our sustenance, and for all the things we need.*

Luke 4:5-8 The devil also took him to a high place and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant. (6) He said to Jesus, "I will give you all this authority and the glory of these kingdoms. For it has been given to me, and I give it to anyone I please. (7) So if you will worship me, all this will be yours." (8) But Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'"

- Verse 6 is a fascinating verse and tells us something very important. Satan had the right to offer these kingdoms to Jesus, because they belong to him, he is the god, or ruler of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4, John 12:31). Some say Satan was exaggerating in this offer, but it wouldn't have been much of a temptation if had not been legitimate. At this time Satan has great power and authority, but always remember he cannot do anything without the divine permission of God.
- What did the devil mean, "it has been given me?" When did that happen? *Ans – at the fall, when Adam sinned. Man was the ruler of the world, but he turned it over to Satan.*
- The condition was that Jesus bow His knee to Satan. Jesus was never going to do that, and it makes you realize that, as intelligent as Satan is, he is so blinded by pride that he actually thought he had a chance to convince The 2nd person of the Trinity to betray the Father.
- Jesus quotes again from Deuteronomy. In that passage (Deut. 6:13) Moses warned the people about their attitude when they finally were to get into the land and gain some glory and dominion. The temptation for them would be to praise themselves and forget to worship God.
- Jesus also knew that Satan's rule of the world was only temporary, that through the Father's plan – His death and resurrection - Satan would be defeated and Jesus would receive the authority and glory of the Kingdoms of the world anyway, and for all time. The apostle John was given a glimpse into the future and saw this momentous event actually carried out in the book of Revelation. So, it was about depending on God's plan and not Satan.
- Satan tries a similar trick with us, trying to get us to buy into his plan, which he deceives us into thinking is our plan. We depend on ourselves instead of depending on God to glorify us. And when we do achieve success and glory of some kind, we forget to worship God, whom all blessings come from.

Luke 4:9-13 The devil also took him into Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. He said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. (10) For it is written, 'God will put his angels in charge of you to watch over you carefully. (11) With their hands they will hold you up, so that you will never hit your foot against a rock.'" (12) Jesus answered him, "**It has been said, 'You must not tempt the Lord your God.'**" After the devil had finished tempting Jesus in every possible way, he left him until another time.

- Here the devil tries to get Jesus to change the timing and nature of His ministry on earth. If he had done what Satan had suggested, He would have survived it, and He would have been accepted as Messiah because of that miracle, but He would have not had to endure the suffering of the cross. What would have been the implications of that for us? Jesus knew He had to go to the cross and die for the sins of the world. He knew who He was and the Father's plan for Him.
- The highest point of the temple was the Royal Porch that overlooked a sheer drop of nearly 450 feet to the Kidron Valley floor. The devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12 to show that the Messiah would be kept safe from harm. Read these verses. Did he quote them correctly?
- That was exactly the situation Moses wrote about in Deuteronomy 6:16, which Jesus quoted. Moses referred back to a time when the people wondered whether God was really with them (Exodus 17:7). But Jesus knew that God was with Him and that the Father's plan and timing were perfect.
- Can you think of a similar way that the devil tempts us?
- Read verse 12 again. These three temptations were only a few of the many ways Satan tempted Jesus during those 40 days. He was tempted in every way a human being can be.

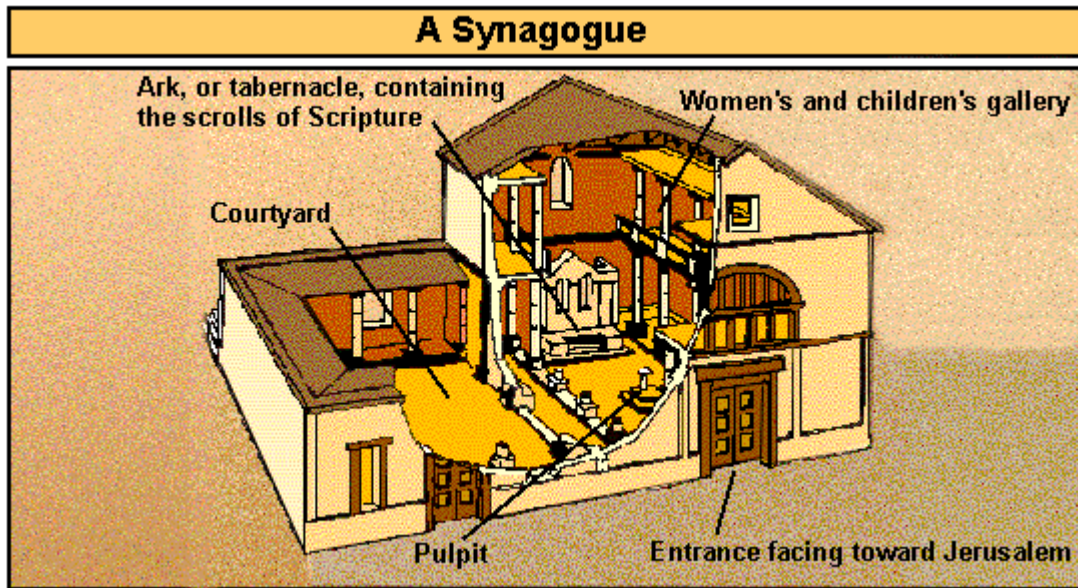
Matthew mentioned something else at the end of the ordeal:

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and began ministering to him.

- Of course, Jesus could have healed Himself and made food for Himself, but the Father sent angels to Him to take care of Him.
- What is the one thing Jesus did in all three of these temptations that is our most important tool to use against the attacks of Satan? *Ans – used the scripture against Him*

Luke 4:14-15 Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile, the news about him spread throughout the surrounding country. (15) He began to teach in their synagogues and was continuously receiving praise from everyone.

- Jesus now begins His ministry in Galilee. Sometimes we forget that Jesus taught in the synagogues, and His teaching was very well received, at least in Galilee.
- Notice the role that the Holy Spirit is playing. He descended on Jesus when he was baptized by John, He led Jesus to the wilderness to be tempted, and now He starts His ministry in the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the source of Jesus' authority.



Luke 4:16-21 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. (17) And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, (18) **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, (19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** (20) And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. (21) And he began to say to them, **"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."**

- "As was His custom" – Obviously Jesus regularly attended the weekly services in the synagogue.
- Remember how Jesus as a young boy impressed the rabbi's in Jerusalem with His knowledge? Apparently He also impressed the local rabbis where He grew up and was asked to read the scriptures and speak regularly. It was the custom in the synagogue for a man to stand while he was reading the Scriptures but then to sit while explaining the portion he had read.
- Jesus returns to Nazareth for a visit and was asked to speak again, but this time His message was different, and it produced a different reaction. He made claims far beyond anything He had ever made before.
- Jesus quoted here from Isaiah 61, which every devout Jew knew was speaking of the Messiah. Then he sat down and said that the scripture had been fulfilled right there and then! So Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah! Try to imagine the astonishment in the synagogue at what He said.
- "To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" – Jesus was announcing that the King was in their presence and the Kingdom was about to come. Along with claiming to be Messiah, Jesus was making an offer to bring the prophesied Kingdom to Israel.
- The most fascinating thing about what Jesus did, though, is that He didn't read the entire prophecy. Let's look at the entire scripture in Isaiah:

Isaiah 61:1-7 **The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;**

(2) to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; (3) to grant to those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. (4) They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. (5) Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; (6) but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. (7) Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy.

- Jesus stopped in the middle of verse 2. Think about it – why do you think He did that? Why did He not quote the whole thing? *Ans – Because this prophecy covers both the first and 2nd comings of the Messiah. In this first coming, Jesus did not come for vengeance, He did not come to judge the nations. That and the rest of the scripture will be fulfilled at His second coming, and in the Millennial Kingdom that He will inaugurate. This time Jesus has come to “proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”, to bring salvation by grace.*

Luke 4:22-24 All the people began to speak well of him and to wonder at the gracious words that flowed from his mouth. They said, "This is Joseph's son, isn't it?" (23) So he said to them, "You will probably quote this proverb to me, 'Doctor, heal yourself! Do all the things here in your hometown that we hear you did in Capernaum.'" (24) He added, "Truly I tell you, a prophet is not accepted in his hometown.

- These people had known Jesus since He was a boy, so, even though they were admiring what He was saying, they started to question where He got the authority to say such things.
- The people wanted to Jesus to do the miracles that they had heard about him doing in Capernaum.
- All four gospels mention that Jesus said this about prophets not being accepted in their hometown. Matthew says that Jesus didn't do very many miracles there in Nazareth because of their unbelief.

Luke 4:25-27 In truth I tell you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the heaven was closed for three years and six months and there was a severe famine everywhere in the land. (26) Yet Elijah wasn't sent to a single one of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. (27) There were also many lepers in Israel in the prophet Elisha's time, yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

- Then Jesus mentions two events in the time of the kings (1 Kings 7:8-24, II Kings 5:1-16) where gentiles believed what God's prophets were saying when the Jews wouldn't. Jesus seemed to be implying that if Israel rejected Him, God would bless the Gentiles. His audience's reaction to that was predictable:

Luke 4:28-30 All the people in the synagogue became furious when they heard this. (29) They got up, forced Jesus out of the city, and led him to the edge of the hill on which their city was built, intending to throw him off of it. (30) But he walked right through the middle of them and went away.

- We don't know if this was a miracle or if it was just Jesus' commanding presence which stopped this

attempt on His life. But we will see this happen again – Jews rejecting Jesus’ message, some Jews wanting to kill Him, and Jesus getting away. He was always in control of the situation. He knew that the Father would not allow Him to be harmed until the time was right (John 10:15, 17-18). When that time came, He would give Himself up.

Luke 4:31-32 Then Jesus went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and began teaching the people on the Sabbath. (32) They were utterly amazed at his teaching, because his message was spoken with authority.

- Capernaum is a city on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, about 25 mi. NE of Nazareth. He later made His home there since His own hometown, Nazareth, had rejected Him. Capernaum was also the home of Peter and Andrew (v. 38).
- Again the people were amazed at first at His teaching. I mean, it was God Himself teaching the scriptures. It would have been amazing!

Luke 4:33-37 In the synagogue was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. He screamed with a loud voice, (34) "Oh, no! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are-the Holy One of God!" (35) But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "**Be quiet, and come out of him!**" At this, the demon threw the man down in the middle of the synagogue and came out of him without hurting him. (36) Amazement came on all of them, and they kept saying to one another, "What kind of statement is this? For with authority and power he tells the unclean spirits what to do, and they come out!" (37) So news about him spread to every place in the surrounding region.

- To authenticate His authority, Jesus will perform a series of healing miracles which showed that His teaching in Nazareth was true.
- Demons are commonly understood in Christianity to be fallen angels, who followed Satan in rebellion against God and were cast out of heaven to the earth. However, there are other theories about who these demons are.
 - Spirits of a race of beings that lived before Adam, before Genesis 1:2. They joined Lucifer in rebellion against God, and God wiped out the entire race, leaving them only disembodied spirits roaming the earth, while the earth was left “dark and void”.
 - Entities from outside our world or dimension – extraterrestrials that we cannot see that have power and intelligence beyond ours.
 - Spirits of dead Nephilim – offspring of fallen angels and human women. This is mentioned briefly in Genesis 6. The flood wiped them out, but their spirits still roam the earth looking for a body to live in.
 - Spirits of wicked men who have died – this has its roots in Greek mythology, and you’ll see this idea in some horror movies, like Nightmare on Elm Street.
 - They could be all or some of the above. Demons could be a variety of different beings that follow Satan. We do know from the Bible that there are different levels and hierarchies of demons.
- In the gospel accounts of demons, they always scream in a loud voice at the presence of Jesus – it’s obvious they were scared out of their wits because they knew who He was and the power and authority He had to destroy them. They also know that their time is limited.
- In this account you see Jesus hush demons that recognize that He is the Messiah. Jesus does not want

demons announcing who He is, and He doesn't need their help. Also, it wasn't yet time for Jesus to reveal Himself officially as Messiah to the nation.

Luke 4:38-39 Then Jesus got up to leave the synagogue and went into Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever, so they asked Jesus about her. (39) He bent over her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began serving them.

- In each of these cases the cause of the problem was completely removed and the person had no side effects, unlike many so-called healings from so-called healers today. The demon left without hurting the man (v. 35), and the fever left so that Simon's mother-in-law could immediately serve them (v. 39). She did not recover slowly and was not weak for a while afterwards.
- Only Luke of the gospel writers mentioned that Peter's mother-in-law had a high fever. Why would he tell us this?
- Most illnesses happen because of the curse on nature after Adam's fall. This isn't the way God originally created things to be. Paul reminds us that we groan to be delivered and that the whole creation groans..until now (Romans 8:22). Modern science can discover medicines to help alleviate suffering from diseases, and even cures for some, but there will always be physical suffering from illness and disease until the final resurrection and redemption of our bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-50).

Luke 4:40-41 When the sun was setting, all those who had any friends suffering from various diseases brought them to him. He placed his hands on each of them and began healing them. (41) Even demons came out of many people, screaming, "You are the Son of God!" But Jesus rebuked them and ordered them not to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

- News spread fast. People came when the sun was setting, when the Sabbath Day was ending. It would have been unlawful to carry the sick before then.

Luke 4:42-44 At daybreak he left and went to a deserted place, while the crowds kept looking for him. When they came to him, they tried to keep him from leaving them. (43) But he said to them, "I have to proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God in the other cities also, for that is what I was sent to do." (44) So he continued to preach in the synagogues of Galilee.

- Notice the difference between people's attitudes toward Jesus in Nazareth and Capernaum. They tried to convince Him to stay, although that may have been more for the healings than it was for the preaching. Jesus' main ministry was preaching the good news, even though we also tend to think more of the healings when we think of His ministry. The healings were mainly to authenticate what He was saying, to prove He had the authority to say the things He was saying.

Let's see how Matthew puts it:

Matthew 4:17 From then on, Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!"

- "The kingdom of God", or "kingdom of heaven" is the main theme of Jesus' preaching. This is the first of 32 times in Luke it is mentioned. The Jews understood this as the time when God would openly become King of Israel.