

12. Jesus Was Tempted in the Wilderness

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the fact that Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of man who fulfilled all of the promises that were given regarding Him in the Old Testament. We want to help our children learn to explain that fact clearly so they may answer questions that others will ask them. Today, in our topic, we will see that Jesus responded to each of the temptations of Satan with Scripture and had victory over Satan in each of the areas where Satan had tempted Adam and Eve.

In Luke 4:1-4, we read, “Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.’ But Jesus answered him, saying, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”’” In these verses, we see that Christ provides us three examples for our own lives.

First, we see that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18, we read, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” We are going to see that Jesus was able to have victory over each temptation that Satan used to try and tempt Jesus. That is one reason why we are told to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. At each moment we are filled with the Spirit, we will be able to have victory over the temptations of Satan.

Second, we see that Jesus was led by the Spirit. The word translated “led” means *to lead or to guide*. This word is used in Galatians 5:18 which says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” As Christians, we are no longer under the law because we now have the Holy Spirit to guide us. When we are led by the Spirit, we will experience His peace. When we fail to be led by the Spirit and depend on ourselves we will often experience guilt. Jesus gives us an example of the importance of learning to be led by the Spirit moment by moment so that we can experience His peace. The Holy Spirit led Jesus from the Jordan River out into the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. During that entire period, Jesus did not eat anything.

Third, we see that Jesus answered the temptations of Satan with Scripture. In fact, we will see that He answers each temptation with Scripture. Deuteronomy 8:3 says, “So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.” Israel complained of hunger in the wilderness and God provided them with manna. However, the last part of the verse shows that mankind cannot receive spiritual life from physical food. Instead, the key to spiritual life is found in the Word of God.

In 1 John 2:15-17, we read, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” Here, we see that there

are three ways that people are tempted: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These were the three ways that Eve was tempted. Genesis 3:6 says, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” This first temptation of Jesus by Satan focused on the lust of the flesh. Satan guessed that Jesus was hungry and told Him that He could turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. As we have said, Jesus answered this temptation by quoting Scripture.

The second temptation by Satan is given in Luke 4:5-8 where we read, “Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.’ And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”’” Here, we see that in the second temptation that Satan appealed to the lust of the eyes. Satan took Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him all of the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

The word translated “authority” means *the power to rule or the power of authority*. Satan said that authority had been delivered to him. Here, we see that Satan claimed that he had been given all authority over the nations of the world. In addition, Satan claimed that he could give this authority to whomever he wished. These were actually lies because Jesus used this same word when he said in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” Then, Satan told Jesus that he would give this authority to Jesus if Jesus would worship him.

Jesus did not argue with Satan about who had all authority. In fact, Jesus did not even call Satan a liar. Instead, Jesus again quoted from the Word of God. Deuteronomy 6:13 says, “You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.” The word translated “fear” in this verse means *to reverence, honor, respect or fear*. By quoting this verse, Jesus made it clear to Satan that God is the only One that any person is to reverence or worship. This is a reminder that the Word of God has an answer for every temptation that Satan would use to tempt us. Satan had tempted Eve with the lust of the eyes. Here, we see that Jesus defeated Satan with the Word of God when Satan tried to tempt Jesus by appealing to the lust of the eyes.

However, Satan still had one more way that he thought that he could tempt Jesus. Luke 4:9-13 says, “Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him 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 shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,” and, “In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.”’ And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘It has been said, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.”’ Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.” This time, Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem to try and tempt Him.

Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the temple in Jerusalem. This highest point was about sixty-five feet above the ground. The temple had a large open area or courtyard around it. The

people of Jerusalem came to the temple courtyard every day during the times of prayer. During the various feast days, this courtyard would be filled with Jews that came to Jerusalem for the feasts. The population of Jerusalem was about forty thousand people but for the feasts as many as a half million people would come to Jerusalem. These visitors would spend much of their time in the temple courtyard. Here, we see that Satan was trying to tempt Jesus with the pride of life. Satan told Jesus that here was an opportunity to impress all of the people who might be in the temple courtyard.

As a result, Satan said, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.” In order to try and get Jesus to obey him, Satan quoted two verses from Psalm 91. Psalm 91:11-12 says, “For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In *their* hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” Satan quoted these verses to tell Jesus that the angels would hold Him so that He would not hurt Himself if He jumped from the highest point of the temple. In addition, all of the people who were in the temple courtyard would be very impressed. This was an appeal to pride. Jesus just answered Satan by quoting a verse. Deuteronomy 6:16 says, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah.” The people of Israel had complained against God when they lacked water in the wilderness. Exodus 17:7 says, “So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’” Moses had reminded the people in Deuteronomy how they had tempted God.

Jesus used that verse to answer Satan and tell him that he was not to tempt the Lord. By this statement, Jesus made it clear to Satan that He is God. Satan did not even try to deny the fact that Jesus was and is God. Instead, Satan left Jesus because he had used every possible way that he had to tempt Jesus and Jesus had defeated him. Jesus had victory over temptation in each of the three areas where Eve had been tempted in the Garden of Eden. In fact, Jesus had answered all of the temptations of Satan from just one book of the Old Testament. This made it clear to Satan that Jesus still had the rest of the Old Testament to answer Satan.

In these verses, we see that it is important to teach our physical and spiritual children how to deal with the temptations of Satan by using the Word of God. Psalm 119:11 says, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!” We want to help our children understand the importance of memorizing and meditating on the Word of God in their hearts. The Word in their hearts is a key way to help them know what God says so that they will not sin against Him. We also want to help them realize that the Word of God will cause Satan to leave for a time. In this way, we are preparing our children so that they can have victory when Satan tempts them. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to have victory over the temptations that they face.