



**CAPITOL[®]
COMMISSION**

Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders



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“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness” Luke 4:1

Luke 4:1-15 - Jesus, the True Son, Proves His Worthiness

Our text this week concerns the testing of Jesus by the devil, or Satan. Read vs 1-13. At first blush this seems an odd aside when the flow of Luke’s account was just gathering steam for Jesus to launch His ministry. Why would the Spirit instead vector Him into a spiritual confrontation with God’s enemy? There are significant reasons for Jesus’ temptation here but it sheds light on the cosmic battle which has raged since an angelic rebellion in heaven, before Creation. Matthew and Mark also include this testing, but only Matthew and Luke include the same three temptations, but given in a different order. It may be helpful to understand since Jesus’ birth the powers of darkness tried to eliminate Him and opposed His incarnate presence on the Earth (e.g., see Matthew 2:13-16).

The setting for the battle immediately follows after Jesus’ baptism by John in Luke 3:21. Jesus leaves the Jordan valley and moves west into the mountainous, arid land. He has no provisions and fasts for 40 days; and Luke simply says, “He was hungry”. I should say so! This informs us that Jesus was not superhuman, He had needs for sustenance and rest, just as our bodies require. Scripture tells us both Moses and Elijah also fasted 40 days and nights (Deuteronomy 9:9, 1 Kings 19:8). Only after that period of fasting does the tempter show up, capitalizing on His physical weakness. Think about the fact this is not a lesser demon but the leader of the angelic rebellion spiritually attacking Jesus. [None of us has likely been the direct target of Satan himself; he is also a created being and is not omnipresent as God is. We tend to be tempted by our own hearts and perhaps much lower ranking demons.]

Forty is a significant number because it reminds us that Israel wandered 40 years after the exodus from Egypt. Recall they were then tested when Moses sent spies into Canaan, but 10 of the 12 brought a bad report regarding the giants in the land (only Joshua and Caleb had faith in God, see Numbers 13 & 14), so the Hebrews were sent back into the wilderness to wander another 40 years until that generation died out. This symbology is significant because they failed the test.

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those in our state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office, are available online at capitolcom.org, and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Rom 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Tim 2:1-4).

Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.

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Let us look now at the devil's attack strategy. He comes against the famished Son of God with a similar scheme used successfully upon Eve, then Adam: an appeal to their appetite. But the temptation leads with **"If** you are the Son of God...". The suggestion is Jesus is not who He knows Himself to be, despite God's own declaration in Luke 3:22. Similarly, Satan asked Eve, "Did God **actually** say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" By raising doubts the truth is called into question. Jesus does not refute him, or his ploy, but responds every time by quoting scripture, here Deuteronomy 8:3, in which Moses reviews their very wandering in the wilderness. The Word of God is the antidote to the venomous lies of the serpent and is the standard way Jesus handles each temptation here.

The second attack involves either a spiritual vision or even a transporting of Jesus to view the world's kingdoms. The offer is: Worship the devil and he will bestow on Jesus the authority over the entire world. Jesus again quotes God's Word, this time Deuteronomy 6:13. But the implication of this test is Satan has such authority to offer. This points to how the kingdoms of the world tend to be aligned against the King of Heaven, as described in Psalm 2. John's gospel often quotes Jesus calling the devil the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). We also know that after the cross and His resurrection, Christ gains full authority over all creation (see Ephesians 1:20-23). Essentially, Satan is trying to short circuit the redemption path Christ must walk, through suffering and His humiliation, by offering the rightful rule Christ anticipates but without the cross and the pain. Which of course would leave us unredeemed!

Having been refuted twice with scripture, the devil employs some of God's own word in the 3rd test. He takes Jesus to the top of the temple at Jerusalem and reminds Him using Psalm 91--but out of context--that God's angels will keep Him from physical harm. God indeed promises to protect His children and especially His beloved Son, but not when doing something foolish. Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16, we are not to test the mercy of God.

These are the temptations listed in Matthew and Luke; there may have been many more and these three are just representative. Note how these track with the world's temptations as listed in 1 John 2:16 (i.e., the flesh, the eyes, the pride of life). However, this time Satan fails and withdraws, for a time. This implies he always closely monitored Jesus' ministry. Matthew's account mentions angels arrive to help Jesus physically recover.

The question we have not answered is why would Jesus have to endure this? Succinctly put, Jesus is the second Adam, proving His worthiness by standing against the tempter in a way Adam and Eve did not. But He is also the true Israel. Luke had just finished giving Jesus' bloodline to establish His kingly claim to David's promise, the tribe of Judah, the child of Abraham, the Son of Adam, and lastly, the Son of God. He identifies with all humanity generally and Israel specifically. Finally, He is showing perfect obedience, subject to the law of God (note He appealed to the book of Deuteronomy every time). By showing His identification with us He earns the High Priesthood for us today!

Applications

1. The question in today's study is, who is Jesus? Is He truly the Son of God? The devil wants nothing more than to cloud Jesus from our sight, to sow doubt and disbelief. Once we realize He is who He claims to be then we must inspect what those truth claims demand of us. Belief and trust!
2. Meditate on Hebrews 4:15. How comforting is it to have an advocate at the right hand of God?

My desire is to highlight Jesus Christ to you. Toward that end, I am available to discuss any biblical topic or question you may have. I especially want to ensure all who read the studies understand how Jesus Christ is distinctively important to the entire world and to each of us individually. Lastly, all Bible studies are available at Capitol Commission's Alabama page: <https://capitolcom.org/state/alabama>.

Plan to attend our in-house Bible Study during session: Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. in Room 123 of the State House.

A key facet empowering our ministry is prayer, especially prayer for our elected leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 commands Christians to obediently pray for all in authority. A tool for America's churches to help consistently pray for you, our elected leaders, is available to all via: www.Pray1Tim2.org - Select Alabama and sign up for daily email reminders, courtesy of Capitol Commission.

Share this link with your home church!