

CAPITOL STUDIES

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 • WEEK 5



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



The Temptation of Jesus



DURING THE 1960s AND 1970s, a well-known television comedian became famous for his saying “The devil made me do it.” Many people have that same philosophy when it comes to sin. The Bible tells us differently. James 1:14 says, “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.” God has provided a way for us to overcome temptation. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will **not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will also **make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Jesus, the God-man, knows what it is like to be tempted: “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” (Hebrews 4:15). In today’s study, Luke shares how Jesus resisted the devil’s temptation, showing us how we can do the same.

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INTRODUCTION

Luke 4:1-2

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.¹

Immediately before this time of temptation was Jesus' baptism. What a highlight! Receiving His Father's commendation and the anointing of the Holy Spirit would have been encouragement and motivation to do all that His Father asked of Him, which included following the Spirit's leading into the wilderness. **Temptation (testing) often comes when you are at a high point in your spiritual life.** The wilderness was a hot, desolate place. Mark tells us wild animals were there. Jesus spent 40 days there, alone, fasting and undoubtedly talking with His Father in prayer. But also, throughout that 40-day period, He was tested by Satan. Luke (as well as Matthew) shares only three of those temptations, which appear to have happened at the end of the 40 days.

I. TEMPTATION 1: THE WILL OF GOD

Luke 4:3-4

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

Satan had one goal: to keep Jesus from completing the salvation mission that God had for Him. He tried to get Jesus to be independent, not relying on His Father. Jesus was surely famished and very weary after 40 days of no food. **Temptation typically comes when we are alone and/or most vulnerable. Beware!** "It was a test to put His immediate physical needs ahead of eternal purposes."² But Jesus did not give in to Satan. Instead, He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, where Moses reminded the people that their existence was not just through the manna God provided but through their daily trust in God's Word. **Jesus always used Scripture to resist temptation. We must do the same.** "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11).

II. TEMPTATION 2: THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Luke 4:5-8

And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And 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. ⁷Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." ⁸Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

Now the devil comes to Jesus with a new temptation: "no suffering, no struggling, no sacrifice. Just one little compromise and this world and the crown of power that goes with it are all His. Then what's the



problem? It bypasses the Cross. God wants His Son to rule over all the kingdoms of the world, not with a crown of power given by the enemy, but with a crown of thorns worn on a Cross.”³ The world would have been a good place with Jesus as ruler, but Jesus chose God’s *best* over *good*. He reminded Satan the Bible says worship and service belong to God alone. **Some of the most powerful temptations involve *good* things!**

III. TEMPTATION 3: THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 4:9-12

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; ¹⁰for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,’ ¹¹and, ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’” ¹²And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

The final temptation in Luke 4 is a direct attack on the goodness and trustworthiness of God, as well as an attempt to lure Jesus into pride. Satan mockingly said, “If you’re really God’s Son, then prove it. God says in His Word that He will keep You from getting hurt.” Notice how the devil twisted Scripture as he did with Eve in the garden of Eden. It is common for people to use Scripture to persuade others to do things that are wrong or not to do things that are right. Isaiah 5:20 says of such people, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil.” **Temptation often tries to get us to question the goodness and trustworthiness of God.** Jesus knew His Father well. He did not need to test His goodness. He could rest in His promises.

Luke 4:13

When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Satan was not done. He would try again. “The devil takes no holiday; he never rests. If beaten, he rises again. If he cannot enter in the front, he steals in at the rear. If he cannot enter in the rear, he breaks through the roof or enters by tunneling under the threshold. He labors until he is in. He uses great cunning and many a plan. When one miscarries, he has another at hand and continues his attempts until he wins.”⁴ **Temptation will come again and will likely be in a different manner. Be prepared.**

IV. JESUS’ PREACHING

Luke 4:14-27

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. ¹⁵And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. ¹⁶And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.





Nazareth was Jesus' home. He had lived there since he was a young boy, and He was well-known in the community. He was used to reading in the synagogue. The service included three parts: worship and prayer, Scripture reading, and teaching. "In the synagogue there was no professional ministry nor any one person to give the address; the president would invite any distinguished person present to speak and discussion and talk would follow."⁵

Luke 4:17-20

And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, ¹⁹To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” ²⁰And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

When a reader sat down, it meant that it was time to teach. Everyone was looking at Jesus, waiting to hear what He had to say. This is the first recorded sermon of Jesus in Luke.

Luke 4:21-27

And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²²And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” ²³And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’” ²⁴And He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. ²⁵But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; ²⁶and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

Up to this point in the service, it seems that the congregation had been speaking highly of Jesus (vs. 22). But when He announced that what He just read about the Messiah was actually speaking about Him, the attitude of the crowd totally changed. They did not believe He was the Messiah, and they were angered that He compared Himself to the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha.

V. JESUS' PERSECUTION

Luke 4:28-30

And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; ²⁹and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. ³⁰But passing through their midst, He went His way.



The people undoubtedly believed Jesus was being blasphemous to say He was the Messiah, so they tried to kill him. It was not God's plan for Jesus to die yet, so miraculously He escaped through the crowd.

VI. JESUS' POWER

Luke 4:31-37

And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; ³²and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority. ³³In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴“Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” ³⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. ³⁶And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, “What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.” ³⁷And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district.

Having left Nazareth, Jesus began to teach in the synagogue in Capernaum. A demon-possessed man disrupted the service, questioning Jesus' authority. The demon was forced to recognize that authority when Jesus commanded him to come out of the man. Demons have no choice but to obey God.

Luke 4:38-41

Then He stood up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's [Peter's] home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. ³⁹And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she stood up and began waiting on them. ⁴⁰And while the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him, and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. ⁴¹And demons also were coming out of many, shouting and saying, “You are the Son of God!” But rebuking them, He was not allowing them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Jesus was invited to Simon Peter's home for the Sabbath noon meal. Peter's mother-in-law was quite ill, and her family had asked Jesus to help. Jesus rebuked the fever like He rebuked the demon. Both submitted to His command. We can imagine that Jesus got a good meal after that! Wherever Jesus went, people followed. This evening was no different. People knew Jesus could and would help, and so they came for healing and release.

More than knowledge of facts about Jesus is needed to get to heaven. The demons knew all about Jesus, but they did not believe in Him nor trust in Him as their Savior.





VII. JESUS' PERSEVERANCE

Luke 4:42-44

When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. ⁴³But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." ⁴⁴So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus needed time alone after giving to people so much, but He knew His mission, and He continued to fulfill it. Though He was rejected in Nazareth, He kept on and did not quit or let anything sidetrack Him as He continued to preach throughout Judea.

CONCLUSION

"A trial becomes a temptation when we respond wrongly... We separate trials and temptations as if they are far, far apart. The biblical writers had no problem using the same word to mean trials in one verse and then using the very same word to mean temptations just a few verses later. They understood what we have forgotten. Everything good comes from God, and everything He gives us is ultimately for our good and His glory."⁶

"Jesus' sinlessness means that He knows temptation better than we ourselves do. C. S. Lewis made this point by speaking of a man walking against the wind. Once the wind of temptation gets strong enough, the man lies down giving in—and thus not knowing what it would have been like ten minutes later. Jesus never lay down; He endured all our temptations and testings without ever giving in. He therefore knows the strength of temptation better than any of us. Only He truly knows the cost."⁷ As the author of Hebrews reminds us, "For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18, ESV).

Jesus did not use His divine powers to win the victory; He used the same spiritual weapons that any of us can use, if we will yield to Him! Are we allowing the Spirit to have full control of our lives? Is God's Word our go-to source in defeating Satan?

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
2. Brian Bell, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/cbb/luke-4.html>.
3. From the study guide *Christ at the Crossroads*, coauthored by Lee Hough, from the Bible teaching ministry of Charles R. Swindoll, Anaheim, CA, Insight for Living. 1991, pg. 5.

