

The Temptation and Early Preaching of Jesus

Luke 4

The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13)

Immediately after Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness. For forty days and nights, Jesus fasted. The devil confronted Jesus in an effort to persuade Him to sin. The temptation of the second Adam reminds us of the devil's temptation of the first

Adam in the Garden of Eden. Both Adam and Christ were tempted by food; both appealed to man's lust for power; on both occasions, the Devil tried to create doubt in God's word (cf. Gen. 3:4-5; Luke 4:3—"if thou

be the Son of God" [cf. 3:22]). However, what succeeded in the Garden of Eden failed on this occasion. In Jesus' first temptation, the Devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread (4:3). Jesus refused saying, "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (4:4). The sec-



Outside the city of Nazareth is a steep hill. Most scholars believe this is the site where the people of Nazareth wanted to kill Jesus by throwing him off the precipice.

ond temptation recorded by Luke¹ tells of the temptation in which the Devil offered Jesus dominion over all of the kingdoms of the world, if Jesus would fall down and worship him (4:6). This was a temptation

to receive "all authority" without enduring the suffering of Calvary. Jesus refused by stating that the Scriptures demanded that man worship God and Him alone (4:8). In the third temptation, the Devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, tempting Him to try God by jumping off the pinnacle. The Devil even quoted Scripture saying, "For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee" (4:9-11). Jesus replied that it is a sin to tempt God.

Jesus was victorious over the Devil. He resisted the Devil and the Devil left His presence—for a season (4:13). He relied upon the written word of God to overcome the Devil (notice His usage of "It is written" [4:4, 5, 12]), and not upon supernatural or miraculous power.

Rejection at Nazareth (4:14-30)

After His temptation, Jesus began His public teaching ministry. He journeyed throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues. On one occasion, He returned to His hometown of Nazareth and worshiped in the synagogue there. He stood and read from Isaiah 61:1-2, a prophecy of the anointing of the Messiah with the Spirit. The passage emphasized that the gospel would be preached to the poor and would bring deliverance to those under bondage to sin. After reading the passage, He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (4:21).

The townspeople were enraged. They had known Jesus from a child. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" (4:22). Jesus replied to their unbelief by saying, "No prophet is accepted in his own country" (4:24). Yet, Jesus only did what prophets before Him had done—revealing God's grace to

¹ Luke's order seems to be based on location (desert, mountain, temple) instead of chronology.

those of another city rather than in His own home town. He reminded them that Elijah had stayed with the widow of Zarephath during the famine in his days, and Elisha had cleansed the Syrian captain, Naaman, of his leprosy, although there were many lepers in Israel. Hence, they should not be surprised that Jesus would work miracles in other places, but not in Nazareth.

The people reacted violently. They rose up to take Jesus from the synagogue to a cliff near Nazareth from which they could cast Him in order to kill Him. Jesus escaped their plot against Him. He left Nazareth and went to Capernaum (4:31), which became His home base for the remainder of His ministry. In Capernaum, the people gladly received Jesus and welcomed Him (4:32).

Healing the Demon Possessed Man (4:33-37)

Jesus taught in the synagogue in Capernaum and was well-received. One Sabbath day, a demon-possessed man was in His audience. He cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God" (4:34).

Jesus commanded the demon to hold his peace and to depart from the man. The multitude was amazed to see even the demons obey Jesus. The casting out of demons demonstrated Jesus' power and authority over the Devil. His fame spread throughout the country.

Healing Peter's Mother-in-Law and Others (4:38-44)

After leaving the synagogue, Jesus went home with Peter. Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever. Jesus rebuked the fever; she was completely and instantly healed.



This photo shows the remains of the fourth century synagogue in Capernaum. However, archaeologists believe that it was built atop the remains of the first century synagogue where Jesus would have assembled and taught.

As the Sabbath drew to a close, people in Capernaum brought their sick to Jesus in order that He might heal them. He healed all manner of diseases completely and instantly. The demon possessed were also healed. When the day was over, Jesus withdrew into a desert place

to pray. The people followed Him, beseeching Him to stay in Capernaum. He replied, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (4:43). He continued His preaching in other Galilean cities.



Remains of an ancient house with engravings with Christian symbols were found in Capernaum. Third century writings mention Peter's house being used as a church. Many scholars believe that Peter's house has been found. Catholics have built an octagonal building over the remains of this house.

Questions

1. On what did Jesus rely to overcome the Devil's temptations? _____

2. How does one's knowledge and use of the Scriptures better equip him to resist the temptation to sin? _____

3. What temptations did the Devil use to overcome Adam and Eve (Gen. 3)? _____

4. What temptations did the Devil use in attempting to overcome Jesus? _____

5. What temptation does he use on us today (cf. 1 John 2:15-17)? _____

6. What was wrong with the Devil's use of Scripture (4:9-11)? _____

7. What was the source of Jesus' temptation? How did His fleshly nature relate to His temptation? _____

8. What is the source of man's temptation? How does man's fleshly nature relate to temptation? _____

9. Why did the Devil leave Jesus (cf. Jas. 4:7)? When will he leave us alone? _____

Thought Questions

1. What was Jesus' custom on the Sabbath (v. 16)? Compare His custom with that of those in Hebrews 10:25.

2. Identify these people in 4:18 (Isa. 61:1):
 - a. Spirit: _____
 - b. Lord: _____
 - c. Me: _____
3. From the Isaiah quotation (Luke 4:18-19), answer these questions:
 - a. Who are the poor? _____
 - b. Brokenhearted? _____
 - c. Captives? _____
 - d. Blind? _____
 - e. Bruised? _____
 - f. What kind of healing and deliverance is discussed? _____
4. What was Jesus' understanding of Isaiah 61:1? _____

5. Why is a prophet (or even a preacher) without honor in his own country? _____

6. Why did Jesus refer to Elijah's helping the widow of Zarephath and Elisha's healing of Naaman the Syrian (vv. 25-27)? _____

7. What reaction did the people of Nazareth give to their native son? _____

True or False

- ____ 1. Jesus believed in demons.
- ____ 2. The demons thought that Jesus was an ordinary man.
- ____ 3. The demons had power equal with Jesus.
- ____ 4. The demons obeyed Jesus.
- ____ 5. Jesus came to destroy the demons.
- ____ 6. Demon possession is insanity, schizophrenia, or some other mental disorder.

Multiple Choice

- ____ 1. Peter was (a) married, (b) unmarried, (c) widowed, (d) divorced.
- ____ 2. Jesus healed (a) no illnesses, (b) some illnesses, (c) all illnesses.
- ____ 3. Jesus healed (a) completely, (b) instantly, (c) without charge, (d) all of the above.
- ____ 4. "Divers diseases" is (a) breathing problems, (b) cramps, (c) collapsed lung, (d) different diseases.
- ____ 5. Jesus' home base for His preaching work was (a) Capernaum, (b) Nazareth, (c) Bethlehem, (d) Jerusalem.

Answering Denominational Error

1. Why could Peter not meet the qualifications to serve today as a priest in the Catholic Church? _____
2. Was Peter's wife living when he worked with Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 9:5)? _____
3. If Peter could not be a priest today, could he be pope in the Catholic Church? _____