

JESUS, ISRAEL & PROPHECY

Week 5 – Jesus Came To Defeat Sin and Death

What God announced to the world through Jesus' baptism is foundational to the truth of Scripture and crucial in our moving forward. The same holds true for what we are going to see in His temptation in the wilderness.

At Jesus' baptism, God the Father declared that Jesus is His Son – the Son of God: “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.”

- The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus – anointing Him as the Messiah (Isa. 60:1).
- At Jesus' baptism we have a clear demonstration of our Tri-une God. We have the Divine stamp signifying the deity and the worthiness of Jesus to bear the title of Messiah, Son of God, Redeemer, Savior of the world!

The baptism was God's announcement to the world of Who Jesus is and of His ministry as the Suffering Servant and of the coming conquering King. One other issue remained in order to validate His Messiahship. Was He able to conquer the devil and sin? Yes – we find Jesus' credentials displayed in the Gospels – which are a fulfillment of prophecy! We find Jesus' profile in the OT! And here He is in all His splendor on the pages of the NT.

John 1:14 – “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

However, the ultimate question is - Can He save sinners from sin? Can He save sinners from the destroyer? Can He save sinners from death and hell? Can He overturn the curse? What is the extent of the curse? When we became separated from God because of sin, we lost everything: a right relationship with God; and we no longer live in “paradise.” We lost everything when sin entered the world. Mankind has been cursed. The earth has been cursed.

Can Jesus regain paradise? Restoring the earth and restoring man's dominion over the earth is part of God's plan. At the fall, we lost the meaning to our existence.

Gen. 1:26-27 – “*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all^[b] the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*”

God intended man to rule over His creation – the works of His hands. Man rebelled! Man wasn't satisfied with all that God gave him. Man didn't want just dominion. He wanted to be like God! What happened? Who usurped dominion? Satan became the god of this world (II Cor. 4:3-4). The world is under the dominion of the enemy and fallen angels. Thus - Eph. 6:12 – we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers!

BUT GOD'S destiny for mankind is to have dominion over His creation. God did not create man to have dominion over a fallen world. God created man to have dominion over an undefiled world. When will that dominion be restored to man? The grand design

for restoring lost humanity – humanity’s lost dominion over God’s creation – revolves around Jesus. Jesus, as the God/man will receive the Kingdom from God the Father – the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13)

Regarding the temptation of Jesus, the compelling question that is answered in the fourth chapter of Matthew and in the fourth chapter of Luke: “Can Jesus conquer Satan? Can He conquer sin and therefore death? Can He conquer hell not only for Himself but for us as well?” The answer is a resounding YES.

Following Jesus’ immersion, He engages in conflict with the devil. This conflict with Satan was prompted by the Holy Spirit. It is not as if Satan came after Him; Jesus came after Satan. The Spirit of God led Him. Mark 1:12 tells us that the Spirit of God DROVE Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Here we have the battle of the ages displayed for us!

In Gen. 3:15, the first Messianic prophecy, we read that God promised that He would put hatred between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Satan would bruise the Redeemer’s heel; the Redeemer, the Messiah, would crush Satan’s head. Jesus’ heel was bruised at the crucifixion on the cross. Hebrews 2:14 tells us that Jesus, through His death, destroyed him who had the power of death – the devil. “Destroy” doesn’t mean to annihilate but rather to render inoperative.

Three of the Gospels include the account of Jesus’ temptation: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

All three Gospels clearly point out that the temptation of Jesus was part of the divine plan.

Matthew 4:1 – *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil”*

Mark 1:12 – *“Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness”*

Luke 4:1 – *“Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into^[a] the wilderness,² being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.”*

Jesus was driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit that He might find the devil to confront the devil.

Consider: For thousands of years Jesus had listened to the devil’s boasts. Jesus CREATED Lucifer. He knew Lucifer! And now the question of “Who is Lord?” needed to be demonstrated.

Jesus was in the wilderness by the will of God; He was fighting against Satan by the will of God. And, praise God, He won by the will of God. And, it is in this arena of temptation where Adam failed. Jesus is noted in Scripture as the second Adam (I Cor. 15:45 [Rom. 5:14]). As the second Adam, Jesus won. When Adam sinned, he lost not only the relationship with God, he also lost having dominion over the creation. When Adam sinned – immediately God promised the Redeemer – Gen. 3:15. The Redeemer would bring us into a right relationship with God and Who would redeem our destiny – of

having dominion over creation. Humanity had brought the problem of sin into the world (“humanity” being Adam), and humanity was going to be the solution to the problem – the GOD/MAN Jesus, the Redeemer. Jesus defeating the tempter, the enemy, was part of the solution.

At the temptation of Jesus, Satan wanted Jesus to be disqualified as the Savior, the Redeemer, the Messiah and as the Son of God! Think of this: following Lucifer’s fall (Isa. 14:12-21; Eze. 28:11-19), he could NOT tempt Jesus in heaven. But now that the “Word was made flesh” – and was on earth – and Satan being the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4) - Satan thought he might strike a blow to Jesus’ humanity. But Jesus, as God, could NOT sin! God cannot sin. He is holy! Since holiness, righteousness, and God’s other attributes are Who God is, if God were to sin, He would cease to be God! (I John 1:5; James 1:17b; Isa. 59:2; II Cor. 5:21; John 14:30; I Peter 2:21b-22).

At the baptism, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God. At His temptation, Jesus proved that He was the Son of God.

Consider these “interesting” observations from the Bible which connect Jesus and Israel:

- The children of Israel passed through the Red Sea into the wilderness – led by God (Ex. 15:1-19; Ex. 19:4).
 - Jesus was immersed into the Jordan River and was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness.
- The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness – this was their time of testing – for 40 years. I Cor. 10:1-13 states that the wilderness was not merely a place for Israel to pass through between Sinai and the Promised Land. It was also a place where God was testing the loyalty and faithfulness of Israel.
 - Jesus spent 40 days of testing in the wilderness.
- The Holy Spirit was present with Israel in the wilderness (Isa. 63:7-19).
 - The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1).
- When Jesus resisted Satan through quoting Scripture, all three references came from Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is known specifically as God’s covenant book re: His covenant with Israel (Dt. 6:4; Dt. 6:5; Dt. 7:6-8).

Had Jesus been tempted previously – during the 30 years of His life thus far? The writer of Hebrews says, "He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). But here at the announcement of His public ministry, we don’t see the “normal” temptation of the world – but temptation by Satan (the accuser/the adversary, the father of lies (John 8:44) – intending to destroy Him as the Messiah. We need to rejoice in this account. We need to know about our Messiah – that He has indeed conquered sin and death! If Jesus was defeated by Satan, then we all lose, there is no salvation, and we are damned. BUT we have a Messiah Who is the answer for the curse placed upon man and upon the earth. Jesus came to overturn the curse – to restore the earth and to reconcile man to God!

AND NOW was the time!

Jesus came – He appeared at the Jordan River – to be baptized – and then to be DRIVEN into the wilderness – led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the Judean wilderness, a 35 by 15 square mile area of precipitous cliffs and ravines, a place of scorpions and snakes and wild animals – a place uninhabited – a place where nothing grows. And there Jesus remained for 40 days in intense battle with the devil. Then he became hungry. Jesus was totally focused on the conflict/battle. He was so focused on submission to the Father. He is fully aware of His divine mission. And now He is engaged in an intense conflict with the devil to demonstrate His deity!

All temptation that came at Jesus came from the outside – none of it came from within Jesus. John 14:30 – “Satan has nothing in Me” – there is nothing within Jesus – in His nature as the God/Man – into which the devil could get to with any temptation.

How do we understand the “temptation” of the second person of the Trinity? In the Greek, the word for tempt is *periazō* – it’s a temptation or a testing. It could be either. It could be a testing for good; it could be a tempting for bad. The English word carries a bad connotation solely. When we see the word tempt we think of a negative happening, i.e. to entice someone to sin. The Greek word can carry either the idea of enticing to evil. However, it can mean a test of a positive nature.

Regarding Jesus’ temptation, from God's viewpoint, it is a test. From the devil's viewpoint, it is a temptation. From God's viewpoint it is a way to prove that the Son is worthy. From the devil's viewpoint it is a way to tempt the Son to be unworthy.

What about when temptations occur in our lives? Whatever comes our way from Satan to entice us are negatives - to cause us to sin.

1 Peter 5:8 – “*Be sober, be vigilant; because^[c] your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*”

Eph. 6:10-12 – “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[c] against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*”.

BUT GOD may allow tests as ways to prove us. James 1:2 - “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various peirasmos.*” Into various trials - certainly not temptations. We don’t have the negative sense within the context of this passage. “*Knowing this, that the testing of your faith works patience. And let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*”

From God's viewpoint, these trials/temptations (periasmos) are positive – to strengthen our faith – to prove righteousness – or to teach us re: where we are weak in order to strengthen us.

However, James 1:12 - "*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is (peiraso) tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*"

You have the very same word; however, it's seen positively at the beginning of this verse and negatively at the end of the verse. God will allow a test to prove righteousness; God will never entice someone into sin.

Look at your own life. When you have tests in your life, what does it prove? Does it prove you're righteous or unrighteous? Do you pass or fail? Is it vindicated as a test from God because you're proven righteous or convicted of areas of weakness? Or does it come out to be a temptation from Satan in which you're enticed into evil? You can't tell the difference until you see the outcome. God allows things to happen in my life. If I pass that test - it proves my righteousness in Christ. If I fail that's a temptation in which I was enticed by my lust into sin. We don't really know, how to define it until we see the result of it.

But we read that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. If God tempts no man, how then can the Holy Spirit drive the Son of God into a conflict with the devil? From God's viewpoint it was a test to prove His righteousness. AND Jesus is God. There is NO QUESTION re: His righteousness. It was only a temptation from Satan's viewpoint.

There is more of a connection between Jesus' baptism and His temptation:

- At the baptism of Jesus, He said that He came to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15). At the temptation of Jesus, this righteousness was tested.
- At the baptism of Jesus, He was declared to be the Son of God by God the Father (Matt. 3:17). At the temptation, He was told to prove it (Matt. 4:3).
- At the baptism of Jesus, He was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His mission and he was immediately sent/driven into the wilderness by the Spirit of God for the express purpose of being tempted by the devil.
 - From the lushness of the Jordan River – from the announcement of Jesus as the Messiah – from His anointing by the Holy Spirit – He is now led into the desolation and isolation of the Judean wilderness where temperatures soar, where the limestone rocks peel and blister from the intense heat, where the landscape is bare and jagged, and where dangerous beasts/animals run wild!
 - Nowhere in all of Israel could Jesus have felt more isolated, abandoned or alone!
 - BUT Jesus was accompanied by THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD!

Mark 1:12-13 – *“Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.”*

Luke 4:1-2 – *“Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into^a the wilderness,² being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.”*

The accounts in Luke and Mark specifically tell us that Jesus was tempted by the devil for forty days. The time of trial consisted of forty days of fasting during which there undoubtedly was constant provocation by Satan. The three temptations recorded in both Matthew and Luke comprise Satan’s final all-out assault against Jesus. Satan tempted Jesus to:

- Turn away from the will of God
- Turn away from the word of God
- Turn away from the cross

The pattern of this battle between the Messiah and the adversary needs to be noted. The temptations directed at Jesus Christ are unique to Him. What the devil tempted Jesus to do would not be a temptation to us. We could never turn stones into bread. We would never imagine that we could rule the kingdoms of the world. We wouldn’t consider taking a dive off a 450 foot high pinnacle and land safely. These temptations, however, could come to us under another category - a broader category.

Do we understand what Jesus, Who is ETERNALLY GOD, gave up to come to this earth and die for man? He emptied Himself of His glory (Phil. 2:5ff) – but NEVER of His deity! Jesus came in submission to the Father. He willingly relinquished His right to use His power for His own benefit and chose to submit Himself fully to the will of His Father. He used His power for the benefit of others.

Every temptation hurled at Jesus represented a less costly way to do God’s work than the way called for in God’s plan – which would have been WRONG!!!!

Consider: the devil was attempting to not only destroy Jesus, but destroy the Trinity by creating rebellion within the Trinity and create a breach in the Godhead.

Matthew 4:3-4 – *“Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If (SINCE) You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*

The word “if” is better rendered “since” due to the context. We need to remember that Satan never questions the deity of Jesus, the demons don’t even question the deity of Jesus, only the liberals question the deity of Jesus. Satan and the fallen angels knew

Jesus before they fell. They were at one time holy angels – they knew Jesus to be God – they still know He is God. There is never a denial of that at any time by the demons (Matt. 8:28-29; James 2:19)

The first temptation is a temptation to distrust God's love...to distrust God's plan for the Son of God. Satan was attempting to get Jesus to focus on His own needs. Jesus' answer to this temptation from Satan was essentially - "Satan, you are presuming that a man needs bread to live, I'll tell you what you need to live, you need to be obedient to God. If He wants Me to live, Jesus is saying, He'll give Me bread, I trust Him...I trust Him! Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 – *“Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”*

Matthew 4:5-7 – *“Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”*

Regarding this second temptation, I believe that the devil since he is a spiritual being, somehow physically transported Jesus to the temple pinnacle (platform where a trumpeter sounded the call to the morning sacrifice high atop the temple walls. It was a 450 foot drop to the Kidron Valley below) and told Jesus to jump from the platform as worshippers gathered, land on His feet 450 feet below, and walk away unharmed. Satan's enticement – the Jews would be convinced by this phenomenal feat and instantly accept Jesus as Messiah. Jesus could forego the agony of the cross. What a breathtaking way to inaugurate His public ministry! The jump would certainly be a crowd pleaser. The Jews anticipated that the Messiah would come suddenly to His Temple (Mal. 3:1). This isn't God's plan. Jesus didn't come to be swept up by the crowd – to be popular – to be accepted. He came to be hated. And He was to die by crucifixion and no other way.

Jesus responds by quoting Deut. 6:16 – *“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”*

For Jesus, was the temptation then real? YES! Heb. 4:15 – *“He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* Jesus' temptation was REAL. Because Jesus could not sin – He could never succumb to the temptation – He never gave in. Therefore, He was tempted to the absolute limit of the capability of Satan to tempt. Every temptation ran to its limit. With us – Satan tempts us and – have you given in – have I given in? Jesus took every temptation to its full limit.

Matthew 4:8-9 – *“Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’”*

Satan was offering this to Jesus NOW! A bit of a detour in God's plan – wouldn't you say? Was this a legitimate offer? Luke 4:6 – *“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.’’

Satan does not literally possess all the nations of the world. He rules the system of evil that dominates the nations of the world – but not forever. Acts 17 – it is God Who sets the boundaries of the nations. It’s God in Whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). It’s God Who designs and turns the boundaries and times and seasons (Acts 17:26 [see also Dan. 2:20-22]). Satan doesn’t possess the kingdoms of the world. He simply rules the system of evil. He does not determine the nations and who rules the nations. In fact, Romans 13 says the hours that be are ordained by God. But Satan is a liar. Not only did he not have the power to give it, it wasn't his to begin with anyway.

Luke 4:7 – *“Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”*

Satan wants to be worshiped by the Son of God. That would almost be like accomplishing his original rebellion where he sought to be as high as God. If he could get the second member of the trinity to worship him, he's achieved what he wanted in the first place – to destroy God!

Jesus had to submit to the Father – there was no other way. Jesus had to go to the cross to bear our sin – there was no other way. And so Jesus proclaimed. . . .

Matthew 4:10-11 – *“‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.”*

Jesus had to conquer Satan in the wilderness. He had to conquer him at the cross. He had to conquer him at the tomb. And He is still conquering him by ever living to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). Jesus will conquer Satan when He returns and casts the devil and all of his demons into the Lake of Fire. Jesus will conquer Satan at every turn. In Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, we see, at the outset of His public ministry, where He puts that conquering power on display for the first time.

Jesus came - He walked from tiny Nazareth – the nowhere town – 60+ MILES – to come to John at the Jordan River – to be commissioned – to be baptized – to IDENTIFY with mankind so that He could serve mankind – so that He could bear our sin – so that He could wear the crown of thorns and be pierced through for us – so that He can now sit at the right hand of God as our GREAT HIGH PRIEST – because He was tempted in all points like we are yet WITHOUT SIN!

Questions:

What was your V8 moment?

Why is the temptation account in Scripture?

How does this temptation account speak to you in your walk with the Lord?

In what ways has God gifted you?

What are some of the temptations prompted by these gifts?

Suggested Homework:

Why are believers tested? Support your answers with Scripture.

What impacted you most regarding the account of Jesus' temptation?