

Intro: Jesus' temptation by the Devil proves that He is qualified to be the Savior-King. The vetting process to confirm qualification for position, role, and authority.

1. Why is This Confrontation Important?

- a. Jesus must be qualified to rescue, redeem, and restore Humanity where Adam and Israel failed to do so.
- b. To Adam
  - i. From the phrase "Adam, son of God" in the genealogy Luke immediately reveals Jesus as being tempted by the Devil, like in the Garden of Eden
  - ii. What was Adam's test? (Genesis 3:1-7)
    1. Will you trust the Lord's provision for you?
      - a. God gave every other tree, but one, for your nourishment and provision.
      - b. Will you trust that His provision is sufficient for you?
      - c. Even with this paradise surrounding him, Adam failed to believe that God would provide for him.
    2. Will you trust the Lord's heart for you?
      - a. "You won't die!" "God's not giving you the whole story"
      - b. The Serpent tried to persuade Eve that God didn't want her best, that He was keeping her from knowledge that would make her and Adam like Himself: "you will not die, but the Lord knows your eyes would be opened"
      - c. Even having walked with God in the garden without shame, Adam failed to trust that the LORD's intentions for him were good and sufficient for the fullness of joy
    3. Will you trust the Lord's Word?
      - a. "Did God *actually* say that?" "What did He really *mean* by it?"
      - b. Rather than trusting the LORD's promise, Adam trusted instead what he could see and seemed wise to him
        - i. You can almost hear the Serpent, "You're supposed to be like Him, as His image-bearer. He is wise. He wants you to be wise, too. Grab wisdom! Seize the power to know like God."
      - c. Even being given life in fullness, Adam failed to trust the LORD's promise and brought sin and death into the world
  - iii. The temptations of Jesus are similar: Will you trust the LORD's provision, goodness, and Word?
- c. To Israel
  - i. Led into the wilderness
    1. The wilderness was the place where those in the ancient near east believed that chaos and demons lived.
    2. It is also the place where Israel was tested as to whether they were going to trust in the LORD, like Adam was tested
      - a. Would His provision be sufficient? (manna)
      - b. Would His Word be kept? (let's go back to Egypt, God can't bring us into the Promised Land)
      - c. Would He be for us? (it would be better if we had died!)
  - ii. 40 days of spiritual struggle
    1. The text indicates that Jesus was tempted over those 40 days, not merely at the end, although the strongest temptations seemed to be at His most vulnerable point, at the end of the 40 day fast
      - a. "he ate nothing...he was hungry"
      - b. When Israel was hungry, God provided manna...and still complained and doubted God's sufficiency and goodness
      - c. Here, when Jesus is desperately hungry, without manna or immediate provision, he does NOT doubt God's sufficiency or goodness

2. Israel's failure was followed by 40 more years of failure and evidence that Moses was not the promised seed to crush the serpent's head
  - iii. Jesus was led here by the Spirit of God in the fullness of the Spirit of God
    1. Just as God's presence went with Israel in the form of pillars of fire and cloud, so did the Holy Spirit of God descend from heaven upon Jesus and lead Him to the wilderness for spiritual battle of trusting God versus trusting Himself
  - d. It is important to note that just because God takes you into a wilderness of testing, where spiritual battle is fierce and lengthy, does not imply that you have failed.
    - i. Jesus did not fail and thus wandered into the spiritual attack of Satan,
      1. No! He was led there by the Spirit, with the Spirit for strength, in order to accomplish the will of God
      2. In this battle, He was strengthened to do what God had called Him to do (continue in Luke's gospel to see that task laid out)
2. Jesus Succeeds Where Adam and Israel Failed: the Temptation to Do Things His Own Way
- a. First of all, each of these temptations is focused on Jesus' *rights* as the "Son of God"
    - i. The Devil always tempts us according to our perceived "rights"
    - ii. "If you are the Son of God"
      1. It is not so much a question of His power, but of His authority to make decisions on His own, apart from the Father's will
      2. Jesus' success, then, is in His refusal to exercise His power on His own authority and rather to submit to the Father's authority, timing, and means
        - a. "I can do nothing on my own." (John 5:30)
        - b. "The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son does." (John 5:19)

"These temptations are amazingly relevant for American Christianity. Satan skips over adultery, fornication, stealing, lying, murder—those temptations are too obvious. Those are the games that sub-devils play with weak saints. Jesus is no fall guy. When Satan means business with a strong saint, he sticks with religion and he makes the Bible his textbook." (John Piper)

- b. Temptation #1: "Don't Suffer - Provide for Yourself" – Doubt the Father's Provision
  - i. Satan tries whatever he can to get Jesus to avoid suffering
    1. It's not that bread is bad, but even the necessities of life must be received in the means and the manner which God provides
    2. In fact, the first temptation for Jesus was probably the temptation to let food control Him.
      - a. Thus, the very fact of fasting is an exclamation that nothing controls Him but the Father through the Holy Spirit
      - b. Is there a wilderness that you and I need to pray through, to ask for the Holy Spirit's strength to fast?
  - ii. The temptation is for Jesus to not trust in the Father's timing and provision for the Son
    1. "You're the Son! God doesn't want you to be hungry. Why are you living like a poor man if you're the son of God? Live like a prince! Use your blessings of power to serve yourself, then you can serve others."
    2. Note that Satan was eager for Jesus to perform miracles...if He would use it for Himself, to serve Himself, to relieve His suffering for Himself.
  - iii. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 8:3
    1. The context is Moses' command for the people to trust in the LORD, who had provided for 40 years, as they went into the Promised Land
      - a. If God led you into the wilderness for 40 years, He will take care of you in the Promised Land
      - b. TRUST HIM!!

2. The verse also gives reason for the hunger...so that Israel might know that man does not truly on bread, but rather on every word that comes from God's mouth
  - a. What Jesus truly needed was not bread, even though he was very hungry, but what He truly saw His need as was God's Word and God's Will
  - b. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work." (John 4:34)
- iv. In the face of the temptation to doubt God's goodness, to believe that God had abandoned Him in His suffering, Jesus trusted the heart and promise of God
  1. This would portend importantly in His greater suffering to come
  2. He succeeded in the midst of suffering where Adam failed in the midst of God's blessing
- c. Temptation #2: "Take the Crown Without the Cross" – Doubt the Father's Heart
  - i. Satan shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth in a moment and promises Jesus that He can have them
    1. Satan mixes in a truth with a lie, just like he did in the Garden
      - a. "It has been handed over to me" (true) - "I give it to whomever I will" (false)
      - b. "Your eyes will be opened" (true) - "You will not surely die" (false)
    2. The temptation here is to seize what is rightfully His as the Son, *but without the cross*
    3. Satan is offering a way to the glories of the eternal throne without the suffering, at the moment of great opportunity to doubt God's goodness in hunger
  - ii. Just like Adam's temptation, the seizure of power and wisdom and authority which was promised to Him as the Divine King is the temptation
    1. "If you are the Son of God – take Your throne without the cross!"
      - a. This is the root of the actual temptation: avoid suffering!
      - b. Satan was asking Jesus to avoid the suffering of the Cross by giving Satan his affections – to not trust in the Father's goodness or His plan – to serve His own interests rather than God's or others
    2. This is the same unbelief that led Abraham to try and fulfill the covenant promise for God by siring Ishmael instead of waiting for the promised son through Sarah, as had been promised
      - a. Though the suffering that Jesus was experiencing immediately (40 days of hunger) and was headed toward (the Cross) was exponentially more suffering than the waiting of Abe.
    3. Note again that Satan is willing for Jesus to have the kingdoms of the world, to be seen and adored and honored by the world...if He would take the kingdoms Himself for Himself and deny the Father for a moment.
  - iii. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:13/10:20
    1. The context is again Deuteronomy and its emphasis on the worship of YHWH alone, the blessings of faithfulness to God and the curses of rejection
    2. Jesus is showing that His priority is God alone and His allegiance is solely with the Father and never to even be shared with anyone or anything else, no matter the payoff for Himself
    3. When God fills our vision and our hearts are set on His glories and His excellencies and His goodness, then the alleviation of suffering becomes less powerful and does not control us: faith conquers.
- d. Temptation #3: "Make God Prove Himself" – Doubt the Father's Word
  - i. "If you are the Son of God, then make God prove it!" – I demand a paternity test!
  - ii. What Satan is requesting is that Jesus make God prove His Word and give up any type of faithful living according to God's Word
    1. As Jesus looks over the ledge into the dizzying effects of the Kidron Valley, He is exhorted to cast Himself down and rest in God's hands: "Let go and let God, Jesus!"
    2. "It doesn't matter what you do! If you are the Son of God, God will take care of it." There is a kind of Rastafarian "no-worries" ignorance to the temptation.

- iii. Having failed twice to persuade Jesus to doubt God's provision and promise, Satan now turns to using the Scriptures Himself to persuade Jesus to test God.
  - 1. Simply because somebody uses Scripture does not imply that they are godly, that they are believers, nor even that they are well-intentioned.
  - 2. It is the proper interpretation of Scripture that is important: that which leads to utter and absolute faith in God on God's terms for God's glory at whatever the cost.
  - 3. Anyone who uses the Scriptures to get you to avoid suffering at the expense of trusting in the LORD completely is of Satan
    - a. Mark 8:31-33 – "Get behind me, Satan!...You are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." – spoken to *Peter* when Peter rebuked Jesus after He spoke of His upcoming suffering and death
      - i. It was Peter's desire to avoid the suffering of the cross that was inline with Satan, not merely love for Jesus
      - ii. We need a proper view of cross-carrying in the church and it comes with a proper view of God's real provision, faithfulness, and goodness
    - b. "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me [in the path of suffering]." (Luke 9:23)
- iv. Note that Satan is eager to see Jesus show tremendous power...if He would make God prove His Word.
  - 1. Herein lies the real test: will you take God at His Word and live accordingly, or will you make God prove His faithfulness to His Word?
  - 2. Remember Zechariah, John's father?
  - 3. Leaps of faith to prove God's promises are not faith at all, they are doubt masquerading as faith.
- v. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:16
  - 1. Indicating again a strong relationship between Israel's testing in the Exodus wilderness and Jesus as the true Israel who succeeds
  - 2. Also, the context is one whereby the people are warned not to test God as they did at Massah where, though they had been given bread from heaven and freedom from slavery in Egypt, they did not believe that God would take care of them.
  - 3. Jesus is saying that He will not ask God to prove that He will care for the Son, but He will take Him at His word and entrust Himself to that word
    - a. To demand miraculous intervention where it is not needed is not loyalty or faith, it is unbelief, the sin that so easily entangles
    - b. God had proclaimed Jesus to be His Son at the baptism, there is more evidence needed than God's Word.

#### Conclusion:

So, what's the point of this story? Why did Luke include this event if was only between Jesus and the Devil, not a teaching moment for the crowds? His point is that Jesus was vetted by God through the temptations of Satan and He proved Himself qualified to rule, rescue, redeem, and restore as the perfect Son of God. Jesus succeeded where Adam and Israel failed. Jesus is the One who can bring all in His family all the way into the blessed presence of God. He is without sin, the only one qualified to redeem those who repent of their unbelief and entrust themselves to Him to rescue them from their sins and all the wrath of God. The Scriptures say that we all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. We don't measure up. We did not trust God. We took the fruit, made the bread to serve ourselves, seize the power to serve ourselves, and we have tried to usurp what only God rightfully holds. Making ourselves enemies of God we mutinied against Him and became enslaved to our self-delusions, professing to be wise our foolishness mastered us. As enemies who tried to destroy Him, we earned the fiery retaliation of justice from His sovereign and impregnable throne. We failed. We were corrupted. We die.

Yet, God did not destroy us, who made ourselves His enemies. According to His grace, sourced in a love that only He fully understands, He endeavored to rescue and redeem and transform some of these enemies and make them His sons and daughters. Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded. Where Israel grumbled unbelief, Jesus worshipped in faith. As the Divine King He is taking enemies captive in His train and giving Holy Spirit transformed sinners back to the Father as redeemed and rescued sons, bought and justly redeemed by His own

sinless and self-giving sacrifice. On the cross Jesus purchased for Himself a new humanity, a new nation, a new people whom God has transferred from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of this Son whom He loves. Jesus is the only qualified champion to redeem sinners. If you are a sinner, Jesus is your hope. If you have failed the test, Jesus is your only Rescuer. In Adam you die, claiming your self-seized rights. But, there is a new family whose Champion is proven worthy, Jesus the Christ. He is vetted and perfect. He died the death you owed and lives to give you life if you will close to Him in faith. He lives to call you today to stop trusting in your own power, your own comfort, your own rights, and entrust yourself to be rescued by the Holy One of God, the Divine King, the Son of God: Jesus the Christ. Repent of trusting in and serving yourself and humbly depend upon Him and you will be saved.

If you already belong to Jesus and have been rescued by Him, then take note of the Enemy's tactics. Satan wants you to avoid suffering at all costs. He will bring up your blessings, the good things of God. He will use Scripture, the very Word of God. He will try and get you to claim your rights, to use God's blessings to serve yourself and in so doing to distrust the Lord. Do not give in to doing things your way, to claiming God's blessings before His timing. Don't take the crown without the way of the cross. You and I are called to following the footsteps of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit; to die to our own power and rights for the glory of God and sake of others. What Satan fears most is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that leads God's people to say with eager faith: "I count everything as trash that I might gain Christ...that I might know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death that by any means possible I might attain to the resurrection...I press on to make it my own because Jesus Christ has made me His own...I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."