

The Devil's Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:1-2

July 3, 2016

So here in Luke's Gospel, fourth chapter, let's enter the passage together, just starting with reading the passage about the devil's temptation of Jesus Christ. Says there in Luke chapter 4, verse 1. "And Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil, and he ate nothing during those days, when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, 'If you're the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.' And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'

"And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, 'To you, I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will, if you then will worship me, it will all be yours.' And Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."' And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him,

'If you're the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you, and on their hands, they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."'

"And Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."' And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him, until an opportune time." As we get into this passage this morning, it's tempting, if you'll pardon the expression, it's tempting to go right from the reading of this, right into application. We see how Jesus answered the devil's temptations with Scripture, and only with Scripture and we want to learn to go and do likewise, that is a good instinct on our part. Not just about the use of Scripture, but also about the desire that we have, every believer has to stand firm against temptation. We don't want to fall into sin. These are the attitudes of every true believer.

We want to pursue holiness in the fear of God. We want to understand the Scripture. But here in this passage, the absolute authority and sufficiency of Scripture is without a doubt, it's assumed by Jesus, it's affirmed by his exclusive use of Scripture in this passage. So if our Lord, being our Lord, if he answered every temptation with scripture, shouldn't we? Yeah, absolutely. And if temptation for us, if the daily enticements to commit sin, if temptation is the common experience of every believer, and it is, and

if we see that Scripture is sufficient to handle the most pernicious temptations of all, from the devil himself.

Then why would we turn to anything else, to answer the needs that we have? Why would we turn anywhere else? Why would we listen to the world and its counsel? Why would we listen to our friends? Why would we google our problems, and try to fix it ourselves, when we have the living word of God in front of us? The Bible is absolutely sufficient for all things pertaining to life and godliness. So it's a good instinct that we have to try to read this and go directly to application, but there is so much more that we need to see here. As much as we want to learn how to combat temptation in our own lives. That's a good thing.

As much as we want to learn to turn from sin, and that is the heart of every true believer, this desire to pursue holiness, this desire to depart from every form of iniquity, this desire that we have to obey God from the very heart. Those are all good and godly attitudes. But as much as we want to learn from this passage, how to stand firm against temptation, and we will get there. We need to see that this passage is not primarily about us. It is first and foremost about Jesus Christ, and we need to see him here. Before we apply this to ourselves, we need to learn what this is teaching us about our Lord and Savior.

GRACE CHURCH



Grace

God, after all, split the heavens open for his son. He gave verbal affirmation of his son. He sent a visible sign of the Holy Spirit himself coming down bodily of confirmation on his son's life in ministry. Jesus is completely and utterly unique. And we in our day as Americans, we tend to like to make our leaders more accessible, more familiar to us. We cannot do this here, we must see Jesus as utterly and totally unique. He is the only begotten of God, he is utterly unique in every way. So we need to see what this teaches us about him. Jesus had to face trials and temptations that you and I will never ever face.

God hasn't willed for any of us to go out into the desert, fast 40 days to be tempted by the devil himself. That test is for Jesus, and Jesus alone. None of us are important enough to warrant the devil's attention, personally, but Jesus is. The whole plan of redemption, decreed among the members of the Trinity before time began, the whole plan of redemption would have been completely thwarted, if Jesus had turned one stone molecule into a bread molecule. The whole plan would have been completely undone. If Jesus even considered bowing before Satan, he would have entered into temptation and if that had happened, we would not be sitting here today.

Not only would the entire system of Christianity come crumbling down and not even exist in the first place because our Redeemer had failed, but God would be unseated as God because his promises had failed. He would cease to be true and faithful, which is a change in his unchanging character. Reality itself would be undone, if we push it all the way back to its logical extent. If God is not God, then well, nothing exists. We're all figments of somebody's imagination, sitting here. And you're like, man, it is only 9:30 in the morning. You're getting awfully heavy for 9:30 in the morning. This is really philosophical, talking about metaphysical changes, ontology, what is going on? Just wanted you to see there is more at stake in this text than just asking the question about how do I get a few formulaic responses to temptations that come into my life.

This is all about Jesus Christ, and the stakes here are infinitely high. If Jesus were to fail, at one point, he would not only fail to be our Redeemer, but God would fail to be God, that cannot be. We're all here, we're all worshipping him. God is God, Jesus is the Redeemer, he never failed and here we are. So we want to discipline ourselves in our study. As we walk through this passage over the next few weeks, we don't want to jump from a superficial reading of the text to immediately applying this text into our lives. So important to understand what the true meaning and the actual significance is of what the things we read here.

The meaning of the Scripture, after all, is the Scripture. If you don't have the meaning, if you don't have the proper interpretation than you are misunderstanding what is written. So we need to slow down. We need to make accurate observations we need to make accurate interpretations and that's so we can rightly divide the word of truth before we rightly apply the word of truth. We're responsible, Chuck read from Ephesians 5:18 and 19, we're responsible in Ephesians 5:17, "To understand what the will of the Lord is." That means, we need to read and make proper observations, we need to make right interpretations. And then we will understand what the will of the Lord is, so that we can rightly obey.

Understanding requires good observation and study. So that we can prayerfully and thoughtfully and even slowly, knowledgeably meditate on what we've studied, and that is going to yield for us a careful, accurate interpretation. It's going to yield for us the meaning of the text, so that we can understand and obey God's will. If this text shows us anything in this regard, particularly when we come to that final temptation of Jesus by the devil. It's that truth is easily twisted and perverted, isn't it? The devil is masterful in twisting the Scripture. How many of us, if we were caught in the wilderness like this by the devil, would have caught the mishandling of Scripture by the devil? Jesus caught it.

The Scripture can be easily mishandled, easily used to mislead and to tempt and to sell a lot of books doing so. But Jesus had read, he had understood the Scripture, he knew what it meant by what it said and he was able to apply it accurately. He was able to use the sword of the Spirit skillfully. He was able to use that sword of the Spirit to good effect. And that's the pattern that we will follow as we study this text together as well. So with that in mind, let's get into our outline. So we can set this text in its context.

That's the first point in our outline for the morning, the context of the temptation, the context of the temptation. The context of this passage is the preparation of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and his ministry to Israel. He, Jesus, is the embodiment and the fulfillment of all the promises that God made to Israel and this passage is essential in qualifying him for all that lay ahead.

To set the passage in its context, we need to just back up, just a little bit to Luke 3:21. When Jesus came forward to be baptized. The baptism is the inauguration of Jesus ministry, when God spoke from heaven, when he sent the Holy Spirit. And it says, verse 21, "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit



descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Now, we see that Luke inserted Jesus' genealogy right after this, but without the genealogy, connecting chapter 3, verse 22, to chapter 4, verse 1, Jesus emerges from the waters of baptism and then this, verse 1, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was being led by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil." From here on, Jesus steps into the spotlight, he becomes the central focus of all the narratives in Luke's Gospel. We have studied together already three chapters and as you know, the focus on Jesus has become increasingly clear, increasingly brilliant. Now the spotlight is shining on him in full force, he's at center stage, and it's going to continue to follow him wherever he goes from here on out, and that is as it should be.

We started with some other characters in the narrative. If you'll remember the gospel started with Gabriel's announcements to Zechariah and then to Mary. We listened in as people reacted to the news, we learned through them about the deep historical and biblical significance of the birth of the Messiah, the forerunner, John the Baptist. When Jesus was born, we saw the reaction of the shepherd, we listened in on the reactions of Anna and Simeon at the temple.

And then the Jesus we saw in those early days, those early accounts, he was just a baby. He was helpless, wrapped in swaddling cloths; couldn't even wrap him himself, his mother had to wrap him, he was dependent on his parents. But then, immediately following that, Luke showed us something else. He showed us the boy Jesus in the temple, when he was just 12 years old and at that point, 12 years old, Jesus clearly understood his true identity.

He knows that he must be, imperative there, he must be in his true father's house. It's a remarkable demonstration at such an early age of his messianic self-understanding. He knew himself to be the Messiah and yet, the young Jesus also knew that his time was not yet, that he needed to wait a little while. So he withdrew with his parents, he headed back to Nazareth, he receded into the background once again.

And he waited in that backwater town of Nazareth, he waited patiently, he waited obediently until the appearance of the forerunner, the one who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah, as it says in Luke 1:17. John's ministry was the very signal that Jesus was waiting for, according to Malachi 4:5-6. That's how Jesus knew it was time to leave Nazareth, to leave behind his private

ministry to his mother, his family. It's time to enter into his public ministry to Israel.

So as Luke has brought us through these narratives, he has demonstrated Jesus' own realization of his messianic role, that is, Jesus had clearly come to understand who he really is and what his purpose really was. Luke then recorded how John's ministry of baptism, how it drew Jesus out, it brought him into the foreground, drew him into his public ministry. We saw there, God's affirmation of him as Messiah of his messianic role, we could call that the inauguration of the Messiah's ministry. And now as the Holy Spirit takes Jesus from his baptism at the Jordan, into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, we're about to see his qualification for the Messianic role, Jesus, and Jesus alone is qualified to be the Christ.

This passage is essential for us seeing that, we need this here and we're gonna learn from his example how we can withstand temptation, we look forward to learning all that we can about Jesus' responses to temptation. I don't want to diminish that. But ultimately, we need to acknowledge that no one but Jesus could have withstood temptation like this from the devil himself. That's what we want to see this morning. That there is no other savior, but Jesus, there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must

be saved. He's exclusively qualified. That's what we're gonna see. Notice just quickly, if you scroll down your reading there to, verses 14 and 15 in chapter 4, because right after this temptation, Jesus entered directly into his messianic role, his mission, his ministry.

Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested, and then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. And a report about him went out throughout all the surrounding country, and he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. The Holy Spirit, we see from start to finish, he is the one directing all of this, the Holy Spirit directed Jesus to do all of this. The Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to begin his ministry in Galilee. And what's the result? He's being glorified by all, it's happening, everything is happening according to God's plan.

This leads to another aspect of the context that I want you to see. We've looked a bit at the biblical context, the narrative context, but the Spirit's abiding presence, that sets this narrative within a theological context. The Spirit here represents the abiding presence of God in Christ. And that sets the context of Jesus temptation firmly within God's sovereign plan. All this has been carefully planned. This isn't haphazard.

Jesus is walking according to the will of God. He hasn't been ambushed in the wilderness by the devil. This doesn't take the Triune God by surprise, totally opposite. God led Jesus by the Spirit, into this period of testing. There is divine purpose in all of this. In fact, if you notice the verb in verse 1, it says Jesus was led by the Spirit, doesn't even say Jesus followed the Spirit. It says he was led by the Spirit, as if the Spirit grabbed him and pulled him along.

It's in the passive voice, the Spirit's in control, and Jesus is being led by him. And he didn't just lead Jesus into the wilderness and then drop him off there. There's an imperfect tense of the verb that indicates that the Spirit was leading him during the entire time. There was not a moment that the Spirit was not there leading him along, not just into the wilderness, but in among the wilderness. He was there at the Spirit's bidding, and the Spirit was with him the entire time. All throughout that 40 days the Spirit was at the helm, he was leading, guiding, directing. Clearly, God, not Satan, is in charge and not just in this, but in all things God, not Satan, is sovereign.

There's a very real devil here isn't there? He's a person who opposes God at every turn, and the Bible, this passage in particular,

it demonstrates the personality of the devil. There are many, many people in the secular age who deny a personal devil. The Liberals have been teaching within churches this for a long, long time, that the devil is simply a metaphor in the Bible, he performs a narrative function. He's the personification of the principle of evil. The devil is fine with all that. He loves it, he loves it whenever anything takes the attention of humanity off of the truth about him or God or the universe. He didn't care what it is, secular distortions, liberal distortions, any kind of distortion, conservative too, he doesn't care. As long as it diverts attention away from truth.

He is a real person. People deny the reality of the personal devil at their own peril. But he is a person who is oriented in diabolical opposition to God. Love that word diabolical because it comes from the word *diabolos*, devil. That's how it's translated here *diabolos*, devil means slanderer, it means blasphemer, it means someone who perverts, distorts truth. Take a look at the verbs used of this metaphor, so called. Take a look at the verbs that are used here. The devil is a subject of all these actions, and all these verbs indicate personality, verse 2, the devil tempts. He speaks, verses 3, 6 and 9, he leads and he shows, verses 5 and 9. The devil even possesses a will, verse 6, he has desires, that is he wants to be worshipped, verse 7.

The devil quotes scripture, which gives him some semblance of memory, understanding, he can learn, but he uses sinful reasoning to misuse God's word for his own purposes. So we have tempting, speaking, leading, showing, willing, desiring, quoting, reasoning, all of that clear indications of real personality. The devil is not just a rhetorical device, shouldn't even use the word just, he is not a rhetorical device. He's not a metaphor. He's not the personification of evil. Devil's a real person, with a mind of his own. He's an evil rebellious, actor, one by the way, who will be held responsible for all of his actions, all of his words and yes, this temptation of the very Son of God.

The devil's a creature, he's accountable to God. Says in the book of Job that the sons of God were wandering to and fro from out the earth and they came to present themselves to God, why were they presenting themselves to God? Because they were accountable to him, God is holding them account. Contrary to what the devil would have us believe, contrary to what he even seems to believe about himself, devil is not sovereign. He's not all powerful. He's not invincible.

In verse 6, he has the audacity to tell Jesus that the world and all of its authority and all of its glory has been delivered over to me and I give it to whomever I will, well talk about delusion. Talk

about overstatement. The devil believes that he is the master of his own fate. He's the captain of his own soul. He is the author of the Invictus poem.

The devil believes himself not only to be free, but to be sovereign, and he wants others to believe that as well and get this, to assert his own importance, and the astounding pride that's wrapped up in all of that, his boldness is the very thing that winds him followers among the unbelieving. But he's hopelessly deceived, as are all those who fall prey to his lies.

Listen, if you believe you can sin and get away with it, you are sorely mistaken. You might as well join forces with the devil in the wilderness, tempting Jesus because that's the side you're on. Devil attempted to do something here. It's not only audacious it's utterly irrational. I tell my kids all the time, "Kids, sin makes ya stupid. Sin makes ya stupid." That's what we see here in the devil.

The height of all folly is to tempt the creator with his own creation. I mean, come on, the one who created stones and bread of all people, he knows the true source of life and sustenance. Does he really think this is gonna work? Will the God who created the entire universe, would he really agree to bow down before a mere creature,

one that he himself created? Now the devil's not sovereign, and not only that, he's not wise, he's foolish. What's he there for then? The devil is a tool in God's toolbox. He's used to shape and to prune and to hone to perfection, the objects of God's love and affection.

According to Hebrews 2:10, God planned all of this for the outworking of the plan of redemption, "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation" Who's that? Jesus Christ. "Should make the founder of their salvation, perfect through suffering."

God made Jesus perfect through suffering. He is sovereign. He is in absolute and total control. The devil is just a tool that he uses to shape all things into conformity with his perfect will. Nothing, not even the devil himself, nothing is outside God's perfect will. Nothing is outside God's perfect sovereign purposes and that's the devil's role here. He plays a role. God is using the devil to shape Jesus for his messianic role to perfect him through temptations and suffering. If I could make just a quick, maybe we might call it a devotional point here, just by way of implication for our own lives.

God uses temptations and suffering for our sakes as well. He shapes us by whatever means, using whatever tools necessary. He even uses demonic forces, as Ephesians 6:12 says, to conform us to the image of Christ, there's a plan in all of this. "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." It's an interesting word that Paul uses there he says, "We do not wrestle." Ya ever wrestled with someone and not in play, but wrestled in war, wrestled to the death, wrestled with real consequence? It's exhausting. It's absolutely exhausting.

It takes every ounce of energy. When you get done, you just want to sleep for a week. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood enemies. We wrestle against spiritual forces. They want to take us down, want to mangle our souls. And that is why we must, verse 13 of Ephesians 6, "Take up the whole armor of God." Why? "That we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm." We need to learn to be strong, not in our own might. We don't have any. Remember that song we just sang? "Lord, I need you oh, I need you, every hour I need you." Oh we need the Lord. That's why we're to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might, not our own insufficient measly, nothing strength.

GRACE CHURCH



Grace

We're like ants, before a combat boot, we got no power. We rely on ourselves, we fail, we stumble, we fall, need to learn to rely on him, always. And God will use whatever means to teach us that lesson. According to Romans 8:28. We know that for those who love God, all things, even temptations, all things, even trials, all things, even pain and suffering, even disappointed plans. Even John MacArthur not coming to our church next week, he'll even use that. We know "That all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." Though the forces of Hell should come against us.

And make no mistake they're prowling about at all times, surrounding us with menacing intent, and yet, they are God's means for sanctifying, perfecting, purifying us, it's all part of the plan. Paul says, "For I'm persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation." Just in case you thought there was a category that didn't apply. "Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Look, we rest in that contentment, without any fear, without any anxiety. We rest in the firm and steady hand of the sovereign God who works all things together for the good for us. And we see that first and foremost here in our Savior.

So with that brief look at the context, let's take a look at a second point here, the significance of the temptation, the significance of the temptation. We've already seen some significance of Jesus' testing here, but there are a couple of other aspects of biblical significance we want to observe. Let's start with the significance of Jesus as the last Adam. That's where we left off when we were in the genealogy. I mentioned this when we covered that section of text. And remember, I just want to remind you that we covered the genealogy in one sermon. Just want to let you know, one sermon only, from verses 30, uh 23 to 38. Thank you, and you're welcome.

Alright, so we covered this in the genealogy that Luke started with Jesus, maternal grandfather, Eli, Luke 3:23 and then he moved in reverse order, all the way back to the father of all mankind, Adam in verse 38, and ultimately to God himself. The close connection with Adam, as we turn the corner from Luke 3:38, to Luke 4:1 the mention of Adam's name followed immediately by the devil's temptation of Jesus, this points to the significance of what Jesus came to do, where Adam failed, Jesus prevailed. Jesus entered into suffering in the sin curse world that Adam's failure was responsible for.

Remember, that Adam was tested when he was in the Garden of Eden. He was surrounded by pristine perfection, absolute stunning beauty. Adam was tested when he was well fed. He was fine, he was completely and abundantly provided for. There was no suffering at all, but when he was tested, he failed at the test, but because of Adam's failure, directly tied to Adam's failure, sin entered the world and death through sin. Jesus suffered in the barren desert that resulted from Adam's failure. In fact, this whole Earth, all the landscape of the entire Earth is shaped by the global flood. Which is what? It's a punishment for sin.

It is a killing of the entire creative things on the world except for two of every kind, and the eight people who are on the ark. We live in a sin cursed world and Jesus suffered in a barren desert that resulted from Adam's failure. He was tested in the wilderness in a cursed Earth. It was the deadness of a sun baked desert. And unlike Adam, Jesus was not well fed, he was famished. Jesus was tested, it says, "During the 40 days of fasting and" End of verse 2, "When those days were drawing to a close, he was hungry." Hungry, weak, he's amid deadness and barrenness, it's dry and empty. This is how Adam left the paradise that he received.

What was once the symbol of very life and blessing, and it'd become a cursed Earth. It was held fast in the vise grip of death. And as Paul wrote in Romans 5:12, "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin and so death spread to all men because all sinned." Here we are, what Adam lost, Jesus came to restore. And the significance of this time of temptation by the devil, God wanted to give Satan a crack at it. Go ahead. He brings Satan into the wilderness to give it his best shot at Jesus and he failed; he failed to make Jesus fall. Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded. And aren't we thankful? Because Jesus has become the progenitor of a new race of those who believe, a redeemed humanity.

Paul continues that thought in Romans 5:18, and 19, "As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners. So by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous." That's one aspect of the significance of the devil's temptation of Jesus. Jesus came to fulfill the perfect righteousness of God, by obeying perfectly by never sinning. What Adam failed to do, leading the entire race into sin, Jesus succeeded, leading all those who believe into perfect righteousness and starts right here , starts right here .

There's another significant aspect of this temptation. We notice it through some of the other notable names in Jesus' genealogy. Plenty of insignificant names in Jesus' lineage, people forgotten by time, known only to God, but there're also some very prominent names in the list. People who played important roles in the story of redemption. We won't get too detailed or involved here, but it just draw your attention to verse 34 of chapter 3, Luke 3:34, Judah was "The son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham." So here we see that Jesus, remembering all the promises from your Old Testament, uh, you know, flannel graph studies in Sunday school.

Jesus is the promise son of Abraham, through Isaac, not Ishmael, and through Jacob, not Esau. He is the promised seed of Genesis 3:15 and that's traced through Ad, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And what Luke wants us to see, it's not just that Adam failed, but it's the whole heritage of Adam. Abraham all the way through the nation of Israel, they also failed. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, none of them perfect men, and they gave birth to imperfect men, imperfect women. Israel completely failed. When Moses brought the law to them at Sinai, they said, "All that God has said we will surely do." Uh, wasn't just minutes later they were bowing down before a golden calf.

This period of testing here, it shows Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Jesus restores Adam's race and he does so through the restoration of Abraham's race, a believing race. Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the perfect Israelite. Look again at Luke 4:1-2. "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for" What? "40 days, being tempted by the devil." Why 40 days? Why 40? What's the significance of that period of time? Why couldn't it have been 39 days or 83 days?

The number 40, as we know, if you've read your Bible for any amount of time, it's not an insignificant number in Scripture. Forty is basically a number that is symbolic of a generation. Whether we're looking at 40 days or 40 years, it's symbolic of the lifespan of a generation. To get even more specific, the number of 40 seems to stand for a period of significant testing. So this is a biblically significant number. Sometimes it refers to judgment itself. The flood rains lasted 40 days and nights, Genesis 7 and 8. God was provoked with Israel and judge the nations with 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, which is what we read in Hebrews. Enough time for the unbelieving disobedient generation to die off. God handed the Israelites over later on to the Philistines for 40 years as well, Judges 13:1.

GRACE CHURCH



Number of passages I could read to you, Numbers 14:33-34, Numbers 32:13, Joshua 5:6, Psalm 95:10, Hebrews 3:9, Hebrews 3:17. Are your hands hurting from writing? You can get it on the audio, so don't, don't worry about it. But all these passages show significance of 40. Let me just choose a couple to read to you. Numbers 32:13 "Moses wrote about Israel's judgment for 40 years, the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness 40 years until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was gone." The writer of the Hebrews acknowledged the same thing. What we read earlier from Hebrews 3:7-12.

So this number 40 it indicates a period of significant judgment, but we have to note, we especially see this in the Old Testament, that even in judgment, God tempered punishments with mercy. He was merciful. He sustained his people, by his gracious provision. Some people think, boy, I'm under the judgment of God. There's no hope for me. I'm in complete despair. You know what? Even in judgment, God shows mercy. Even when there are severe consequences to our sin, God's there to visit us with mercy if we'll humble ourselves before him and beg for his mercy. God sustained Israel during 40 years of wilderness wanderings. It was in the midst of judgment that God demonstrated his favor for Israel, even teaching, training the nation to trust him, during that time, to worship him and him alone, to please him fully.

Again, there are a number of passages that demonstrate this, Exodus 16:35, Deuteronomy 2:7, Deuteronomy 8:2-4, Deuteronomy 29:5, Nehemiah 9:21, Amos 2:10, Acts 7:36, Acts 13:18. Let me just read one of those passages, just to make the point Deuteronomy 8:2-4, Moses wrote this. "You shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you during these 40 years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know." Why? "That he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell during these 40 years."

It's pretty apparent from the fact that Jesus answered the devil's temptations every single time from the book of Deuteronomy. It's pretty apparent he was thinking about that passage during his own time of testing in the wilderness. For him, these 40 days, they were symbolic of the wilderness wanderings. While Israel never learned to trust God wholly, never learned to trust God consistently, Jesus did. Never a moment of break in his trust of God. Each of the devil's temptations reveal and demonstrate Jesus perfect trust in God, unbroken.

First temptation, look at it there in Luke 4, says, "Israel needed to learn to live not by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." But Israel failed. Didn't the nation fail crying out for food? They were willing to kill Moses and Aaron, return to Egypt. Jesus by contrast, he stood firm, he passed the test. Luke 4:4 he answered the devil "It is written man shall not live by bread alone." Which pointed to the teaching of that whole passage.

Second temptation, next verses, verses 5-8. Israel needed to learn to worship Lord God and serve him only. They were to love God, Deuteronomy 6:5 says, "With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might." Verse 13 of Deuteronomy 6, Moses warned, "It's the Lord your God, you shall fear, him you shall serve, by his name you shall swear, you shall not go after other gods." But Israel repeatedly disobeyed, repeatedly went after other gods. Jesus stood firm though, he passed the test. Luke 4:8, Jesus answered the devil, "It's written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"

Third temptation, verses 9-12. Israel needed to learn to please the Lord, that pleasing him was the only thing that mattered in life. But Israel did not please the Lord, Israel complained instead against God. Israel grumbled, tested his patience repeatedly, over and over and finally incurred his wrath and his judgment. Jesus, he didn't

succumb to that temptation at all, as he told the devil Luke 4:12 "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Listen, by enduring these 40 days of testing, by standing firm against all the devil's temptations, Jesus demonstrated his place as the perfect Israelite. He's the quintessential Israelite; he fulfilled perfectly what both Adam and Israel had failed to do. Listen, that's the significance of these temptations, it proves that only Jesus could accomplish all this for us. While this passage does help us understand how to withstand temptation ourselves, ultimately, we need to see, not that we can be successful. We don't need our own cheering squad, or cheerleaders or anything through this whole thing. We need to look at Christ. We need to see not just what he could do, but what he did, in fact, do. Because he's our only hope. We need to see that Jesus prevailed, we need to stop and worship him. He fulfilled all this by the power of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to the father, for the glory of the father. As the perfect Israelite, Jesus obeyed the law and he obeyed all the law.

Everything that God revealed to Moses at Sinai, Jesus obeyed and thus he becomes the fulfillment of all the promises of God, to Israel, through Israel, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By fulfilling that perfect law of God, Jesus takes his place as the last Adam. He

fulfilled all righteousness, he pleased God in every way, and he has become the representative head of a new race of redeemed people, that's us. So we've seen in the context, we've seen the context of the temptation, we've seen the significance of the temptation, this period of testing, it's the foundation for Jesus' entire messianic ministry.

Let's consider a third point. We're just gonna do one more for this morning, the purpose of the temptation, the purpose. Why, why did Jesus need to go through this time of testing? I mean, we see the significance, but did it have to happen this way? It's not as if the father needed to prove anything. He knew. His affirmation of the son, remember, came at his baptism, before this time of testing in the wilderness, not after. No, the father didn't need anything proven or verified. He knew the son's nature, not just fully man, but fully God as well. Theologians call this the hypostatic union. It's the union of two natures, one divine nature, one human nature in the one person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God knew.

So why was the suffering necessary? What was the purpose? Was it, was it Jesus who needed the encouragement? As in, hey, look at this, I, I can withstand all temptation. I guess I am the Messiah after all. Was this about his confidence? Son didn't need anything proven or verified either. He'd known since he was a 12 year old young man, who

he was. The subsequent 18 years of the study of God's word, all those years of submissive obedience to his parents. Everything else had brought him up to this point all of it, it confirmed what he knew to be true. He didn't need any subjective experience to steel his resolve. He didn't need an experience here to encourage him to embrace his role. He knew who he was, he knew who the father was. He was confident.

We've mentioned the Father and the Son, we might as well consider the Holy Spirit as well. But we know right off that the Holy Spirit is one mind with the Father and the Son, he proceeds from the Father and the Son, the third person of the Trinity, he's of the same mind as the Father and the Son. He's one with the Father with Jesus, the agent of this Triune God. So for whose sake is this period of temptation, for whose sake is this period of qualification? What is the point?

Couple passages in Hebrews that I'd like to show you to provide a sufficient answer for this question. We read from some of this earlier this morning. Turn over in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14. And we'll start there. As you may know, if you've been a Christian for any time that a, the letter to the Hebrews is anonymous, it's an, it

doesn't have a stated written name that we can attribute the authorship to.

There're many different uh, theories about who wrote the book of Hebrews. Some say it's Apollos, some say, it seems to have a lot of the marks of the apostle Paul, I'll tell you, as I've been studying Luke, and as for many years, I've been studying the apostle Paul, I'm going to tell you what I think is one of the best theories yet, that I've heard, uh, heard recently, theory yer, articulated by James White, I don't know if you know him. He's a apologist, defender of the faith, very intelligent man, elder in Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church. But he is I don't ther, know if this view is original to him, but I heard him articulate it. He believes that Hebrews was written by Luke. And I like that, we're studying Luke.

He says he thinks Hebrews is written by Luke, and it's essentially sermonic material that's recorded from Paul's preaching. I'll tell you, as I've been studying Luke, for all the time, I've been studying Paul, that makes a lot of sense to me, because it's in the style and the grammar and the Greek of Luke. But it's Paul's theology that's coming right through the book of Hebrews. But I digress. Look at Hebrews 2:14. "Since therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things. And through

death, he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." What does that tell us? It tells us that Jesus stood up to the bully of the universe, he put him down.

"For surely it's not angels that he helps but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest, in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." Some people wonder how it is that the holy Son of God being perfect, unable to sin, as it says in verse 18, how he could truly suffer when tempted, did Jesus suffer when he was tempted? Well, this verse tells us he most certainly did suffer. So we need to wonder, well, in what way did he suffer? Make no mistake about this, Jesus suffered more pressure during temptation than you and I ever will. Why? Because he outlasted the temptation.

He endured longer than the temptation had the power to endure. We don't. We never see the temptation all the way to its ending. We don't ever get to that point, because we break first. I had a dear professor in seminary named Trevor Cragin. A salt of the earth man, he was a native of Rhodesia, which is modern day Zimbabwe. He provided an

illustration that's helped me understand this a bit better, perhaps you'll find it helpful as well. Think about humanity as having the strength of like a wooden broom handle. It's strong enough for its tasks. If you put enough pressure on a wooden broom handle it eventually it's going to break, isn't it? That's us.

When we're visited with temptation, we feel that pressure to give in, but when we call out for God as we ought to, and he delivers us, the pressure relents, we don't break, we continue sweeping the room. If we continue battling the temptation on our own strength, you know what happens, we will eventually break. We're just wooden broom handles, after all. So Jesus in sharing flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that is to say, in his humanity, he is like that wooden broom handle, feeling all the pain, the pressure that we do, and yet his humanity is lashed, it's tied to a titanium bar, the titanium bar of a divine nature, which never ever breaks. His divine nature is untemptable, as James tells us, God cannot be tempted with evil.

So even when these temptations visited Jesus, though he didn't break, he felt all the pressure to break in his humanity. He felt the full force of those temptations because he never broke. He outlasted every temptation, which is something you and I are unable to do on our

own. But he endured, so that, Hebrews 2:17, "So that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest, in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Oh, he felt it all right, he felt every ounce of pressure, he endured to the end. It's an imperfect illustration. Don't try to make it get up and walk on all fours, like all illustration, it will break down at several points. But if you just take it for the simple point it's meant to illustrate, how Jesus could feel real pressure, suffer when tempted, more significant pressure than you and I will ever, ever feel. It's sufficient to illustrate that purpose.

And notice, if you look ahead to Hebrews 4, we ended here, He, Hebrews 4: 14-15. Take a look at that. We read this earlier, the writer reinforces what we just learned. "Since then, we have a great high priest who's passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." So for the purpose of becoming our merciful, high priest, Jesus entered into the wilderness to endure the greatest of all temptations from the greatest tempter in the world.

Before he commenced his messianic ministry, it wasn't just death for sins that was on his mind, but also his advocacy before the father. He prays for us when we are tempted. He suffered through this immense pressure to break to give into sin, and yet never relented so that you and I can pray to him. You know what, when you're tempted, when you're suffering, when you're struggling, you know what, he knows, he has been there, he's felt it, and he succeeded. He never failed, you can come to him for strength, he will help you in every need.

Let's keep reading though, in Hebrews because there's one more purpose, Hebrews chapter 3, one more purpose of Jesus testing in the wilderness. Take a look at it there. Hebrews 3:1-6. "Therefore holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle, and High Priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, as much as a builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. Every house is built by someone; the builder of all things is God. Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later. Christ is faithful over God's house, as a son." There's another purpose here. Writer calls Jesus not only the High Priest of our confession, but he's a leader after the pattern of Moses, and yet he's counted of worthy of more glory than Moses.

Moses, do you remember he came down from Mount Sinai with a law of God in his hands. It is no coincidence that Moses he also had 40 days retreat in the wilderness on the harsh peaks of Mount Sinai, before he was given the law. Says in Exodus 24:18. "Moses entered the cloud went up on the mountain, and he was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights." During that time, Moses even testified of himself. I neither ate bread nor drank water. How'd he do it? Sustained supernaturally by God. It's a time of communion with God. It was a time of preparation, being sustained by God on the mountain. And when Moses came down from the mountain, he carried with him the words of the Covenant inscribed by the finger of God.

God told Moses, Deuteronomy 18:18, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers, and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him." So Israel was always looking for the second Moses, the one who would inaugurate a new covenant, which Jeremiah prophesied, Jeremiah 31:31-34. Like Moses before him, Jesus was in the wilderness with no one to sustain him, but God. Like Moses, Jesus prepared himself to receive God's word and then to deliver that word to God's people.

GRACE CHURCH



Moses was prepared 40 days to bring the law. Jesus was prepared 40 days to bring the Gospel. Jesus communed with God, he was sustained by God, he meditated on his Word, God sent him forth to bring the new covenant to his people. He was fully obedient, Jesus was, in his commission. Especially remarkable since the instituting of the New Covenant meant his own death for sins.

By his death for sins, Jesus brought the forgiveness of sins to his people. This forgiveness of sins, full communion with God, it's what the writer of the Hebrews calls rest, Sabbath rest. He holds that rest forth as the hope of the gospel, the good news, it's preached in Jesus Christ. There's a warning in Hebrews 3 about not entering that rest. Even Moses didn't enter that rest, did he? Moses sinned; he didn't enter the promised land.

But Jesus, one greater than Moses, in as much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house itself. He is the one who fulfills that work of Moses, he leads his people into the greater promise land of rest, and that rest is rest indeed. It's a rest that means deliverance from sins penalty, which is death. It's a rest that means deliverance from sin's power, which is falling into temptation being sla, enslaved to sin.



It's a rest that means, one day deliverance from sin's presence altogether. Sin's penalty, power, and presence, never more to be troubled with temptation, never more to be troubled with the threat of falling. So with all that in mind, just as an introduction to these temptations of Jesus, we're ready to take a closer look at the passage, aren't we? We need to see that Jesus is front and center. We need to see his success. We need to see the purpose of all of this. We're out of time.

So we'll pick that up. That fourth point next week. I'm just going to close with the thought as the writer to the Hebrews put it, "was fitting that he for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation, perfect through suffering." I'm so thankful he did because there is no salvation without it.