

## **Luke 4:1-13 – Jesus' Temptation In The Wilderness**

After Jesus was baptised and the Spirit came upon him, he was taken away into the wilderness to be tested. First, before he preached in public, he would be tested in private, to prove that he was truly the Son of God who had come to save God's people. That temptation is recorded by Luke here.

### **1. Why Jesus was tempted (v1-2)**

We can learn a lot about temptation, and about the ways of the devil, in these words. We can learn a lot about Jesus too. The main point, though, is that Luke is showing us that Jesus is the true Son of God. There were two great temptations (testings) in the Bible before this one. Adam, the first man (3:38) was tested in paradise. Would he obey God's word? After Adam fell, God raised up a new "son" - Israel (Hosea 11:1). They were also tested in the wilderness, before they could enter the promised land. Would they trust God to lead them, or would they disobey him and look for their own way? They also sinned after being tested for 40 days, and were judged by being made to die in the wilderness where they wandered for 40 years. Now, Jesus also came into the wilderness beyond Jordan to be tested for 40 days. The test was to see – was he the Son of God (v3, v9), and would he walk obediently in God's will to fulfil his calling? Is he the one to lead God's people to life and glory?

### **2. First Temptation (v3-4)**

Like Moses and Elijah, Jesus was sent to lead the people of God forward. Like them, he began by fasting for 40 days, to seek God's face (Exodus 34:28, 1 Kings 19:8). After that time, he was hungry. The devil came and tempted him, telling him to turn stones into bread (v3). Jesus had the power to do that – so why not use it? It was a clever temptation. The temptation was for Jesus to go ahead, not trusting God, but using his powers for himself, in his own way. Like Adam, he was being tempted to rise up and become a rival to God, instead of being his obedient, trusting Son. Jesus replied from Deuteronomy 8:3. God provided manna to feed Israel in the wilderness; God can provide any way he pleases – but our duty is to wait for him and trust him, not run ahead. We are not to use our own wisdom and strength, but to be totally obedient to him. Is that how you live your life?

### **3. Second Temptation (v5-8)**

Satan showed Jesus the riches and glory of the world, and offered it to him. Truly, these things belonged to Jesus. Like Adam, and like Israel, he was promised that he would reign. But the way to reign would be through obedience, patience and suffering. He must go to the cross to redeem his people. There is no glory for a fallen world now, except through the cross. But Satan offered Jesus an "easier" way – just join with him, and leave God! The same temptation had come to Adam; rebel against God, eat the fruit, and get glory himself without God! The same temptation comes to us – to sin, and become our own "lords". But Satan's promises are empty. He cannot deliver us the glory he promises, only death and destruction. Jesus spoke from Deuteronomy 6:13, where Israel was told to remember their true Lord. Are you going the way of the cross? Are you trusting in Christ? That is the only true way to glory.

### **4. Third Temptation (v9-13)**

Jesus was taken to the temple. Satan told him to throw himself down, and so prove God's protection over him. He was the Son of God, so God would keep him! The devil even quoted Scripture (from Psalm 91:11-12; see also 2 Corinthians 11:14). But he did not quote it well. So we should be wise; not everyone who comes talking about God and the Bible is trying to help us! The temptation was for Jesus to live carelessly. He was tempted to use his own position as a permission to behave as he liked. He should just assume that God would always protect him, even if he lived wrecklessly. Christians have the same temptation, as Adam and Israel did – just go your own way, and everything will be alright! But that is a sin. Jesus quoted again from Deuteronomy, 6:16. God must not be put on trial like this. They must live in strict obedience to God, and only then could they rely on his protection. God's promises are given to those who obey him. They are not a licence for carelessness.

Jesus showed he was truly God's Son. He walked faithfully, and continued to walk faithfully until he reached the cross and the grave, and was then lifted up to glory. Salvation is in him. Will we believe in him, and be faithful to him? Then, we shall inherit together with him – but the way is narrow; are we in it? (Matthew 7:13-14).