

## WAS JESUS REALLY TEMPTED?

What's your greatest temptation? What makes you want to give up resolve for good and right and best, and do what pleases for the moment? You could make quite a list. Until God the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin you can fool yourself quite easily and for quite awhile.

**1- How do you respond to temptation?** You might convince yourself that most of your yielding to temptation is merely frivolous. But it's not true. Yielding to temptation is what the Bible calls sin. And sin is "cosmic treason" declares theologian RC Sproul, "a personal affront" to the one and only holy God, who is all-knowing and almighty, pure in character.

Temptation is an invitation to do what you want to do instead of what God wants you to do. It is not a sin to be tempted. It is sin to yield to temptation, in thought or word or deed, so that you go against God's holy, righteous purity. Temptation happens to everyone. Every moment we are assaulted by temptation to sin, through the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The world's attitude and culture tells you: yield to temptation. Your own flesh, your existence in a human body with a mind shaped by human experience, is naturally self-centered. The devil, the spiritual enemy of mankind, with his demons will take advantage of any weakness in your character or resolve, to mistrust or disobey God's Word, which reflects His nature.

**2- How could Jesus be tempted?** Jesus Christ is the only unique person with two natures, fully human and fully divine. He is God come in the flesh, the second person of the trinity taking human form. At His consecration for ministry as the Christ, the Holy Spirit "rested upon Him" as God declared, "*You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased.*" The narrative goes from the voice of heaven in Luke 3 to the jaws of hell in Luke 4: "*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. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were ended, He was hungry.*"

He is the bearer of the Holy Spirit, and is full of the Holy Spirit. He is directed by and dependent upon and obedient to the Holy Spirit. He deliberately leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted to sin. But He has been fully prepared to fulfill all of God's promises regarding the coming Christ, because He is God come in the flesh to save mankind.

There is more here in Luke 4 than meets the eye, directly related to the Old Testament. This is an intentional contrast to Genesis 3 and the temptation of Adam and Eve. The wilderness of Jeshimon, which means devastation, lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea as a vast wasteland where there is no water and nothing grows. Jesus had nothing at all there with Him.

**- How did Adam respond to temptation?** In Genesis 3, the garden of Eden was the jewel of creation, which had everything Adam and Eve needed. And they had only one command, "*do not eat*" of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the midst of the garden. The devil lied, hissing, "*has God really said?*" as the first skeptical questioning of the Word of God in history.

Eve was deceived, as Adam disobeyed God's Word, and they ate the forbidden fruit. This is of great significance, because in so doing, they represented the entire human race. You are a sinner today because you have inherited Adam's sin. But you'd have done the same thing yourself. You sin because you are a sinner, by nature and by choice.

**- How did Jesus respond to temptation?** In Luke 4, Jesus Christ also represents the entire human race, as the obedient son of God. The Bible refers to Him as the second Adam and the last Adam. The first Adam disobeyed, but the last Adam, Jesus Christ, perfectly obeyed.

In Luke 4:3, the devil said, "*If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.*" Jesus, though fully divine, was also fully human, and after 40 days in the desert, was starving. He was tempted, mightily. Hebrews 2:17 says Jesus is like us in every respect, yet without sin.

As the eternal Son of God, His mouth spoke the cosmos into being. To turn stone into bread would be child's play, and immediately satisfy the raving craving in His human being. But He committed not even one sin in His whole life. His mouth also breathes the breath of God, the Word of God, which overcomes temptation, as we'll see next time! ☐