

THE TESTING OF JESUS

The gospel of Luke presents Jesus Christ as God come in the flesh, fully divine and fully human, come to be the Savior of mankind. In chapter 4, "*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were ended, He was hungry.*"

This sets the stage for temptation. He was at His most vulnerable. Jesus Christ, who Scripture calls *the last Adam*, has come to bring salvation to mankind, in much the same way that the first Adam sinned in the garden, to bring sin and death to mankind. Faced with the deception of the devil, Adam yielded to temptation and disobeyed God. Will Jesus Christ obey?

1- The first temptation: "*If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread,*" the devil challenged Jesus. What a temptation for the One who spoke the cosmos into existence, to simply produce a loaf of bread. As Hebrews 2:17 says, Jesus is like us in every respect, "*yet without sin.*" The devil's suggestion is a direct challenge to the divine right of Christ. In Luke 3:22 God had just said to Him, "*You are My beloved Son.*" Turning stone into bread was not a physical challenge, but a spiritual one. Because Christ had come to do the Father's will.

Food was the focus of Adam's sin. He or you could never turn stone to bread. But Christ could use supernatural power to provide for natural needs. He did many times, to heal or help others. In verse 4, Jesus answers, "*It is written, man shall not live by bread alone,*" from Deuteronomy 8:3, "*man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*" The context was God's miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness. Just as mankind exists by the breath of God, His spoken Word, Jesus Christ was tempted to disobey God by the breath of His mouth.

2- A spiritual test: Jesus in John 4:34 told His disciples, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.*" Christ came not to satisfy His own desires, but to do God's will. He said in John 6:35, "*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst.*" Jesus Christ was the bearer and the bestower of the Holy Spirit, who gives spiritual life to those who believe and receive Him as Lord and Savior.

Christ will not trump His humanity with His divinity. Hebrews 5:8 says, "*The Son learned obedience through what He suffered,*" real trials and tribulations. Hebrews 10:5-7 says, "*I have come in a body to do the will of God, as it is written of Me in the book.*" More than 300 Old Testament prophecies are all perfectly fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, for you.

3- The second temptation: The adversary tries a different tack. Verses 5-7, "*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!'*" What a devious deception. Adam had usurped the authority of God by disobeying Him, and had usurped his own God-given authority in Eden, by allowing Eve to eat of forbidden fruit, and to "*become like God.*"

The Bible says it was Adam's disobedience of God's authority that gave the devil a limited, derived, temporary authority on earth, because Adam chose the wages of sin, and became enslaved to sin and death in the dark domain of the devil. If Jesus agreed, He would acquiesce His divine authority as the Son of God to the derived and allowed authority of Satan. It would also mean no cross, no suffering, all accomplished without pain. However, without the shedding of blood there could be no atonement, no righteousness, no payment for sin.

4- Another spiritual test: Verse 8, *Jesus answers him, "it is written, 'you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'*" No way is the uncreated Son of God, come in the flesh as Jesus the Christ, going to worship a created being, the devil who had fallen in rebellion to God. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 where Moses warns the people about falling down to false idols. There is no shortcut to obedience, not even for Jesus Christ.

RK Hughes notes, "In Jesus' refusal to take the easy way, we see that taking the path of least resistance, to follow comfortable expediency, is idolatry - it is worshiping a false god." Does the devil know the Bible better than you? Do not allow Scripture to be twisted against you! ☐