

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are  
Most Surely Believed Among Us  
An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**  
**Chapter 4- Luke 4:3-13**  
**38- The Temptation of Jesus Christ- Part 1**

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July 19, 2009

**Luke 4:3-13**

We come again on this Lord's Day to our Journey through **The Gospel According to Luke**. For those of you who are visiting- we are in a long protracted verse by verse exposition of **Luke's Story of Salvation**- which is the longest of the four Gospels in the New Testament. And we have just begun our examination of Chapter 4- which has to do with the familiar temptation of Jesus Christ in which He enters into conflict with the devil.

Now, before we look at the text itself, I want to give a little bit of background so you will understand how all of this fits into the purposes of Luke and the Purposes of God in Scripture.

By the time you get to the fourth chapter of **The Gospel of Luke**- you have already been through three very long chapters. And in our particular journey- that took 36 weeks- 19 sermons in Chapter 1, 11 sermons in Chapter 2, and six sermons in Chapter 3. And Lord willing, all of these sermons will be edited and put into a Commentary along with our journeys through **1John**, **Hebrews**, and **Romans** and they will be made available in both text and audio formats on the Church Website in the near future.

And in the first three chapters of Luke's Account- the good doctor is endeavoring to prove beyond any doubt that Jesus is the Messiah- that He is the Son of God- and that He alone is the Savior of the world. And so Luke lays down for us in three chapters- every element of that evidence and every evidence of that proof.

Summing it all up, we can say that the Messiahship of Jesus Christ has been proven by the testimony of angels. The angel who spoke to Zacharias, and the angels who spoke to Mary and Joseph, and

the angels also who addressed shepherds in the field, affirmed Jesus- as being the Messiah.

And not only did Luke record for us the testimony of angels- but he also faithfully wrote down the testimony of several men and women. Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, knew full well that their child- their miraculously born child- was going to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and that John would proclaim the arrival of the Messiah Who was very soon to come after the birth of their son- the prophet John the Baptist.

Then there's the testimony of Joseph and Mary, both of whom knew that the Child granted to them was the Son of God, the Savior of the world, Immanuel, Who is God with us. There was also the confirming testimony of two very godly older people in the temple, namely Anna and Simeon. Then later on- there was the testimony of John the Baptist who said of Jesus that He is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.

So you have the testimony of angels, and you have the testimony of people affirming the Messiahship and the Saviorhood of Jesus Christ. And then Luke gave us the Testimony of God Himself Who at the baptism of Jesus says out of heaven, **"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."** The first Person of the Trinity, therefore, is attesting to the validity and credibility of the second Person of the Trinity. Then you have the testimony of the third member of the trinity, the Holy Spirit- Who descends from heaven and rests upon Jesus- a Divine stamp signifying the Deity and the worthiness of Jesus to bear the Title of Messiah, Son of God, Savior of the world.

And in addition to the testimony of angels, the testimony of men, and the testimony of the Trinity- Luke also gave us the testimony of genealogy. And you will notice at the end of Chapter 3 where the genealogy of Jesus is given- starting at Jesus, going all the way down to verse 38 back to Adam and back to God.

So in the end- Jesus is the Son of Adam and the Son of God. He is fully God and fully Man. In other words- His genealogy suits Him to be the Messiah. He is Son of God, Son of Adam, He is Son of Abraham, and He is Son of David, therefore, He is of the royal lineage and has the right to be God's anointed King.

Now all of this in three chapters is a summation of the evidence to indicate that Jesus and no other is the Savior of the world, the Son of

God, and the Messiah. There is one other issue, however, in order to validate His Messiahship, and that is His ability to conquer the devil and sin.

It's fine to have all of these evidences and all of these proofs and all of these credentials in place. But the ultimate question is...can this Man save sinners from sin? Can He save sinners from the destroyer? Can he deliver our eternal souls from death and hell? That's the real question. Can He overturn the Curse? Can He acquire Paradise for us? Can Jesus not only walk this world in white- but can He pardon my guilt and purchase eternal life for me- even though I have *not* walked this world in white? Can this Man undo what the destroyer did with the first Adam? Can Jesus conquer Satan? Can He conquer sin, and, therefore, conquer death, and, therefore, conquer hell not only for Himself- but for all who trust in Him?

And if He can't even do this for *Himself*- then it's for sure that He can't do it for anybody else. And so the compelling question that is answered in the fourth chapter of **Luke** that the good doctor wants Theophilus to know is the question- can Jesus conquer the devil and sin? And thank God there is a resounding, "Yes!" to that question.

So in this fourth Chapter- we see Jesus engaged in a serious conflict with the devil. It is not a conflict that comes about because Jesus inadvertently finds Himself involved somehow with the devil rather by accident. And it is not a conflict that comes about because Jesus made some mistake or made a bad choice and ended up in a compromising situation where He was somewhat vulnerable to Satan. No, Jesus enters into this conflict with Satan by being led by the Holy Spirit.

It is not as if Satan came after Jesus- but that Jesus came after Satan. The Spirit of God literally driving Him, says one of the Gospel writers, into the wilderness, pushing Jesus into this conflict because it was absolutely critical at the outset of His ministry that He be given the ultimate test of the power of Satan against Him to prove to the entire world and Satan himself that He was the Messiah.

Now Jesus had been tempted in the same manner as all people are tempted throughout the 30 years of His life up until this point. The writer of **Hebrews** says in **Hebrews 4:15**, that Jesus

**... has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.**

So Jesus was tempted as an infant, and He was tempted as a small child, and He was tempted as a young child, and He was tempted as a teenager, and He was tempted as a young adult, and Jesus was tempted as an adult- the same way that everybody is tempted.

But the way that this verse is written makes us see that Jesus was tempted differently than we are in that we are only tempted with certain temptations while Jesus was tempted with *all* of the temptations that have ever and will ever plague all of humanity.

And even though Jesus went through a level and an intensity of temptation never seen before or since- the Bible clearly declares that Jesus never sinned. Jesus never violated one Law of God in thought, word, or deed for one single millisecond. Jesus was perfectly and in all aspects sinless.

But here at the launch point of His ministry- there is a twofold and parallel time of temptation that was intended by the devil to trick Jesus and to trap Jesus and to ruin His credibility and ruin His Authority and ruin His sinless life so that He would be destroyed before he ever began. That was Satan's intention.

But from God's viewpoint- this very same conflict and season of temptation was ordained and Spirit led to validate Jesus as the Messiah because Satan will not succeed in any way to draw Jesus into sin.

So if anyone is to be the Messiah- He must have the credentials that include His ability to demonstrate His power over Satan. Now keep in mind that this is not the only time Jesus did this- because for 30 years up until this time- Jesus was sinless- even though He was tempted. But Jesus goes through tremendous temptation without sin here in a very monumental conflict. And we need to know that Jesus will continue to do this all throughout the remaining 3-1/2 years of His ministry as He overpowers the kingdom of darkness and casts out demons anytime He chooses, in any volume He chooses, and can send them to the pit- as we see indicated in His actions.

Jesus also demonstrates great power over the force of temptation itself in the Garden of Gethsemane, and greater power yet as He conquers Satan even in death as He hangs on the Cross, and then comes three days later out of the tomb.

So by no means is this the only time that Jesus enters into conflict, and, of course, **Luke 4:13** says,

**When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.**

... showing us that while the devil departed from Jesus- it was only for a time, and he would be back.

But this is an initial and monumental conflict that starts His ministry which adds to His credentials as the Messiah by demonstrating His power over Satan and His power over sin. And so I say again- if Jesus is not adequate here to conquer sin and Satan himself- then He certainly can't do anything eternal for us. If Jesus is in any way defeated by satan here- then we all lose- and Jesus is no better at conquering sin than Adam was, and there is no Salvation, and we are all eternally damned.

Now the Jewish scholars and Pharisees knew that satan had conquered Adam. So the question now before them was, could satan also conquer Jesus? And the Jews knew that Moses had written in **Genesis** that Adam was in a perfect environment. But here we find Jesus in the most *imperfect* of environments. If Adam was in Eden, then Jesus is in anti-Eden. He is out "*in the devastation*", as the great Scottish theologian George Adam Smith called it, "*the rocky precipitous dangerous area in the Judean wilderness that is in the crevices and the cracks, and the canyons between Jericho in the Jordan valley and Jerusalem up on the plateau.*"

So this is a very dangerous area. It is an isolated area. It is a barren, dry, desolate area where Jesus finds Himself engaged in conflict with satan. So if Adam had everything- Adam had all that he ever wanted to eat, Adam had a kingdom that spread across the whole world, the pinnacle of which was expressed in the magnificence of the Garden of Eden- if Adam had everything and still sinned- then Jesus was in the opposite situation, He had no food at all and He had no kingdom and possessed absolutely nothing.

So we find Jesus at the very opposite end in terms of circumstances from Adam. Adam had everything. Jesus had nothing. If Adam was vulnerable, certainly Jesus is even *more* vulnerable, and if the first Adam collapsed at the first temptation- then perhaps the

second Adam will collapse at this temptation, though He has succeeded in many before this.

So Satan thinks that perhaps the circumstances finally are enough to crush Him and there will be no Savior and our souls will forever be lost. So that's the question that needs to be answered. And praise God! The glorious answer is that Jesus completely conquered Satan and He conquered him in a very triumphant way- as we shall see.

And so, Luke tells us here that we have a Savior Who can overturn the Curse. We have a Savior Who is *not* like the first Adam. We have a Savior Who can take all of the fury of the devil and all of the onslaught of temptation and never wince one time and never budge an inch and never move at all and never even internalize a solicitation to even think evil. So Jesus comes out of this wilderness triumphant and with that Luke consummates, caps off the credentials that identify Jesus as the One and only Messiah and Savior.

So let's read **Luke 4:1-13** again:

**1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness**

**2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.**

**3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."**

**4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"**

**5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.**

**6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.**

**7 Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."**

**8 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"**

**9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;**

**10 for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,'**

**11 and, ‘ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’”**

**12 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”**

**13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.**

Now again- here is what is at stake. If Jesus had fallen to the temptations of Satan in any way- even in the thoughts of His Heart- then Salvation would be *impossible* and we would all be damned forever. Jesus is the only substitute- there is no other. Jesus is the only Lamb- there is not another one. Jesus is the only Sacrifice and He is the only One perfect- there is no Plan "B".

And contrary to what Kenneth Copeland teaches- Jesus Christ is the only One suitable or capable or qualified to die for sinners. So it is absolutely *crucial* that He win this battle with the enemy, this consummate battle, this pinnacle of all battles, and as the text indicates, He did.

The question asked certainly by anyone who understands the process of Redemption is, *"Is there Someone Who can conquer sin? Is there someone who can conquer Satan? Is there someone who can reverse the Curse?"* And the answer is, "Yes, there is!" Jesus and Jesus alone has demonstrated His Power here. So where the first Adam failed- the second Adam succeeded. And so in the first Adam- we all died- but in the second Adam- we may all live. Please turn and read **1Corinthians 15:13-23:**

**13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;**

**14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.**

**15 Moreover we are even found *to be* false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.**

**16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;**

**17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**

**18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

**19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.**

**20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.**

**21 For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.**

**22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.**

**23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,**

So here in **Luke 4-** the Son of God is tested and He's tested as to His ability to resist temptation; He's tested as to His impeccability and He is found to be completely impervious to all temptation. He did only what the Father wanted Him to do. And He *a/ways* did what the Father wanted Him to do. Jesus never failed His Father or disappointed His Father or let His Father down one single time.

And when God said of Him after the first 30 years of life, "**This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,**" God was saying, "He's never done anything, never thought anything, or said anything that didn't please Me."

The Father having given that testimony- that testimony is then put to the test in this temptation. It is a temptation which God Himself inaugurates, and which God Himself initiates, and which God Himself ordains by the Spirit leading or driving Jesus into conflict with Satan, rather than Satan sneaking up and attacking Jesus.

And because Jesus is triumphant- we can say that Jesus and Jesus alone is, in fact, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. He has been and continues to be from this point on until His death- tempted in all points like we are- yet without sin.

So this is an incredibly important account in the life of Jesus that it is recorded also by Mark in chapter 1 and by Matthew in chapter 4. And you will see varying details when you compare those passages.

Now last time we looked at the first point that I wanted you to see, the preparation for battle, the first two verses. Jesus prepared for battle by being full of the Holy Spirit. That is He was permeated or saturated with the Presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now keep in mind that Jesus was fully God and fully Man. And as God - Jesus was able at times to set aside His Humanity and walk on water and raise the dead and forgive sin. And at other times Jesus was



able to set aside His Deity and weep and get tired and bleed and die and say that His Father was greater than He was.

So as the God/Man- Jesus could set aside the independent use of His Deity. And here He sets aside the independent use of His Deity and He submits Himself to the Work of the Holy Spirit. God's Will would be done in His life by means of the Power of the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit of God literally permeates Jesus. The Spirit of God literally fills Jesus and there is no room in Jesus for anything else.

Now you remember that God didn't give Jesus the Spirit by measure like He does with us. God didn't give out a limited dose or a portion of the Spirit like we get because of the sin of our flesh- but God gave to Jesus an immeasurable amount of the Spirit. No other human on earth can ever receive the fullness of God's Spirit down here on this earth and in this life due to the sinfulness of our flesh.

But the entirety of the fullness of the Spirit belonged to Jesus without any measure or restrictions, so He moved into His ministry from the Jordan River where He has been baptized and where His sinlessness and Deity have been confirmed and commended by none other than God Himself, and Jesus moves into His ministry in the fullest measure of the Holy Spirit- the third Person of the Trinity- completely and utterly empowering Jesus to do the Will of the first Person of the Trinity- Who is God the Father.

So the Spirit *leads* Jesus into the wilderness and into the devastation- into a 35 by 15 square mile area of dangerous cliffs and ravines and rocks- a place of poisonous scorpions and snakes and wild animals, a place uninhabited, a place where nothing grows, a completely desolate part of the Judean desert that rises from the Dead Sea 1500 feet or so below sea level to Jerusalem up on the plateau, about a mile in distance.

It is a very lonely and dangerous area. And Jesus is there for 40 days and for all those 40 days- He is in a serious conflict with the devil. And this is an intense battle- so intense that Jesus doesn't eat anything for 40 days. And during that 40 days- Jesus is fighting so hard and concentrating so intensely at the battle before Him that He is not even conscious of being hungry because in verse 2 it says that

**... when they had ended, He became hungry.**

So Jesus had no sense of His hunger until *after* the conflict was over- *then* He hungered- the Bible says. Some of us get hungry if we just miss lunch and get a late lunch. Some of you are hungry right after you just had breakfast. So it is hard for us to imagine someone not eating for 40 days and not being hungry- unless you understand the intensity of the struggle that is going on. Jesus is so totally focused on the conflict, so focused on the enemy, so focused on the Will of the Father, so focused on doing what is right- that there is no thought of anything human or mundane. It is the conflict and the conflict alone that consumes Him.

The Father has publicly commended Him; The Spirit has descended on Him to mark out the fact that He is under the full power of the Holy Spirit; The prophet John has proclaimed Him the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world; The people of Jerusalem and Judea have been prepared by a baptism unto repentance for His coming; He is fully aware of His Own Divine Nature; He is fully aware of His Divine Mission; His sacred humanity is under the full control of the Holy Spirit; He is filled with pure Joy because now since all of this was planned before time began- He has waited all this time; He has waited for 30 years in the obscurity of Nazareth; He has now had His official launch at the Jordan; He is at the highest point of anticipation and fully prepared to enter into His ministry and in that Spirit- So He engages the devil to forever demonstrate one final great essential credential, and that is His ability to conquer sin and Satan. This is the moment in which He will verify His holy perfection.

Now I want you to look at a very important passage found in **James 1:13-16:**

**13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.**

**14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.**

**15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**

**16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**

Now in this passage, the Apostle James is teaching us how the process of temptation, sin, and death works. James teaches here that

temptation finishes its work in sin, and sin finishes its work in death. So the principle is that temptation is ongoing in our lives and never stops until it finishes with us yielding to it and sinning. And sin never stops its relentless labor inside us until it finishes in our death- both spiritual and natural.

Now please look closely at verse 14. Here James says:

**But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.**

So the Bible says here that we are tempted when we are "**carried away and enticed by his own lust**". So temptation is the carrying away of us- away from the Truth, away from righteousness, away from holiness away from the Bible, away from Prayer, away from purity, away from Joy, and away from bringing Glory and Honor to God, and stealing that Glory and Honor from God and giving them to things that are passing away.

But notice that these lusts are our own. The Apostle James teaches here that the lusts which satan carries us away with- *belong* to us already- they live *inside* of us; they reside in our hearts and dwell *within* us. They are our *own* lusts. And they are ours by virtue of the fact that we are born with Original Sin, and so all that satan has to do to cause us to sin is to give us an *opportunity* to act out on the lusts that we already have inside of us.

You see, satan cannot *make* or *force* anybody to sin, dear friends- we sin because we *want* to, because we *desire* to sin, because we *choose* to sin, and we *choose* to sin because Jesus said in **John 3:19** that we love darkness rather than light. And we love darkness rather than light because we are fallen creatures who have lost our first estate that Adam had before he fell.

So sinning to a fallen person is not abnormal- no, sinning is as natural as breathing, and that is why nobody can ever be saved unless and until God Sovereignly *intervenes* on our behalf. Because in order to be saved- we have to think and believe and act counterintuitive to our fallen nature, and we have to love what we do not normally or naturally love- and we *cannot* do that and we *will not* do that unless we are supernaturally empowered to do that by the Holy Spirit.

So satan tempts us by simply providing us with an avenue to do what we want to do anyway in our normal and natural fallen

inclination- which is to sin. So that is the way that temptation and sin works in us.

But Jesus had no Original Sin in Him because Jesus was not born with the seed of Adam- Jesus was born with the Seed of God. You see, Jesus' Father was God- not Joseph- and so the seed of Adam that comes to every human through the seed of their father- bypassed Jesus.

The result of this is that Jesus had no internal lusts for which satan could give opportunity to draw Him away. So for 40 days- satan is unsuccessful in getting Jesus to sin because as Jesus Himself said in **John 14:30:**

**He (Satan) has nothing in Me;**

There was absolutely *nothing* inside of Jesus, in His Heart, or in His Nature that satan could entice. There was *nothing* in Jesus' Nature as the God/Man which the devil could hook an enticement on which would allow Jesus to act out internal sinful lusts. Jesus had no capacity to internalize a temptation. All temptation that came at Jesus always came from the *outside*- no temptation ever came to Jesus from the *inside* because Jesus had no sinful nature, and, thus, He had no lusts lurking inside His Nature because His Nature was not fallen.

There was absolutely no internal solicitation for evil in Jesus. There was nothing in Him that could respond to any temptation by sinning. So every single response that Jesus had toward to temptation was immediate and it was pure and it as perfectly righteous. Every response to temptation was precise. And you never ever read about any kind of internal struggle going on inside Jesus as if Jesus was trying to fight off some natural tendency that He had for iniquity. He did not.

So while it is absolutely true that Jesus was tempted- we must understand that as the most unique Person Who ever lived- being both fully God and fully Man- Jesus was *not* tempted in the same *way* that you and I are tempted.

Jesus was not tempted because He was carried away of some lust that He had inherent inside His fallen heart because Jesus did not *have* a fallen heart and neither did He have internal lusts. But Jesus was tempted so that He could confront satan head on and destroy the power that satan had over us in our sin and make a way for us to be redeemed out of our sin.

Now this whole issue centers around the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. And the struggle to understand this falls along these lines:

- A. Was Jesus able to be tempted in the same sense as we are and able also to actually sin?
- B. Was Jesus *not* able to be tempted in the same sense as we are and able to live without sin?

This is what theologians call the "peccability" and the "impeccability" of Jesus Christ. These words "peccability" and "impeccability" come from the Latin word *peccator*, which means: *to be able or unable to sin*. So the question is this:

"Was Jesus actually tempted by Satan here in the same way as you and I are tempted, and could Jesus actually have sinned, or was Jesus unable to be tempted and unable to sin?"

And this has been debated and argued over for 2,000 years, and I will try my best to answer this question this morning. We must remember that any time we are dealing with any issue about Jesus- we must deal with that issue in very special ways due to the fact that Jesus was different from anyone else. Jesus was both God and Man, and He shared a *dual* Nature of both human and Divine. And exactly how that dual Nature works together- without contradicting each other- such as in this case- has always raised serious but difficult questions.

For example- it is incorrect to think that Jesus was human from midnight till noon, and then was God from noon to midnight. It didn't work that way. It is also incorrect to think of Jesus as being 50% God and 50% Man- because it didn't work that way either.

No, Jesus was 100% God and 100% Man in the same Body at the same time without conflict or contradiction, and that is nothing short of a miracle, and that is a mystery, and that is something that should take our breath away, and that is something that should cause us to wonder in amazement after Jesus Christ.

So the best answer that there is- is that as a human being Jesus was fully capable of being tempted and of sinning, but as God- Jesus was *incapable* of sinning and also *incapable* of even being tempted. And so in this case- in His battle here with Satan- Jesus' Deity superimposed

itself on Jesus' Humanity, and Jesus was not able to be tempted or sin- at least not in the same sense as you and I are tempted and sin. And that is because Jesus had no internal lusts on which satan could capitalize.

So Jesus' peccability as a Man was overshadowed by His impeccability as God. Now that may not satisfy some of you, but that is my best shot, and so if you want to deal with this subject deeper and more fully- I invite you to meditate on this subject during the week and see if you can word it better than that. In the meantime- I am satisfied that Jesus' Deity would not allow Jesus' Humanity to be tempted or to sin in the same way and in the same sense as we are tempted.

Now notice in **Luke 4:2** that after that 40 days of struggle was over- Jesus- in His full humanity- feels hungry. And satan senses in that hunger a new vulnerability. He senses that in the fact that because in His full humanity- Jesus is feeling human hunger- that perhaps Jesus is beginning to feel His mortality. So satan moves in for what he thinks might be the kill.

And so what comes forth are three temptations that Satan devises that are the most brash, the most ruthless, and the most clever temptations ever conceived. And satan waits to spring these three temptations on Jesus until he finds in Christ this moment of human vulnerability.

And that takes us from the *Preparation* for battle to the *Pattern* of battle in verses 3 to 12. And this *Pattern* for Battle is very, very important because the temptations directed at Jesus Christ here are *unique* to Him- and we need to understand that. When the writer of **Hebrews** wrote in **Hebrews 4:5** that Jesus was tempted like as we are yet without sin- he was *not* referring to this moment with satan. Jesus was *constantly* being tempted all throughout His 33-1/2 years on this earth with a barrage of sin like nobody else in history. But this temptation here is unique to Jesus only.

For example- what the devil tempts Jesus to do here would not be a temptation to us at all. We would not be tempted to turn stones into bread. We can't do that and so that wouldn't be a temptation to us. Jesus *could* do that, and so to Him this temptation was special.

We could not be tempted to imagine that somehow we could rule over all the kingdoms of the world- nor could we take a dive off of a 450

foot precipice and expect a safe landing. These are not temptations that would bother us- because we can't do these things.

But even though these temptations could not trouble us specifically- they could trouble us categorically- and I hope to show you that as we go further into this.

So these specific temptations come not only with specificity, but they come in a category. The specificity doesn't connect to us but the category does. And Lord willing- you'll see that after awhile.

Now let's look again at **Luke 4:3:**

**And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.**

Now this first temptation is a temptation is very strange and can only be properly understood by looking at Jesus' response to it found in **Luke 4:4:**

**... It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.**

So we can see then that rather than being about food here- this temptation was really about distrusting God's Love. And all of us can understand that temptation categorically. Not only can we all understand it- but all of us have been tempted to distrust God's Love at one point or another. We all have been tempted to say that since things aren't going the way that I think they ought to go- God must not love me- because if God loved me- I never would have wound up marrying this man, or I would have never been in this situation, or I would not have had all this bad health, or all these bad things happen to me.

If God really loved me- then my kids wouldn't have turned out this way. And if God really loved me- I wouldn't be living with so much disappointment. If God really loved me- He wouldn't have put me in this community where things are so difficult. If God really loved me- life would be better and I wouldn't have gone down the path I went down that is sort of locked me in for a career that I really don't like.

If God really loved me- I wouldn't be missing the things I think are so important to a fulfilled life. If God really loved me, He would have enabled me to do things for my family that I'm unable to do. If God really loved me- I wouldn't be bearing so many burdens. If God

really loved me- then the righteous would not suffer and the wicked would not prosper?

So we can understand this category of temptation, can't we? Now none of us can actually and literally turn rocks into bread- but we can be tempted to distrust God's Love for us. So while we are not tempted with the very same temptation as Jesus here- we are tempted with this same category of temptation- in this case- to distrust God's Love.

And the question..."Why don't I have the things that I think God should give to me that I have determined is the proof that God loves me" is precisely the very same category of temptation that Jesus suffered- even though it is not the same specific temptation of turning rocks into bread.

Now notice in verse 3- that the devil spoke to Jesus. And all the way through this time of battle- the devil speaks and he speaks with a measure of truth. This is his pattern and the way that he deceives the whole world. You see, deception only works if it somehow has partial truth in it. And so when the devil speaks- he always starts from a point of truth. That's the subtlety of his deception. So the devil spoke to Jesus.

Now in our English translations- **Luke 4:3** begins with the word, "if", and that *seems* to mean that satan doubted who Jesus was and was challenging His credibility- forcing Jesus to do what the devil wanted him to do to prove Who He really was.

But that is not the best translation of this verse. The Greek construction of this phrase is what is called, *a first class conditional phrase*, and in Greek grammar- a first class conditional phrase *never* ever presumes doubt. So the way to look at this verse is that satan does not doubt at all Who Jesus is. So what the devil is *really* saying here is not "if" but "since". *"Since You are the Son of God"...* In other words- satan is telling Jesus- *"Okay I fully believe Who you are- and since You are God manifested in flesh, and You have all Power in Heaven and earth- and since You have not eaten in forty days, and since you are very hungry- why don't you just turn these rocks into bread so you can eat. I mean after all- what could possibly be wrong with eating after you've fasted for 40 days? Go ahead Jesus- do this and eat."* You turn these rocks into bread- so you can eat.

Now, by the way- this is the purpose of the first three chapters of Luke- to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He is that holy



offspring that the angel described to Mary, that He is the fulfillment of almost 400 Old Testament prophecies, and is literally God Almighty in a human Body.

And that's what's been going on for three chapters. We've been learning that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. So that is not questioned or debatable. And I would just remind you that the devil never questions the Deity of Jesus. Satan never questions the Deity of Jesus; demons don't ever question the Deity of Jesus; only ungodly liberals question the Deity of Jesus.

It is patently obvious in the Bible that Jesus is God. And it is patently obvious to the demons, too. They've known Jesus as God before they fell and before He was born. They were holy angels before they enjoined into Satan's rebellion. They knew Jesus to be God; they still know He is God. There is never a denial of Jesus' Deity by any demon or from Satan himself anywhere in the Bible. No demon has ever recorded to have denied the Deity of Jesus Christ- they know beyond any doubt that He is God and it is always assumed in all their conversations. That's why in **Matthew 8:29** the demons say, **“What business do we have with each other, Son of God?”** They know Who Jesus is. And that is why the Apostle James tells us in **James 2:19** that the devils tremble. They tremble because they know and they believe. Everything in all of Creation acknowledges the Deity of Jesus Christ except wicked human beings.

So Satan comes to Jesus- the Greek word here for devil is diabolos which means: *the slanderer; and the accuser*, and says to Him, **“Since You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”** Or as Matthew puts it, ***“command that these stones become bread.”*** Putting these sentences together maybe Satan said something like...*“Tell these stones to become bread, in fact, command that stone to become a loaf right there.”* So this is the first solicitation to evil.

Now at first glance you look at that and you say *“Why is this so wrong?”* It is certainly not a temptation to make bread- bread isn't sinful. And it is certainly not wrong to eat bread- especially if you haven't eaten in 40 days.

And in light of the fact that Jesus had not eaten for 40 days- makes eating bread a very reasonable thing to do. It certainly isn't wrong in itself to create bread- if you have the power to create it. So eating bread is not sinful. And this has nothing to do with gluttony as

some have suggested because Jesus has not eaten anything in 40 days! So this is certainly not overeating. And we must also know that satisfying your hunger is not sinful. Hunger is what God gave us in order that we would eat and supply the necessary fuel for our bodies.

And this is also not a temptation for Jesus to show off because there isn't anybody there to show off to- so this isn't some kind of grandstand play to demonstrate something to a crowd of people because there's absolutely nobody there but Jesus and the devil.

And this is also not some temptation to excessive self-indulgence or satisfaction. And it isn't a sin to meet your own basic human need for food.

So what's the deal here? What's the problem? Why is this such a terrible temptation? Well it goes like this. The implication here is to distrust God's Love. The implication here is based upon the fact that Satan knew that Jesus had restricted His independent use of His Own Deity to do only the Will of the Father through the Power of the Spirit, and that He wasn't to do anything that the Father didn't Will and the Spirit empower. In fact, Jesus said, **John 4:34**,

**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.**

Numerous times in **The Gospel of John** Jesus says this one way or another, **"I only do what the Father tells Me to do"**; or **"I only do what the Father shows Me to do"** or **"I've come to do the Father's Will, and that's it."**

Now part of the self-emptying of Jesus, part of Him abandoning His Own Will in order to do God's Will- theologians call this self-emptying the "kenosis" of Jesus- part of Jesus' humiliation and self-emptying was to set aside the independent use of His Own Deity as being fully God and operate only under the Father's Will in perfect submission and by the Spirit's Power in effecting that Will. This was part of Jesus' full condensation.

So the implication that the devil is making here is, *"Look, if God really loved You- You wouldn't be hungry. So take matters into your own hand and do what you have the ability to do- regardless of your father's Will."*

*"How much does God really love You, Jesus? You've waited all this time in Nazareth, You had Your moment in the sun down there at the Jordan River at Your baptism, and now for 40 days- You've been out*

*here in this God-forsaken place, and You've been in conflict with the devil and You've had nothing to eat for 40 days, and now You're very hungry and God hasn't provided anything for You. So You think You can trust God's love? Do You think there's any evidence that God really loves You? Maybe God doesn't love You as much as You think He loves You."*

That is the implication here and this is very same formula that Satan used with Eve, isn't it? What Satan was saying to Eve in the Garden is, *"You mean to tell me there's a tree that has fruit on it and God doesn't want you to have it? Well if God really loved you, why would He restrict you? God probably isn't as loving as you think He is, He's probably not as kind as you think He is. He's probably not as good as you think He is or He wouldn't restrict you from eating that tree. Don't you think that? Maybe God isn't quite as good as you think He is, or as loving as you think He is. In fact, you know I'll tell you why He doesn't want you to eat that, because if you eat that you'll be like Him and He hates competition at that level. And that will tell you He's really not good at all because the reason He doesn't want you to eat of that is you'll be like Him and He doesn't want that kind of competition."*

And Eve bought into the lie that God wasn't as good as she thought He was. She was tricked into believing that God wasn't as kind as she thought He was. He wasn't as loving as she thought He was. And so she ate.

And that's the same scenario here. *"You think God is loving, Jesus? You're the Son of God, how come You're hungry? Why has God allowed You to go through all this? It only proves that God really does not love you at all. You think God is loving? Didn't You just hear God out of heaven down at the Jordan River say, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' so is this how He demonstrates His Love? With forty days fasting in the wilderness; 40 days in face to face conflict with satan in this dangerous, God-forsaken place; 40 days with nothing to eat. You call this Love?*

*Look- I know you're really God in the flesh and You really do have the power to do anything You want to- so why don't you just take matters into your own hands and help yourself out here since God has obviously abandoned You and really doesn't love you at all."*

*"Listen to me, You're the Son of God, so let me suggest to You it's time to use Your own prerogatives here- go ahead prove that God is not loving and turn these stones into bread and go ahead and eat."*

And what Satan wants to do is to set Jesus against the Father and the Spirit, acting independently on His Own. And he can't challenge His Deity so he appeals to Him as the God/Man through His suffering, hungry Humanity. *"You shouldn't be hungry, Jesus- You shouldn't be suffering this. You shouldn't be going through this. You're the Son of God and you deserve better than this."*

And the implication is after all God even fed those rebellious, doubting, sinful and complaining idolaters with manna for 40 years in the wilderness and God won't even feed His perfectly sinless Son for 40 days? They were fed every morning and Jesus is hungry and you call that love?

Now you could even say that Satan could have used the argument, "How come the wicked prospered in the wilderness, and You're suffering and You're the righteous One? And by the way, didn't God say He'd rain down bread miraculously on His people and didn't He do it for them in the wilderness? And didn't Isaiah say that God's people would never hunger and thirst? And didn't the psalmist say God always fills the hungry with what is good, Psalm 107, and doesn't the psalmist say he'd never seen God's people begging for bread? I would suggest to You, says Satan, that it's time for You to act on Your own because I don't think God is as good to You as You might have thought He is, or You wouldn't be in this situation. I think You better grab some satisfaction for yourself, Jesus.

"Now by the way Jesus- as a footnote- even Moses was able to pull bread out of heaven for his people- do You think You're his equal?"

So this is what is going on here, and there's no question that Jesus could make bread. He made enough bread and enough fish to feed several thousands of people, didn't He? He could do that- so this was not a challenge to His Power. And it really wasn't a question of whether Jesus had a right to eat. He had to eat- He was a man and He had to eat or He would die. So the only real issue here was that Jesus was being tempted to take it on to Himself to decide when the food would come and how the food would come. And the temptation was to distrust God's Love. Great bread, grab some satisfaction, You deserve

it, God isn't nearly as loving towards You as You think He is or You wouldn't be in this situation.

Now satan would have been saying, "It's inconceivable to me that You could be the Son of God, that You could be the one who fully pleased God, and here You are starving; it doesn't make sense. There are all kinds of people who hate God, there are all kinds of enemies of God who are full and fat. It doesn't make sense. You're God's Son, You have a right to it."

So you see- satan is never denying the Deity of Jesus. He's never denying that He's the Son of God. He just wants to get Jesus to act independently of the Father and express doubt and distrust and disobedience toward God- which is sinful- that's the idea. Distrust God. God must be disinterested. He must be somewhat indifferent or He would have fed you Himself.

Now I have to stop here and Lord willing we will get into the Response that Jesus gave to satan about this effort to get Jesus to distrust in God's Love next week.

Let's come and pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.