

The Church of the Servant King
Survey of the Bible Series – Luke
SB_LK4_Jesus' Temptations and Public Ministry in Galilee Initiated

Luke 4

Jesus' Temptation (4:1-13)

Luke 4:1-2 – the Setting

- ❑ Note that Jesus was led to the temptation by the Spirit, not by Satan
- ❑ The temptation took place immediately after Jesus' baptism
- ❑ Jesus' responses to the temptations all come from Deuteronomy 6-8 in which Israel is instructed in the Law while in the wilderness. In the wilderness, God instructed Israel in the Law. In Luke 4 (as in the parallel passages), the God/Man Jesus is quoting the Law as He fulfills it
- ❑ In Scripture the wilderness was not only a place of demonic activity (Isa 13:21; 34:14; Matt 12:43; Rev 18:2), but it was the place of Israel's greatest testing
- ❑ Israel failed; Jesus was victorious
- ❑ Israel was tempted immediately after a victory and period of exaltation in the world.
- ❑ Jesus was tempted after public acknowledgment
- ❑ In Jesus' temptations, God clearly purposed to test Him just as Israel was tested and Jesus' responses from the Old Testament clearly indicated that He understood
- ❑ Israel wandered for forty years
- ❑ Jesus fasted for forty days
- ❑ "It is not by accident that Jesus' temptation continued for 40 days, just as Israel's wanderings and temptation continued for 40 years in the wilderness."¹

Luke 4:3-4 – the First Temptation to Turn the Stones into Bread

- ❑ This test related to Jesus' Sonship
- ❑ Jesus had just spent 40 days without food in total dependence upon the Father's provision for His sustenance
- ❑ Satan tempted Jesus to act independently of the Father's will for Him
- ❑ The Jews in the wilderness had to trust God's Word that the manna would in fact sustain them. If it had not been God's will for them to live, God would not have made the provision for them
- ❑ In similar fashion, Jesus had to trust the Father to provide for Him in the wilderness. Jesus knew that the Father's plan for His life included a public ministry and eventually a sacrificial death. The Father would provide for Him all He needed to execute that plan.
- ❑ Had Jesus succumbed to Satan's temptation, Jesus would have in effect denied the Father's plan for His life

Luke 4:5-8 – the Second Temptation (per Luke) to Bypass the Cross in Order to Gain the Kingdom

- ❑ Satan tempts Jesus to obtain the kingdom apart from the Father's plan of the Cross
- ❑ In essence, this temptation was a temptation to accept Satan's plan and authority verses the Father's plan and authority. Satan's plan did not involve the Cross; therefore, there would have been no redemption available to man from Satan's kingdom
- ❑ This was a legitimate offer by Satan to Jesus since Satan obtained dominion over the earth at the point that man succumbed to Satan's temptation in the garden and lost his dominion over the earth. (See Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Co 4:4; Eph 2:2).

¹ Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc., 1983, 1985), 213.

- ❑ Jesus knew from Hebrew Scriptures that He, as the Messiah, would one day rule over a kingdom on earth in which the dominion of the earth will be restored to man (i.e. the Messiah and God/man)

Luke 4:9-12 – the Third Temptation (per Luke) to Win Israel's Acceptance Apart From the Father's Plan

- ❑ Satan tempts Jesus to gain public attention through a spectacle rather than through His righteous life and message. Satan knew that such an event might even cause the nation to recognize Him for Who He was and accept Him. Satan even quoted Psalm 91:11-12 to prove that the Messiah would be kept safe from harm. However, the Jews acceptance of Jesus under circumstances that involved Jesus succumbing to Satan's plan would have provided no deliverance at all. The Jews would have been following just another (now sinful) prophet.
- ❑ Satan's temptation related to a common perception from Malachi 3:1 that the Messiah would suddenly appear in the sky and come down to His temple.

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry (4:14-15)

Jesus' early ministry was primarily in Galilee, though from John 1-4 it is known that He did have an early ministry in Judea and Jerusalem before His Galilean ministry. Two purposes of the Galilean ministry were to authenticate Jesus and to call the disciples who would follow Him.²

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth (4:16-30)

- ❑ Most synagogue services had a reading from the Law and one from the Prophets followed by an exposition that connected the two together. The scrolls were maintained in the synagogue and would be handed to the reader by an attendant.
- ❑ Jesus only quoted a small portion of Isaiah 61:1-2 and omitted the phrase "and the day of vengeance of our God." He wanted to focus upon the truths associated with His first advent rather than His second advent.
- ❑ The Messiah healed the brokenhearted by providing hope of an eternal life in which they would be freed from the miseries and suffering of this life.
- ❑ The Messiah promised liberty to the captives in a dual sense. First, those who believed in Him would be free from the slave market of sin (1:77 cf. 7:47; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18). Second, Daniel had prophesied that Israel would be subject to Gentile domination throughout the remainder of her history until the Messianic kingdom (see Dan 2:24-45 cf. 9:20-27). The Jews longed for the day that they would no longer be subject to other Gentile nations (Lk 1:68-74).
- ❑ By offering an alternative to the slave market of sin and by providing hope of redemption (physical and spiritual), Jesus gave sight to the blind and gave liberty to the oppressed.
- ❑ The acceptable year of the Lord is an allusion to the year of Jubilee which occurred every 50 years (Lev 25:10). During the year of Jubilee, the Law required that all debt be forgiven, slaves were set free, and ancestral lands were returned to the original family. Jesus offered a total cancellation of spiritual debt and a new beginning to those who respond to His message.
- ❑ "These 17 verses serve as Luke's summary of what happened throughout the entire ministry of Jesus: Jesus declared Himself to be the Messiah (Luke 4:21); the Jewish hearers proved themselves to be unworthy of God's blessings (vv. 28-29), and the gospel would also go to the Gentiles (vv. 24-27)."³
- ❑ "This pattern is seen throughout the rest of Jesus' ministry: Jesus went to the Jews; they rejected Him; He told of Gentile participation in the kingdom; some Jews wanted to kill Him.

² Ibid., 214.

³ Ibid.

But He was not killed until the proper time, when He chose to die (23:46; cf. John 10:15, 17-18).”⁴

- In this passage, the Jews responded violently to Jesus’ statement and tried to kill him. The thing that incensed them was Jesus’ acknowledgement of their opposition (4:23-24) and His notation of two instances in which God’s prophets ministered miraculous acts of grace to Gentiles while Israel was in unbelief—**Elijah** and the **widow of Zarephath** (vv. 25-26; cf. 1 Kings 17:8-16), and **Elisha** and **Naaman the Syrian** leper (Luke 4:27; cf. 2 Kings 5:1-19).⁵
- By using these examples, Jesus was noting the parallels between the unbelief of their ancestors and their unbelief.

Jesus Casts Out an Unclean Spirit (4:31-37)

Capernaum became Jesus’ base of operations throughout His public ministry after His rejection in Nazareth. In this passage, even the demons acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus rebuked the demon because Jesus did not want to be identified as some type of political revolutionary prior to having provided Israel with the opportunity to repent and demonstrate that she was ready spiritually for the Messianic kingdom.

Jesus Performs Other Miracles and Preaches in Galilee (4:38-44)

Jesus continued His ministry throughout Galilee which included the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law. Luke notes that His preaching continued to occur in the synagogues even though Luke emphasizes the blessing to Gentiles throughout His Gospel.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.