

Luke, The coming of the gospel

I. The temptation of Jesus

(Luke 4:1-13) Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2 where **for forty days he was tempted by the devil.**

A. This wasn't a quick three temptations — it lasted 40 days! Hence, there were surely more temptations.

He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

B. Why not turn the stone to bread? Because it would help himself, not others. Then, how are we to use our gifts?

C. Jesus always used his miraculous powers for others. He never used them for himself. After all, Jesus had to be tempted just as we are, and so no cheating. It wasn't so much a sin to do what Satan asked as a frustration of Jesus mission. He couldn't "learn obedience" unless he did everything the hard (human) way.

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

D. Nothing indicates that Satan appeared in physical form. Rather, it's more likely Satan came to Jesus in his mind.

E. Notice that Jesus does not contradict Satan's claim to possess all worldly authority. What does this tell us about worldly authority? And how it is gained?

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10 For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

12 Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

- F. Ask Zechariah about putting God to the test!
- G. Why not do this?
- H. What do the temptations have in common?
 1. An effort to show off his power
 2. Earthly motivation — none of these would have helped anyone else

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

I. Satan wasn't finished with Jesus.

J. The point is to show that Jesus was, as a matter of personal discipline, not to use his powers for himself. And he wasn't going to be an earthly ruler. He wouldn't be the Messiah the people were expecting.

K. It also shows that Jesus was not above temptation. In fact, because of his miraculous abilities, he was very likely much more tempted than the rest of us.

II. Jesus announces his mission

(Luke 4:14-22) Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. *15* He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. *16* He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. *17* The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach **good news** to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the **prisoners** and recovery of sight for the **blind**, to release the **oppressed**, *19* to proclaim **the year of the Lord's favor**."

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, *21* and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

A. First Centuries rabbis interpreted Isaiah as predicting the Messiah would come from Galilee—

(Isa 9:1-2) Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan-- 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

B. At the time, a visiting rabbi would routinely be invited to speak. This was much less formal than our Sunday church service.

C. Jesus announces that he is the Messiah

D. "Good news" is the announcement of the coming of the king, such as the ascension of a new king to the throne or the birth of a king's son. The term appears both in Jewish prophecy and in Greek usage.

E. He says nothing of personal salvation. Rather, at this point, the fulfillment of God's promise is foremost, as is the coming of the Messianic age.

F. Emphasis is on God's concern for the needy of society. No one listening would have interpreted this as referring to personal salvation or purely "spiritual" matters.

G. The "year of the Lord's favor" may be a reference to the Jubilee, where debts were forgiven and property restored to its original ownership.

(Luke 4:23-30) Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian."

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

H. Jesus was no charmer. This is *not* what they wanted to hear! He talked about God blessing Gentiles—the very opposite of what the Jews were praying for. The mood rapidly shifted from admiration to hatred and murder.

I. Why did the Jews so despise Gentiles at this time and place?

J. Why did Jesus antagonize them? Why not just enjoy the praise of men?

K. Why does Luke tell this story? To make the point that the gospel was for the Gentiles, too, even though its roots are deep in Judaism—and that this teaching was anathema to the Jews. Jesus was not a product of his culture.

III. Jesus demonstrates his power

(Luke 4:31-44) Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. ³² They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.

³³ In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ³⁴ "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"

³⁵ "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. ³⁶ All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"

³⁷ And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area. ³⁸ Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. ³⁹ So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

⁴⁰ When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. ⁴¹ Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and **would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.**

A. Why did Luke include these stories?

1. To demonstrate the divine power of Jesus.
2. He could heal physically ill and cast out demons
3. It required no magic — he just cast them out by command
4. Demons acknowledged him as Messiah

B. Why did Jesus suppress the fact that he is the Messiah—when he began his ministry with such an announcement? Perhaps to slow the crush, to avoid accelerating

his death too soon. Or maybe Jesus didn't want to be commended by demons — it would have allowed people to claim he was on the same side as them.

42 At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them.

43 But he said, "I must preach the **good news of the kingdom of God** to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." 44 And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

- C. Luke now adds a new concept: the "kingdom of God"
- D. Matthew uses "Kingdom of Heaven," but "heaven" is a First Century Jewish euphemism for God, as the Jews were reluctant to speak God's name as too holy for human lips.
- E. "Kingdom" carries an active sense in the original, so "reign" or "rule" may be a better translation: reign of God. Hence, the kingdom is wherever knees bow to God, where people submit to God.
- F. The Biblical idea is "Not yet/Already"—the kingdom is here but not in its fully realized state.
- G. Announcing the coming of the Kingdom clearly implies that the kingdom has not yet arrived, which implies that the Jews were not fully submissive to God.
- H. At this point, the thought is that the Messiah had come, the people were being called to submit to the will of God, that many of the Jews were not doing so (being a son of Abraham is not enough), that repentance is necessary, and a new order is arriving for those who repent. And faith is very important — Mary is commended for faith and Zechariah punished for lack of faith.