

Lesson 3 – Jesus’ Baptism and Temptation

Text: Matthew 3:13-4:11; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:21-4:13; John 1:29-51

Main Characters: God, Jesus, John the Baptist, Satan

Key Passages:

- Matthew 3:17 – God, the Father, announced that Jesus, the Son, pleased him by his baptism.
- Luke 4:13 – Though Satan was done tempting Jesus then, he would be back at a more opportune time.

Main Storyline:

When Jesus was about thirty years old, he knew it was time to begin the work he had been sent to do. For the first part of his life, he had lived privately as a carpenter (as his father had been, Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3), but it had come time to begin his public ministry. John the Baptist, his kinsman, had already been preaching about repentance and baptism, so it was fitting that Jesus go to John before beginning his ministry.

John the Baptist was told by God that a sign would indicate the man who was chosen by God as the Christ (Messiah), who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John was to look for the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on someone; that would be the sign of the Messiah.

One day, Jesus, John’s kinsman, approached John at the Jordan River and asked him to be baptized. John the Baptist, knowing Jesus was a righteous man (though he did not know Jesus was the Christ, John 1:31), said that, in fact, he should be baptized by Jesus, not the other way around. Jesus insisted that John baptize him in order to fulfill all righteousness. John agreed and baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. As soon as Jesus emerged from the water, the heavens opened up and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and remained upon Jesus. Suddenly, a voice came from heaven, saying “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

After his baptism, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, where he was to be tempted by Satan. He stayed there for forty days, eating nothing and, apparently, continuously being tempted by Satan (Luke 4:2), though the Bible specifically only has record of three particular temptations. In each of the recorded temptations, Jesus used scripture to defend his choices, particularly the book of Deuteronomy. It has been said that Jesus was tempted in the three types of sins during this time: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 2:16).

In one temptation, Jesus, having been fasting, was hungry. Satan came to Jesus and suggested that, if he were truly the Son of God, he should command stones to become bread. It appears that Satan was trying to convince Jesus to misuse his power (selfishly). Jesus rebuked Satan, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God’” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

In another temptation, Satan took Jesus to the highest point of the temple, suggesting that, if he were truly the Son of God, he should be able to jump off and allow angels to catch him, referring to Psalm 91:11-12. Naturally, Satan was misrepresenting the intent of the passage, and further, Jesus had no need to test God’s abilities. Jesus replied, “...it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test’” (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Finally, Satan took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain and showed him the glory of all of the kingdoms of the world. He promised that, if Jesus would bow down and worship him, he would give it all to Jesus. Jesus strongly rebuked Satan, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Deuteronomy 6:13). Then Satan left Jesus, and angels came to minister to him.

Following these things, John the Baptist began to direct his disciples to Jesus. One day, he stood with two disciples when Jesus passed by. John immediately pointed out that Jesus was the Lamb of God. When the disciples heard Jesus speak, they began to follow him. The word began to spread that Jesus, the Messiah, had come, and many people began to follow him, including Andrew, Simon (Cephas/Peter), Philip, and Nathanael.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Our most effective weapon against Satan is the Bible; we must know it to defeat him (Ephesians 6:17).
- 2.) We can trust that the promises of God are faithful and true; we must have faith and trust God.
- 3.) The will of God must come before our own desires (just as Jesus put service to God above all else).