**Research: Temptations of Jesus**

Luke 4:1,2,

And Jesus being full of the Holy   
ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the spirit into the wilderness,

“Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. It was by his influence, therefore, that Christ went into the desert” (Barnes 15).

“Since Jesus was ‘returning’ towards Galilee (Luke), the traditional scene of the temptation, Mount Quarantania, near Jericho, is a suitable one” (Dummelow 633).

“The same Spirit who engendered Jesus (Matt.1:20) and attested the Father’s acknowledgment of his sonship (Matt.3:16-17) now leads him into the desert to be tempted by the devil” (*EBC* 8.113).

“WILDERNESS.Loneliness; doubt; darkness. Spontaneity of thought and idea; the vestibule in which a material sense of things disappears, and spiritual sense unfolds the great facts of existence” (*S&H* 597).

“The word *to tempt*, in the original, means to try, to endeavor, to attempt to do a thing; then to try the nature of a thing as metals by fire; then to test moral qualities by trying them, to see how they will endure; then, to endeavor to draw men away from virtue by suggesting motives to evil” (Barnes 15).

Jesus is really being given an identity test to see if he can maintain who he is in Scripture. He was told in Matt. 3:17 that he was God’s beloved son in whom God is well pleased. Now Satan comes to thought to try and get Jesus to question that divine pronouncement.

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

“The parallel with historic Israel continues. Jesus’ fast (doubtless total abstention from food but not from drink [Luke 4:2]) of forty days and nights reflected Israel’s forty-year wandering (Deut 8:2). Both Israel’s and Jesus’ hunger taught a lesson; both spent time in the desert preparatory to their respective tasks” (*EBC* 8.113).

“The tempter’s whole object during the forty days evidently was to get him to distrust the heavenly testimony borne to him at his baptism as the Son of God—to persuade him to regard it as but a splendid illusion—and, generally, to dislodge from his breast the consciousness of his Sonship” (Jamieson 3.16).

Matt. 4:3-11

“The narrative, which can only have come from our Lord’s own lips, describes an actual historical fact, the great temptation which he underwent at the very beginning of his ministry. He was tempted at other times (Luke 4:13), perhaps at all times (Heb 2:18), during his earthly life, but the two great seasons of trial were now, and immediately before the Passion: (Luke 22:42; Matt 26:39)...Jesus here appears as the second Adam victorious in the conflict in which the first Adam failed” (Dummelow 632).

“All these things being offered Jesus are to a degree a kind of power. He was offered personal power by changing stones into bread. Then he was offered priestly power if he’d go for the argument to be the head of ecclesiasticism. And he was offered political power by being shown all the kingdoms of the world. It’s only in the gospel of Luke that we see that Luke apparently grasped this as a struggle over power. After all of these power bases are offered to Jesus, after the devil is dismissed and angels minister unto Jesus, Luke says (4:14), ‘Jesus went in the power of the Spirit into Galilee,’ showing that he knew that it was a question of where power resided for man. It was in the power of Spirit that Jesus was able to exercise his full dominion as God’s Son” (Crisler, *Gospels Vol. 1,* 21).

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

The word *tempter* in Greek is *peirazo* and it means “to test one maliciously, craftily to put to the proof; to try or test one’s faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin...” (Thayer 498).

*“If thou be the Son of God.*If thou art the Messiah—if God’s own Son—then thou hast power to work a miracle; and here is a fit opportunity to try thy power, and show that thou art truly his Son. He had just been *declared* to be the Son of God (Matt 3:17), and here was an opportunity to show that he was really so” (Barnes 15).

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

“Jesus decided the best defense was Scripture. This verse is taken from Deut. 8:3. Deuteronomy is a law book. In fact, the word in Greek, *deuteros nomos,* is the second law or the repetition of the law. How did he regard this test by Satan? What was going on in Jesus’ thinking here? First of all, what does *‘Satan’* mean in Hebrew? Accuser. It is also the term for prosecuting attorney. If he has the prosecuting attorney accusing in thought, Jesus in his defense cites what? The law. He quotes the law book. He doesn’t need to do anything original. The law is the law and it never varies. Therefore, what is being suggested here by Satan, or the prosecuting attorney, is illegal. It is illegitimate. He proves it by citing the law. That’s a marvelous technique for us in the middle of temptation” (Crisler, *Gospels Vol. 1,* 19).

“These words, taken from Deut 8:3, refer to Israel in the wilderness. There they, like Jesus, had no bread, yet they were fed by the word of God’s mouth, for God commanded manna to fall from heaven. . . In the life of Jesus there is not a single example of a miracle worked for his own advantage. In every case his miraculous power was used for the good of others, to remove the ravages of disease and sin, and to advance the kingdom of God, and for these purposes alone was it entrusted to him” (Dummelow 633).

“Jesus’ response is based solely on Scripture: ‘It is written’ ” (*EBC* 8.113).

“The point of each temptation must be determined by closely examining both the temptation and Jesus’ response. This clearly shows that this first temptation was no simple incitement to use improper means of making bread, or an attempt to use a miracle to prove to himself that he was really God’s Son, or to act alone without thought of others; it was a temptation to use his sonship in a way inconsistent with his God-ordained mission” (*EBC* 8.113).

“Israel’s hunger had been intended to show them that hearing and obeying the word of God is the most important thing in life (Deut 8:2-3). . . More necessary than bread for Jesus was obedience to God’s Word” (*EBC* 8.113).

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

“Next thing, take Jesus out of the wilderness and move him into an entirely different environment,the sophistication of organized religion, ecclesiasticism. ‘Take him to the very pinnacle of the Temple.’ Show him everything that could belong to him ecclesiastically if he would only go via the world’s route by following the devilish suggestions. ‘If thou be the Son of God,’ the same test question again. ‘Cast thyself down.’ Notice the suggestion is that Jesus do it himself. Apparently Satan knew that it would not succeed trying to cast Jesus down. If Satan couldn’t do it, the only way that it could be done would be for Jesus to do it himself ” (Crisler, *Gospels Vol. 1,* 20).

“The next temptation was more subtle. The devil took him in spirit to the lofty platform overlooking the courts of the Temple, from which a great multitude could be conveniently addressed. It was from this platform or pulpit that James the Lord’s brother delivered the public address which was the immediate occasion of his martyrdom. Satan suggested that our Lord should address the assembled multitudes of Israel from this giddy height, and then prove his Messianic claims beyond all question by flying through the air, and descending to the ground unharmed” (Dummelow 633).

“The Greek word for *devil* is *diabolos* and it means ‘to slander, to accuse falsely; a calumniator, false accuser, slanderer’” (Thayer 135). The word *diabolos* means to try to throw in two directions; it cannot be done. Perhaps it might mean to try to think in two directions or to have a sense of dualism in thought.

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

“Stripped of its symbolical form, this was a temptation to take a short and easy road to recognition as the Messiah by giving ‘a sign from heaven’ which even the most incredulous and unspiritual would be compelled to accept. This short and easy method Jesus decisively rejected” (Dummelow 633).

“Jesus’ hesitation came, not from wondering whether his Father could command the normal forces of nature, but because Scripture forbids putting God to the test. So Jesus was tempted by Satan to test God; but Jesus recognized Satan’s testing as a sort of manipulative bribery expressly forbidden in the Scriptures” (*EBC* 8.114).

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

The word *tempt* in Greek is *ekpeirazo* and it means “to prove, to test, to put to proof God’s character and power” (Thayer 198).

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

“Then the devil made his last effort. He offered Jesus all that he had, ‘all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them,’ if he would but worship him, i.e. acknowledge his usurped authority, and do evil that good might come” (Dummelow 633).

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

“Since the tempter has now thrown off the mask, and stands forth in his true character, our Lord no longer deals with him as a pretended friend and pious counselor, but calls him by his right name—his knowledge of which from the outset he had carefully concealed till now—and orders him off” (Jamieson 3.18).

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

The word for *ministered* in Greek is *diakoneo* and it means “to be a servant, to wait upon, to offer food and drink, to supply food and necessities of life, to distribute the things necessary to sustain life. . .” (Thayer 137).

“One of the best ways of meeting temptation is by applying Scripture. So our Saviour did, and they will always best succeed who best wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Eph 6:17” (Barnes 17).

“Jesus had refused to relieve his hunger by miraculously turning stones to bread; now he is fed supernaturally. He had refused to throw himself off the temple heights in the hope of angelic help; now angels feed him. He had refused to take a shortcut to inherit the kingdom of the world; now he fulfills Scripture by beginning his ministry and announcing the kingdom in Galilee of the Gentiles” (*EBC* 8.115).

”ANGELS.God’s thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect; the inspiration of goodness, purity, and immortality, counteracting all evil, sensuality, and mortality” (*S&H* 581).

“*The devil leaveth him*. No longer is there dualism in thought. *Angels came and ministered unto him.* True communication completely governed his thought, it was no longer a divided kingdom” (Crisler, *Gospels Vol. 1,* 21).

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Abbreviation key:

*EBC = The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*

*S&H = Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*