

Jesus is Tempted

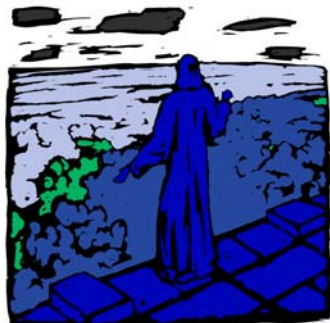
Just after Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit led him to a place to be alone, to be tempted by the Devil. The Bible calls the place “the wilderness” because it was a wild place where no one lived except animals. It was a hot, desert area with rocks all around—big mountain-sized rocks towering up into the sky and loose rocks all over the ground. In some places, Jesus could walk along paths with great rock walls towering on either side of Him, and in other places He’d find hills made of nothing but dust and sand. Sometimes He’d walk along a cliff and loose rocks would go skittering down the steep chasm beside Him. You can understand why no people would choose to live in such a place.

Jesus stayed in the desert wilderness for forty days, fasting and praying to God. (Fasting means that Jesus didn’t eat any food; that’s something believers sometimes do when they are praying seriously about something and longing for God’s help.) Then, the Bible says, Satan came to Jesus to tempt Him.

Remember how hungry Jesus was after not eating for 40 days? Satan said, “Why don’t you turn some of these stones into bread? Then you won’t be hungry any longer.” But Jesus didn’t do it. He answered Satan with some verses from the book of Deuteronomy in the Bible, saying, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Obeying His Heavenly Father was more important to Jesus than what He ate, or anything else. Jesus understood that His Father wanted Him to know what it was like to be hungry, because sometimes we get hungry.

Next, Satan took Jesus up to the top of the temple, which was on the top of a mountain, and said, “Why don’t You throw Yourself down from here? The angels will save You (it says so in the Bible) and everyone will see how powerful You are and will follow You.”

Wasn’t Satan sly to quote the Bible to Jesus? But Jesus knew that this wasn’t the way God planned for Him to get followers. He answered Satan with another verse from the Bible, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” Jesus knew that His Father had planned for Jesus to teach and preach, and that the Holy Spirit would open the ears of the people and help them understand



His message. Even though jumping off the building might have caused some people to be interested in Jesus, it wasn’t the Father’s plan and so Jesus didn’t do it.

Then Satan led Jesus to a high mountain where He could see all the great cities of the world. Satan said, “I’ll give you all these cities if you will worship me.” You see, if Jesus were the King of all these cities, He could command them to worship God. Would that be a good thing? Well, it wasn’t what the Father had planned for Jesus. He had planned for Jesus to die on the cross and take away the sins of His people, not for Him to be a great government leader. Jesus quoted the Bible to Satan again, saying, “You shall worship the Lord God, and Him alone.”

Satan had lost. He offered Jesus everything he could think of, but Jesus didn’t sin. Satan left Jesus in the wilderness.

The Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews that Jesus was tested like we are. When we come to Him we know He understands our weakness—like being hungry. Yet unlike all of us, Jesus never sinned. Because He understands our feelings, we know we can come to Jesus for help when we are tempted, and He’ll be able to help us.

Jesus also gave us an example of doing God’s work the way God wants it done. What if I went to the mall and offered \$20 to anyone who would say they loved God? I think lots of people would take my money and say that they loved God, don’t you? But that is not the way God has planned for us to tell the world about Him. The Bible says that God wants the world to learn about Him through the preaching of the Gospel and by watching how Christians love each other. Like Jesus, I need to be careful to do God’s work in the way God wants it to be done.

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, Jesus answered Satan with verses He had learned from the Bible. Like Jesus, we need to have verses memorized that will help us do the right thing when we are tempted. Let’s start by memorizing the verse below.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Hebrews 4:15

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