

Day 3

Tested by the Devil

⁴ ¹⁻² Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry.

³ The Devil, playing on his hunger, gave the first test: "Since you're God's Son, command this stone to turn into a loaf of bread."

⁴ Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to really live."

⁵⁻⁷ For the second test he led him up and spread out all the kingdoms of the earth on display at once. Then the Devil said, "They're yours in all their splendor to serve your pleasure. I'm in charge of them all and can turn them over to whomever I wish. Worship me and they're yours, the whole works."

⁸ Jesus refused, again backing his refusal with Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."

⁹⁻¹¹ For the third test the Devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the Temple. He said, "If you are God's Son, jump. It's written, isn't it, that 'he has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; they will catch you; you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone'?"

¹² "Yes," said Jesus, "and it's also written, 'Don't you dare tempt the Lord your God.'"

¹³ That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.

Obviously, this passage has to do with the temptation of Christ. We learn from scripture that Jesus was tempted in all ways like us, but without sin. It was necessary for him to be tempted in such a way that He might be able to be touched with the infirmities of our weaknesses. God does understand and He cares.

Luke 4: 13

"And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time."

I find this little verse in Luke to be interesting on several levels. The fact that the devil ended his temptation is striking. Did he just give up? Was he tired of hearing Jesus' response with the Word? Did it take energy on his part to present the temptation or was he defeated, believing that Jesus would not give in?

It is also interesting, that it indicates that he would return. Jesus did leave for us a strategic plan for responding to temptation. Every temptation was met with the Word of God. In order to meet temptation with the Word, we must know the Word since it is a sword to be wielded in battle.

Spiritual warfare is a reality! Just draw some lines in the sand and chart a course of holy living and see what happens. There is an aggressive nature to sin that lurks at every turn.

My wife and I recently had a late dinner at a place that serves donuts. After the meal, the waitress asked if we wanted dessert. We said 'no' and that we were trying to be good. When I went to the register to pay, once again I was asked if we would like some to take home, and I politely thanked her and again, said 'no'.

After paying, she handed me a bag with six donuts and smiled.

Even when the road is paved with the best of intentions, temptation can be so persistent. Maybe I should have quoted some verses!

Make the most of your Lenten journey by focusing on the words of Jesus and learning from Him how to handle temptation.