

# The Temptations of Jesus Christ (Part VI)

Luke 4:9-13

## 1. Introduction.

- a. We come to the third and final temptation. It is instructive for learning the nature of the devil, as well as his schemes. It is his greatest lie and temptation, thus far.
  - i. Pope's revising of the Lord's Prayer.
  - ii. Review of first two temptations (1-8).
    1. The temptation to doubt the love of the Father (1-4).
    2. Temptation to doubt the plan of the Father (5-8).
- b. This final temptation is a one in which the devil seeks to cause Jesus to presume upon the Promise of the Father (9-13).

## 2. The Scene (9a).

- a. Jesus is lead out of the desert, and onto the pinnacle of Temple.
  - i. This was a location known as the Royal Porch.
  - ii. It loomed out over the Kidron Valley.
    1. This was a 450ft. drop.
    2. The very place from which James was thrown off in martyrdom. He survived the fall, but was then beaten to death with clubs.
- b. I can only imagine how bizarre this scene of Jesus would have looked to the average onlooker that happen to have been on the Temple grounds on this particular day.

## 3. The Temptation (9b-11).

- a. Once again, the devil phrases the temptation with a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional statement. It does not presume doubt. "Since you are the Son..."

- i. The devil is using what he knows Jesus knows about Himself—that He truly is the Son of God.
  - ii. The devil begins this way in order to frame out the narrative and control the lens through which Jesus must interpret the rest of his words.
  - iii. If the devil can remind Jesus that He truly is the Son of God, it will help the devil make his case for why Jesus should cast Himself off the cliff.
- b. In light of the devil’s command (9b), he then attempts to make an argument from the Scriptures.
  - i. He quotes Psalm 91 (a Messianic Psalm) that is to have its fulfillment in the Messiah. It’s a Psalm predicting of a time in which God was to rescue the Messiah.
  - ii. On the surface, it’s not a very tempting argument.
    - 1. However, the devil tactfully uses the previous responses of Jesus to try and back him into a corner of having to follow the devil’s words.
      - a. The first temptation showed how Jesus hoped in the *love* of the Father, but based upon the Scriptures.
      - b. The second temptation showed how Jesus hoped in the *plan* of the Father, but again, based upon the Scriptures.
      - c. So with this final temptation, the devil is attempting to use the Scriptures to show how casting Himself off the cliff would demonstrate a trust in both the love and plan of the Father. And again, it’s based upon the Scriptures (i.e., Psalm 91).
    - 2. Psalm 91.
      - a. Note the language of safety and protection (v.1) being a reference to the Temple, but in light of the Trapper (v.3).
      - b. V. 4, again, speaks of protection from the snare of the Trapper.
    - 3. Essentially, the devil creates a situation that nearly models the explicit context and scene of Psalm 91, thus requiring Jesus to decide if this was to be the moment of the Father’s fulfillment.

- iii. In light of the context of Psalm 91, if Jesus was to take the Scriptures seriously, this all of a sudden becomes a very live temptation for Him.

#### 4. The Response (12).

- a. Jesus quotes Deut. 6:16 – a scene in which the nation of Israel is in the midst of putting God to the test.
  - i. In the context, Israel’s testing of God manifests itself in a presumption upon His promise to protect and provide.
  - ii. They grew bitter, not because God wasn’t faithful to His promise, but because He didn’t fulfill His promise in a manner that Israel desired Him to fulfill it. And that is pure presumption.
- b. Jesus, then, recognizing the devil’s corrupt interpretation, quotes Deut. 6:16. He’s picking up on how Israel’s wrongful interpretation of the promise turned God’s promise into an expectation and demand.
- c. In the case of Jesus, while God promised to protect the Messiah in Psalm 91, nowhere does the Psalm command the Messiah to test this promise by jumping off a cliff.
- d. We do this in subtle ways when we grumble in discontentment.
  - i. We feel we’re owed something.
  - ii. Grumbling and discontentment is always the result of wrongly presuming that God owes us perfect comfort and pleasure.
  - iii. While God gives us many promises we can hold onto, never are we permitted to demand that God fulfill them as we desire them to be fulfilled.

#### 5. The Devil Flees (13).

- a. “...an opportune time” (John 13:27).
- b. If the devil can’t tempt you directly, he will always use other people and means to get you to fall.

#### 6. Conclusion— 3 points of application.

- a. Trial and temptation is a reality for the Christian.

- b. We must seek to rightly understand the Word, but so that we might rightly apply the Word.
- c. Embrace Christ as your great substitutionary obedience.

Small Group Questions:

1. What stood out in this sermon?
2. In what ways have you been angry at God in your life? Why were you angry, and what did you do?
3. Is there an area in your life in which you're perhaps presuming upon a promise of God? Are you testing Him without perhaps calling it that?
4. What are some areas in your life in which you find yourself grumbling, bitter, or angry? In what ways is this manifesting an expectation that God owes you some kind of fix? How can you better think and pray in light of this?