

The Temptations of Jesus Christ (Part III)

Luke 4:5-8

1. Introduction.

a. Review of 4:1-4.

i. Verses 1-2 set the scene.

ii. Verses 3-4 record the first temptation – the temptation to doubt the love of the Father.

b. The three temptations are a progressive attack. They build off each other. Today we'll look at the second.

2. The second temptation of the devil (5-7).

a. The devil leads Jesus up onto a mountain to be tested a second time (c.f., Matt. 4:8). This is an interesting concept, considering Jesus is always led by the Spirit.

i. Yet, the leading of the devil is still under the sovereign control of the Spirit. (4:1).

ii. This gets into the nature of how the Spirit works to sanctify a person.

b. Jesus is shown all the kingdoms of the world “in a moment of time.”

i. Some understand this to mean Jesus is being shown the Roman Empire.

ii. However, it's better to understand this as a vision, where He's seeing all kingdoms throughout time.

1. In fact, this is how the devil tends to work.

2. Many leaders of great religions began as a result a “vision,” where they're being shown visions of grandeur and glory. When you read of the accounts of these visions, they're almost identical to the account of Luke between Jesus and the devil.

3. Jesus is not only promised to be given the domain (or authority over the kingdoms), but also their associated glory (6).

- iii. This has to be incredibly tempting for Jesus, considering He's still in the desert with nothing.
 - 1. In fact, what makes it so tempting is that He's being tempted with the very reality for which He's come. He's come to receive glory, but from the nations.
 - a. Psalm 2:1-6.
 - b. Dan. 7:14.
 - 2. The devil's attempting to make everything appear like it's in accordance to the promise of the Father.
 - a. He brings Him up to stand on a mountain.
 - b. He promises Him the nations.
 - c. He promises Him glory from the nations.
 - d. As a result, he's trying to get Jesus to doubt the faithfulness of the Father. It's a tacit assumption that the Father is slow to bring about His promises.
 - e. More than anything, the devil is trying to get Jesus to doubt the plan of the Father.
 - i. This is what makes the devil so slippery in his deceptive schemes.
 - ii. He's hanging truth in front of Jesus' face (i.e., the Father's promise), but wants Him to doubt the Father's method through which the promise is to be obtained.
- c. The lie comes in at the end of v.6.
 - i. While the devil certainly works his evil within the wicked systems of nations, he doesn't actually possess the nations. They are not his to give.
 - 1. Acts 17:26.
 - 2. Ps. 2:1-6.

- ii. If Jesus were to take the devil up on the promise, it would be an act of mistrust in the Father's plan.
 - d. The only requirement of the devil is that Jesus must worship him (7).
 - i. So what is false worship in this context? – a mistrust in the plan of the Father.
 - ii. The devil offers the same promise as the Father, but an alternative means of obtaining the promise. He's offering Him a crown, but without the cross.
 - 1. Jesus knows exactly how He was to achieve the crown. It was always through the cross. In fact, the suffering of the cross was of divine necessity. It was the Father's pre-determined plan. It had to be done this way.
 - a. 9:22.
 - b. 13:33.
 - c. 17:25.
 - d. 22:37.
 - e. 24:7.
 - f. 24:44.
 - 2. The devil simply wants to offer a cross-free fulfillment of the promise. For ease and comfort is always a tempting bribe.
 - 3. Again, the devil couldn't get Jesus to doubt the love of the Father (temptation #1), but perhaps He can now get Him to doubt the plan of the Father.
- 3. The response of Jesus (8).
 - a. Jesus, once again, quotes from the wilderness wanderings of Israel (Deut. 6:13; 10:20).
 - i. For Jesus, an attempt to receive the promise of the Father, while rejecting the plan of the Father, is pure idolatry.

- ii. True worship in this moment, for Jesus, is staying the course in the face wanting to avoid the suffering.
- iii. Israel utterly failed at this. When times became difficult in the wilderness, they desired an alternative plan. They started to believe that God not only didn't know what He was doing, but that He might actually be against them.
 - 1. How often might we do this?
 - 2. How often are we convinced of what's right, yet compromise, simply because it's difficult?
- iv. Yet Jesus, being the better Israel, overcomes—and on our behalf.

4. Conclusion.

- a. The term for “serve (λατρεύω)” in v.8 is such a rich term.
 - i. It's the idea of sacrifice, no matter the cost.
 - ii. The driving principle behind a true spiritual service, which is true worship, is always asking the question of what will bring honor to God, regardless of the situation.
 - 1. If our driving principle for decision-making is bound up with what will bring the greatest comfort, then true worship will never happen.
 - 2. True worship comes only through faithfulness to God's desire, which is often the more difficult plan. But it is the good plan.
 - iii. This makes decision-making very simple. It might produce an unpleasant affect, but if your driving principle is always the issue of bringing honor to God, then decision-making becomes very simple.
- b. In the end, we see, yet again, the faithfulness of Jesus to perfectly overcome on our behalf. Though we might fail, we can always look to the One Who has passed the test.

Small Group Questions:

1. What stood out in this sermon?
2. In what ways have you been most tempted to mistrust the plan of God this past year?
3. In what ways are you perhaps comprising, or justifying, certain decisions in your mind (e.g. decisions regarding family, work, relationship, school, etc.)?
4. Where do you need to repent of this?
5. What are specific passages of Scripture you can store up in your heart to battle the temptations? If you don't know, recommend some passages to each other, and look them up as a group.