

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL  
THE RESCUE *begins*  
GOD THE SON  
*The Son of God is Tempted*

Temptation can be defined as an invitation to sin. We all experience temptation. Even Jesus, our Lord, was tempted. In the wilderness, He was tempted in three different ways that are common to all of us. **1 John 2:16 (ESV)**<sup>16</sup> *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.* Our desires – our lusts represent the inward part of temptation – or wanting our own way.

**Genesis 3:6 (ESV)**<sup>6</sup> *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.* Eve (the woman) saw that the tree was good for food – **the lust of the flesh**; it was pleasant to the eyes – **the lust of the eyes**, and the tree was desired to make one wise – **the pride of life**. You know what happened! Eve was deceived, Adam disobeyed, sin came into the world, and death passed upon all men by sin. **Romans 3:23 (ESV)**<sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* As sinners we all need a Savior. **1 Timothy 1:15 (ESV)**<sup>15</sup> *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*

Oftentimes after we have ‘mountaintop’ experiences, we find ourselves plunged into the ‘valley of temptation’. This is what Jesus experienced. At His baptism the heavens opened up and the Father declared, *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.*” Following His glorious baptism comes Jesus’ temptation by Satan in the wilderness. We are led into temptation by our own lust. **James 1:14 (ESV)**<sup>14</sup> *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

It is a natural thought to wonder, ‘Why was Jesus tempted?’ I like the way Harry Ironside answers the question when he wrote, “He who was both God and man in one person was tempted, not to see if He would (or could) sin, but **to prove that He was the sinless One.**”

Even though we know that Jesus was both God and Man, it is important to remember that Jesus did not use His divine powers to overcome the enemy, because that is just what the enemy wanted Him to do! Jesus used the same spiritual resources that are available to us today. Through the power of the Spirit, with the Sword of the Spirit, Christ successfully resisted the temptations of the Devil and now we can too!

Jesus' first temptation involved the lust of the flesh. Jesus is tempted to satisfy His desires apart from God's will.

**Read Matthew 4:1-4 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.* <sup>2</sup> *And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.* <sup>3</sup> *And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."* <sup>4</sup> *But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.""*

First, notice that it was not Satan who led Jesus into temptation –Jesus was led by the **Spirit** into the wilderness for the purpose of being tempted. When we go through hard times, those are very times that later allow us to be sympathetic towards others. A line from an old hymn says, "Jesus knows all about our struggles." His experience in the wilderness of temptation, prepared Him to be our sympathetic High Priest. **Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:45 (ESV)** <sup>45</sup> *Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.* The first temptation of man occurred in a garden, but this temptation of the last Adam [Jesus], occurs in a wilderness. Usually we don't think of a nature setting as a place of temptation. We think of being around others as the place of temptation. Jesus' temptation shows us that temptation does not come from without but from within.

His temptation to give in to the lust of the flesh came after fasting 40 days. Jesus was a human being and naturally He was hungry. Yet, He refused to act on the enemy's advice, even to satisfy His own fleshly hunger. There might seem to be nothing inherently wrong for Jesus to satisfy His hunger by making bread from stones, but as a man He now depended on the living Father. Jesus said in **John 6:57 (ESV)** <sup>57</sup> *As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.* Jesus is the Word and we are to feed on the Word. The deepest need in our life is not the physical – it's spiritual. **John 6:35 (ESV)** <sup>35</sup> *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

In His 'mountaintop' experience of baptism, the Father had declared that Jesus was His beloved Son. Now Satan calls the words of the Father into question – *if you are the Son of God*. Satan was making a subtle suggestion that Jesus was not so loved as the Father had claimed. After all, Jesus was in the wilderness – without food for 40 days! Then, Satan tempted Jesus to use His

divine powers to meet His own needs. When we put our physical needs ahead of our spiritual needs we sin.

Jesus refuted the temptation to sin with the scripture where Moses reminded Israel that spiritual nourishment is found in the Word of God. Let's read the passage, Jesus quoted to the tempter.

*Read Deuteronomy 8:3 (ESV)* <sup>3</sup> *And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

If Jesus had not quoted this passage, this great spiritual truth from Deuteronomy of all places might not shine as brightly. Jesus through His temptation of the flesh reminds us that the Word of God is our perfect sustenance.

Jesus is tempted to test God and doubt His promises.

*Read Matthew 4:5-7 (ESV)* <sup>5</sup> *Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple* <sup>6</sup> *and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and "‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’"* <sup>7</sup> *Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’"*

Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, probably 500 feet above the Kidron Valley. The Temple was the religious center of the Jewish nation and the place where the people expected the Messiah to arrive. From this spot, Jesus could see all of Jerusalem behind him and the country for miles in front of him. It must have been a beautiful view. And here Satan goes again, *If you are the Son of God*. Satan wanted Jesus to mistrust His Father by putting His Father to a test – to see if He would lift Him with angel wings.

Satan misquoted scripture in this portion of the temptation. Let's read the passage for ourselves just to see how the 'old deceiver' twisted God's Word.

*Read Psalm 91:11-12 (ESV)* <sup>11</sup> *For he will command his angels concerning you to **guard you in all your ways.*** <sup>12</sup> *On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.*

Notice that the deceiver omitted one critical line: **guard you in all your ways**. When the child of God is in the will of God, the Father will protect him. He watches over those who are 'in His ways.' However, it is not our place to test God.

We can prove anything with the Bible when we isolate texts and omit certain words. We must always compare spiritual things with spiritual. **1 Corinthians 2:13 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> *And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*

Once again, Jesus faced temptation by quoting scripture. **Deuteronomy 6:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> *“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test... We tempt or test God when we place ourselves in circumstances that try to force our Father to work miracles on our behalf. We should never do reckless things expecting God to take care of us.*

Finally, Jesus is tempted to exalt Himself apart from the cross.

**Read Matthew 4:8-11 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.*

Satan had robbed Adam of the authority given him and reigned as usurper in the hearts of wicked men. The Devil now offered Jesus a shortcut to the kingdom. The temptation before Jesus was to take the world as a political ruler right then, without carrying out his plan to save the world from sin. Later we read in **John 18:36 (ESV)** <sup>36</sup> *Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”* Today the devil offers us the world by trying to entice us with materialism and power. We can resist temptations the same way Jesus did. Once again, Jesus refused temptation by quoting scripture. **Deuteronomy 6:13 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> *It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.*

After this attempt, the devil slunk away. We read in **Luke 4:13 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> *And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.* This passage reveals that Satan did not give up on tempting Jesus – he just gave up for the moment. It is the same with us. Even after winning one great battle against temptation, we will continue to be tempted with something ‘new’ – no not new really – just different. **1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.* I find it interesting that after the temptations, angels did come to minister to the obedient Jesus.

Are you being tempted? Turn to Jesus. **Hebrews 2:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> *For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*