

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-29 The Temptation

In our last lesson we learned that all of the millennia, from the creation of Adam and Eve until the time of Jesus, revealed God's character to mankind. We see His unlimited power and intellect when we look into the sky and marvel at the vastness of His creation. But His absolute holiness is only revealed in His relationship with us. We learned that there was God's holiness and that there was sin. There was nothing in between.

From this we discovered that God is the Judge who rules the world in righteousness and judges with equity. His law demands that the person who sins shall die. Thus the grave was created as a type of prison to hold the souls of the dead. God revealed His absolute holiness to His children. But from the very moment that He pronounced judgment upon Adam and Eve in the Garden, He also promised that one day a Redeemer would come. During the time of the Roman Empire a virgin girl named Mary was visited by an angel. She was told that she would become pregnant and give birth to a son who would be called Jesus.

Now Jesus was both God and man. You might wonder how this could be. It is written in the Bible that the Son of God in heaven set aside his godly attributes and submitted himself to become a human being. He was willing to do this as an act of love. So, although Jesus was God, He would live His life upon the earth as a man who was in perfect submission to God the Father.

Jesus grew up like all of us. He would have to learn obedience and study the Scriptures. From an early age He understood His uniqueness. At the age of 12 He sat at the feet of the priests and scholars in the Temple asking them questions. They were amazed at His understanding. Now you might think that because Jesus was God that He did not have to obey His parents. But you would be wrong to think so. In order for Jesus to be the perfect man He had to first be the perfect child. The Bible tells us that He grew up in obedience to His parents.

In Jewish culture a boy becomes a man at the age of 12. Although considered a man, he does not enjoy all the rights of manhood until he reaches the age of 20. At 20 he begins to pay taxes and may be conscripted into the military. Although considered to be a complete adult at the age of 20, he would not be permitted to be in a position of leadership until the age of 30. And so it was with Jesus. He grew up in submission to His parents and learned the trade of carpentry. At the age of 30 He put down His carpentry tools to begin ministry. You might wonder if it indeed took Jesus 30 years to get ready for ministry. But we will discover that Jesus always did things properly. He knew that He would not be accepted as a 'rabbi' or teacher until He had reached the age of 30.

Jesus had a cousin named John who would be the last prophet of the Old Testament. John went about preaching repentance and baptism in water. Jesus left his home in Nazareth and traveled south to the Jordan River where John was baptizing people. Jesus patiently waited in the water for His turn to be baptized by John. When it was His turn, John suddenly realized who Jesus was and refused to baptize Him. But Jesus insisted, saying that it was necessary to fulfill all righteousness. So John baptized Jesus. As Jesus came up out of the water, the sky above Him

opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove. God himself proclaimed, "This is my son, whom I love, and with him I am well pleased" (Matt 4:17).

Jesus, now full of the Holy Spirit, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He spent 40 days fasting and praying. The human body experiences hunger pains the first three or four days of a fast. But then the pains disappear and the body begins to live off of stored fat. Eventually the body runs out of fat and begins the process of starvation. At this point the hunger pains return and if the person does not eat soon, they will die. At the end of the 40 days of fasting the Bible says that Jesus hungered. He was at the point of starvation. Physically, He was at His weakest point. That is exactly when Satan appeared, holding a round river rock in his hand. It was about the size, shape, and color of the small loaves of bread that were baked in Israel.

"If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Satan challenged Him, knowing that a person's flesh and its desires can be a powerful temptation.

But Jesus understood what Satan was doing and responded to the temptation by quoting the Word of God. "It is written, 'man shall not live by bread alone'."

Suddenly Satan carried Jesus up to a high mountain and with a wave of his hand showed Jesus all the nations of the world. "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours." Satan knew that this would be a powerful temptation. Humans often crave and lust after what they see. Isn't that what happened with Eve? Satan called her attention to the fruit of the tree. And once she realized that it was good to eat, as well as beautiful to look at, and would bring them knowledge, she gave into her lusts and sinned.

But again Jesus knew that He must obey the Father and that although one day He would rule over all the earth, He could not take a short cut. Jesus answered Satan again by quoting the Word of God. "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only," Jesus said.

Satan then led Jesus to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. In the courtyard below were all of the priests and leaders of Israel. Jesus knew from prophecy that they would not accept Him. Satan knew that humans had great pride and that pride could be used to turn a person's heart. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone'."

Yet again Jesus understood Satan's temptation. He would not disobey God and allow His pride to try and impress the religious leaders of His country. Instead Jesus answered, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'."

Satan tempts us in the same three ways he tempted Eve and Jesus. He appeals to the desires of our bodies, the things we see that appeal to us, and things that will feed our pride. The apostle John sums it up by saying, "Do not love the world or anything in the world.... The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (1John 2:15, 17).

When the devil had finished his tempting, he left Jesus until a more opportune time. He had tried and failed to kill Jesus as a baby. Now he had failed again in trying to corrupt Jesus as he had corrupted Adam and Eve. Jesus had resisted him for this moment, but there would be another time and place and opportunity to defeat Him.

And so Jesus left the wilderness and went up into Galilee, not just full of the Spirit, or just being led by the Spirit, but in the power of the Spirit! And thus His ministry began.

This lesson is **important** because it demonstrates that Jesus was tempted in all of the ways that we are tempted, yet without sin.

The **main point** of this lesson is that Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan to sin. He did this through God's Word. He refused to prove he was the Son of God by using his power, but rather by his obedience.

Let's **review** what you learned in this lesson.

1. At what age did Jesus begin his ministry? [Pause 5 seconds]
A. If you said, "At the age of 30 he began his ministry," you are correct.
2. What was the first thing that Jesus did after putting down his carpentry tools at the age of 30? [Pause]
A. If you said, "Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John," you are right.
3. Satan tempted Jesus in three ways. What were those temptations? [Pause]
A. If you said, "Jesus was tempted in the desires of the flesh, in the desires of what is seen, and then in His pride," you answered correctly.

This lesson is very important as it demonstrates that Jesus was tempted in all of the ways that we are tempted. He also showed us how to overcome temptation by responding to it with the Word of God. Your **assignment** is to watch this lesson at least three times until you understand Jesus' childhood, His baptism, and His temptation in the wilderness by Satan. Then find someone and teach them what you have learned.