

## Th131 God's Plan

### *Lesson Th131-30 Satan Before the Throne*

In our last lesson we learned how Jesus went to the Jordan River and was baptized by the last prophet of the Old Testament, John the Baptist. As Jesus came up out of the water the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and God spoke from heaven proclaiming that Jesus was God's Son. The Bible tells us that at this point Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and led by the Holy Spirit. There are no Biblical references to Jesus having done any miracles prior to His baptism and temptation. Immediately after His baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness for a time of fasting and prayer. At the end of 40 days, when He was at his weakest physical point, Satan came and tempted Him with the three main temptations that all people face. Jesus rebuked each temptation with the Word of God. The Bible says that Satan left at the end of the temptation but planned to return at a more opportune time.

Where did Satan go? Why didn't Satan just continue to harass Jesus? In this lesson we will discuss these questions and try to gain an understanding of our enemy, Satan.

Satan has limitations. He did not fully understand Jesus and what He would be doing upon the earth. He did observe that Jesus was the Son of God in a physical human form. This gave Satan a tremendous opportunity to wreak revenge upon God. But Satan had to play by the rules and could go only as far as God allowed him. The temptation is a good example of this. Jesus was led into the wilderness and Satan was waiting for Him. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to a place where He could be tried and tested. I am sure Satan viewed this as an opportunity to destroy Jesus, but God had a different plan. Jesus was to be the perfect man who lived in perfect submission to the Father. He would live His life to fulfill all righteousness and be an example for all of us. Jesus would not live His perfect life based upon His being God. But rather, having emptied himself of his godly powers and attributes, Jesus would live His life as a lowly human being in total obedience to the Father. The temptation of Jesus was part of the obedience He demonstrated to His Father.

Now Satan had given it his very best trying to get Jesus to sin. But when that did not work he went away not knowing or suspecting what Jesus would do next. The Bible tells us that Jesus went up into Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. His ministry would now begin. The apostle Peter said that Jesus went about doing good and healing all of those who were oppressed by Satan. Jesus was healing the sick, casting out demons, and preaching to the poor. There had been many prophets in Israel before Jesus who preached to the people. Some had even performed great miracles. Satan had seen this before. Although this was irritating to him, it did not significantly change Satan's work upon the earth. After all, he had millions of demons to do his work.

Satan ruled over a great empire that perhaps spanned as much as one third of the universe. He had countless legions of fallen angels that served him. Many of these angels had great power and authority and ruled over entire nations. Thus Satan himself had little need to personally interfere in the affairs of men. Perhaps he only gets personally involved when it is a rare and difficult situation like that of the Godly man named Job. On one occasion, at the

beginning of Job's story, all of the angels of heaven were gathering before God's throne and Satan decided that he too would attend. When God asked him where he had been, he replied that he had been to and fro across the earth checking things out. God asked him if he had noticed the godly man, Job. Of course Satan knew about Job. He was a devout worshipper of God. This led to Satan's getting involved with the persecution and attack on Job and his family. After Job's suffering was complete, God blessed Job again and restored all that he had lost plus more.

The Bible does not specifically tell us where Satan went after he tempted Jesus. Perhaps he continued travelling through Israel, meeting with his demonic angels, giving them instructions on what they should do if they encountered Jesus. There is another distinct possibility. The apostle John said that Satan is the accuser of the brethren of Christ and that he stands before God's throne day and night accusing us of our sins. Satan might have ascended back into heaven to the throne room of God where he continued his accusations. After all, Jesus was just a single man living in one small country among a people who were under the oppression of the mighty Roman Empire. There was no radio, television, or Internet. There were no newspapers. Any problems that Jesus might cause would have to be face to face. And without sound systems to amplify His voice, how many people could He talk to at one time? And for a man living in a time without automobiles, buses, or even bicycles, how far could He travel in a day? For Satan, who ruled over a vast immeasurable empire, Jesus would, at worst, be an isolated and local problem. Satan had no idea the trap that he was about to fall into.

This lesson is **important** because it suggests what Satan might have done after he unsuccessfully tried to tempt Jesus to sin. Satan's empire spanned a third of the universe, but didn't fully understand what Jesus was about to accomplish.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that Satan's powers are limited. He roams the earth, looking for those he can deceive, but also spends time before God's throne accusing believers, trying to prove to God they deserve to die as sinners.

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

1. When did Jesus begin to work miracles? [Pause 5 seconds]
  - A. If you said, "Jesus began His work after He was baptized by John and tempted by Satan," you are correct.
2. Name one of the places that Satan might have gone after he tempted Jesus? [Pause]
  - A. If you said, "Satan might have ascended into heaven to the throne room of God to accuse the righteous," then you answered correctly.
3. Who does most of Satan's work upon the earth? [Pause]
  - A. If you said, "Most of Satan's work upon the earth is done by legions of Satan's fallen angels," you are right.

This lesson is very important as it sets the stage for the rest of the events that will transpire in Satan's defeat. Your **assignment** is to watch this lesson at least three times and then find someone and teach them what you have learned.