

Finishing Well

Lesson #27

Spiritual Warfare in the GOSPELS: Luke 4

July 12, 2023

In Genesis 3:15 Satan learned: A woman would have a child which would spell his destruction: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

As we open the pages of the New Testament, we have the advent of the promised seed of the woman, our Savior.

Gal. 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters.

Rev. 12:4b-5a and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. ⁵ And she brought forth a man child,...

Through the bloody decree of Herod, Satan tried to destroy the seed by slaying every male child under two years.

Matt. 2:13 Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt and stay there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to kill Him."

Satan knew from the beginning of history that a man would come to destroy him.

- Satan undoubtedly knew that Jesus was the "seed of the woman," the "Son of God," the King of Israel, the Messiah who had come to destroy him and to establish an everlasting righteous kingdom.

Satan's Motive: Stop Jesus at all costs.

IF Jesus could not be defeated by Satan, perhaps an agreement could be negotiated.

An alliance could be established and the "kingdom of Satan" could be shared.

The Lord's Temptation By Satan: Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

The term "temptation" is employed in two very different senses.

1. Temptation is, on the one hand, a solicitation to sin, to do that which is contrary to the will and the word of God. Temptation is an attempt to cause a person to sin. Satan's efforts at temptation always fall into this category.
2. Temptation from God's point of view is a "test," an opportunity for one to be proven righteous. Thus, in the case of Job,
 - Satan sought to bring Job to the point of forsaking his faith, to the point of sinning.
 - God's purpose was to deepen Job's faith, as well as to demonstrate to Satan that Job's love for God was not based upon the material blessings which God bestowed upon him.

To know the mindset and the methods of our enemy, the Devil, we are forewarned and forearmed as to the temptations by which he will seek to destroy us. "... in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes" [II Cor. 2:11].

It was Satan's attempt to nullify the purpose of Christ's first coming, to prevent the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, where God's will would be done.

Jesus is being tested as the "Son of God." Israel's Messiah and King.

To fail these tests would be to nullify all of God's purposes and promises which were to be realized through the Son of God.

II Cor. 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

From the standpoint of our Lord's ministry and calling, His entire mission is contingent upon His victory over every temptation of Satan.

Jesus exemplified the use of the Word of God in recognizing the error of Satan's solicitations and the course of obedience to the will of the Father. His example in facing temptation is vital to all who desire to live a life in conformity with the will and the Word of God.

In the 3 challenges and solicitations of Satan in the temptation accounts of Matthew and Luke we find the three primary avenues by which Satan seeks to make inroads into our lives to devastate our spiritual walk with God through Christ.

Our survival as saints depends upon our knowing Satan and ourselves, and thereby putting on the "full armor of God" so we are able to withstand his attacks.

Luke 4:1 And Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Note: The Spirit does not always lead us "beside the still waters."

The Spirit led Jesus to a long and difficult trial.

Note: The two meanings of temptation have long been recognized by Biblical scholars.

We might therefore maintain that Jesus was "tempted" in two senses in our text.

- From the vantage point of Satan's intended purpose, our Lord was tempted. Satan wished to prompt the "Son of God" to act in disobedience to the Father, thus terminating His ability to fulfill His mission.
- From the viewpoint of God, this was a "test" of Jesus Christ, proving Him to be suited and qualified to fulfill His mission as the Son of God.

Mark 1:12 And immediately [euthus] the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

- Emphasizes the continuity between His baptism and His temptation.
- No lag time between the baptism & filling of the Holy Spirit and the temptation.

Adrian Rogers *Be prepared. As soon as God opens the windows of Heaven to bless us, the devil will open the doors of Hell to blast us.* Right after the moment of blessing is the moment of testing. Heaven had opened; now Hell opened.

Satan loves to attack us when we think we are the strongest.

"After a high time often comes a hard time; on the heels of a triumph, trouble often follows."

I Cor. 10:12 Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- The Son of God was filled with the Holy Spirit to meet this temptation.

- You & I cannot face all the temptations in our own strength.

Luke 4:2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

⁴ And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written,

That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

God's Word is a sword to use in spiritual combat. Knowing and obeying God's Word is an effective weapon. Faith in God's promises is critical because Satan also knows Scripture and is adept at twisting it to suit his purpose.

Obeying the Scripture is more important than simply quoting the verse.

1. Challenging Our Identity

Luke 4:1-13 Satan came against Jesus to tempt Him in the wilderness. On two different occasions, Satan began his temptations with these words: "If you are the Son of God."

- The devil chose a time when Jesus was physically weak and hungry to attack His identity.

Note: Satan was trying to get Jesus to take a shortcut to solve his immediate problem at the expense of his long-range goals; to seek comfort at the sacrifice of His discipline.

Note: Satan often tempts us when we are vulnerable: under physical or emotional stress; lonely, tired, weighing big decisions.

- Even if you are doubting what God has said, protect yourself by meditating on the unshakable truths of God's Word.

Adrian Rogers: Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.

Mark 1:34 Satan knew exactly who Jesus was. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him. To make his wiles more effective, he hits us during a crisis or a spiritual struggle and suggests,

- "If you were a child of God, this wouldn't happen."
- "If you were actually a Christian, God would help you right now."

Key Point: The fact the helmet is related to salvation indicates Satan's blows are directed at the believer's security and assurance in Christ. I must be spiritually equipped with the "helmet of salvation" firmly in place to withstand such attacks against our identity and God's character.

2. Offering A Tempting Alternative To Obedience

Cunningly, Satan knew better than to suggest that Jesus forget the whole salvation plan and go back to heaven. He suggested another path but avoided strict obedience to God's will.

Luke 4:5-8 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

⁷ If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

⁸ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

This temptation was aimed at the humanity of the Son of Man. Jesus knew what it felt like to be in the flesh. He knew what spikes would feel like in His hands and feet. He knew what rejection and mockery would feel like when He was stripped naked and paraded before the crowds. Satan was offering Him a compromise, an alternative path.

What if Jesus could "save the world" without having to suffer crucifixion?

What if He could take a shortcut and possess all the world's kingdoms now?

Note: Satan offered Christ a glorious kingdom in return for worship. It was his to give.

IF Jesus had accepted Satan's offer, He could have by-passed the cross.

However, Jesus was "obedient unto death," and God "highly exalted Him." (Phil. 2:8-10)

The Father had already promised to give the Son all the kingdoms of the world [Ps. 2:7-8], but first the Son had to suffer and die [John 12:23-33; Rev. 5:8-10].

God's pattern is to start with suffering and end with glory [I Peter 5:10].

Satan's pattern is to start with glory and end with suffering. Satan wants us to sacrifice the eternal for the temporary and take the "easy way." There are no "shortcuts" in the Christian life. There is no easy way to spiritual victory and maturity.

If the perfect Son of God had to hang on a tree before He could sit on the throne, then His disciples should not expect an easier way of life [Luke 9:22-26; Acts 24:22].

Note: When temptations seem especially strong or when you think you can rationalize giving in, consider whether Satan may be trying to block God's purposes for your life.

3. Presume Upon God To Save You From Harm.

Luke 4:9-12 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

¹⁰ For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

¹¹ And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

➤ Satan misquotes the passage from Psalm 91.

Satan questioned the Father's love when he tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread.

He questioned His hope when he offered Jesus the world's kingdoms this side of the cross.

Satan questioned the Father's faithfulness when he asked Jesus to jump from the temple and prove that the Father would keep His promise (Ps. 91:11-12).

Thus, the enemy attacked the three basic virtues of the Christian life—faith, hope, and love.

When Satan tempted our Lord, recorded in Matt. 4 and Luke 4, he gave up, for the moment.

But Luke makes it clear that it was only for a time, only until he could regroup:

Luke 4:13 And when the devil had finished all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season. [until an opportune time]

McGee: "Not only did Satan tempt our Lord with several different lines of approach, he purposed to continue to tempt Him when the opportunity presented itself.

Satan is an opportunist, with an almost endless variety of "schemes."

McGee All of His life, from the moment He was born and Herod sought to destroy Him, Satan was making attacks on Him.

Could Christ have fallen & yielded to Satan's suggestions when He was tempted?

- The answer is a categorical no. He could not fall!

Was it a legitimate temptation? Yes, it was a test to demonstrate that:

- He could not fall,
- He was the immaculate Son of God,
- He was an impeccable Savior,
- He was able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through Him.

Consider: It is clear both from Scripture and from the testimony of many of God's servants that Satan can access our mind and emotions.

Matt. 16:13, 16-17 Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answers, saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus commends him for his response, "Blessed are you Simon, Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

In Matt. 16:21-23 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Key Point: In the first instance, Peter's mind was influenced by the Lord. A few minutes later Peter was under the influence of Satan and his thoughts were satanically inspired.

KEY POINT: SATAN'S purpose is to thwart the purpose and plan of God.

John 8:44 *He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,*

- *for there is no truth in him.*

Truth is a crucial component for every believer in this spiritual battle—without it, believers **are** not prepared to stand and fight.

Matthew Henry: The belt girds or secures ALL the other pieces of our armor.

- Truth should cleave to us as a belt cleaves to our body.
- The belt of truth of the spiritual armor holds the sword of the Spirit, linking truth and the Word of God [John 17:17]. The Word of God is truth.
- The belt of truth is a crucial piece of defensive armor guarding our inmost being in the battle against the lies and deceptions of the enemy.

Without an understanding of truth, we are left vulnerable to being "carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming." [Eph. 4:14]

Key Point: *The most important battlefield of your life is your mind!* Spiritual warfare is primarily a matter of the mind.

As long as the mind is held in check and is renewed to right thinking by the Word of God, the majority of spiritual attacks will fail.

Luke 4:13 And when the devil had finished all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season. [Now insert John 1:19-4:45]

Before our Lord appeared at the synagogue in Nazareth in Luke 4:16, He had ministered publicly for about a year around Galilee. Christ's earthly ministry was only 3½ years long, but Luke takes ~30% of that and says absolutely nothing about it.

During this year of ministry, you look to the book of John. [1:19-4:45]

John 1:19-34 He had been introduced as the Messiah by John the Baptist.

John 1:35-51 Called some (if not all) of His disciples.

John 2:1-12 Water turned to wine at Cana

John 2:13-22 Cleansed the temple in Jerusalem.

John 3:1-21 Talked with Nicodemus, a prominent Jewish teacher.

John 3:22-4:3 Jesus baptizing in Judea.

John 4:4-42 Proclaimed the gospel in Samaria.

John 4:43-45 Jesus returned to Galilee. [Mark 1:14; Luke 4:14-15]

John 4:46-54 He healed the nobleman's son from a distance, the nobleman approaching Him in Cana, while his son was ill in Capernaum.

After John 1-4, now insert Luke 4:14-15

Luke 4:14-15 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee:

and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about.

¹⁵ And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

Reports of Jesus' ministry thus reached the people of Nazareth before He did.

When He finally arrived, the level of anticipation and excitement was high.

Luke 4:16-21 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Then He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him. He said to them,

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

He finishes the prophecy - one that Jewish people had read for nearly 700 years - by identifying himself as the one spoken of by Isaiah.

Luke 4:18-19

Isa. 61:1-2a

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me	The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me
Because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor	because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek
he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted	he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted
to preach deliverance to the captives	to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and recovering of sight to the blind	
to set at liberty them that are bruised,	and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.	To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD
	and the day of vengeance of our God

Note: The clause "recovery of sight to the blind" is noticeably absent.

However, most quotes of the Old Testament in the New Testament are from the Septuagint.

Isa. 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,"

Note: Jesus did not quote the last part of Isa. 61: the day of vengeance of our God.

- This will occur at the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ.

Wiersbe: Luke 4:22-28 The problem was that His listeners would not believe in Him. They saw Him only as the son of Mary and Joseph, the Boy they had watched grow up in their own city. Furthermore, they wanted Him to perform in Nazareth the same miracles He had done in Capernaum, but He refused. That's the meaning of the phrase, "Physician, heal thyself."

Do a miracle! At first, they admired the way He taught, but it didn't take long for their admiration to turn into antagonism. Jesus reminded them of God's goodness to the Gentiles! The prophet Elijah bypassed all the Jewish widows and helped a Gentile widow in Sidon.

[I Kings 17:8-16]. Elisha healed a Gentile leper from Syria [II Kings 5:1-15].

Our Lord's message of grace was a blow to the proud Jewish exclusivism of the congregation, and they would not repent. Imagine this hometown boy saying that Jews had to be saved by grace just like the pagan Gentiles.

Luke 4:28-30 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,²⁹ And rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

Augustine "They love truth when it enlightens them but hate truth when it accuses them."

Despite the unbelief of the people in Nazareth, the Scriptures declared that Jesus of Nazareth is God's Son, the Messiah sent to fulfill His promises.

The people who do not want Him and who reject "the acceptable year of the Lord" will one day face "the day of vengeance of our God" [Isa. 61:2]. How significant that Jesus stopped reading at that very place!

Luke 4:30-32, 36 But He passing through the midst of them went His way,

³¹ And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

- Jesus left Nazareth and set up His headquarters in Capernaum [Matt. 4:13-16], the home of Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

³² And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power.

- Greek word *ekplessō*, "be amazed, overwhelmed" in the imperfect tense, the idea of continued action: "they were continually amazed...."

³⁶ And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Delivering a Demoniac in a Capernaum Synagogue

This is the first of seven miracles where Jesus casts out evil spirits.

1. Man in a synagogue	Luke 4:33-36
2. A blind and mute demoniac	Matt. 12:22-30 Mark 3:20-27 Luke 11:14-23
3. The Gadarene demoniac	Matt. 8:28-34 Mark 5:1-20 Luke 8:26-39
4. A mute demoniac	Matt. 9:32-33
5. Daughter of a Syrophenician mother	Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
6. A boy at the base of Mt. Hermon	Matt. 17:14-18; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:38-42
7. Woman in a synagogue	Luke 13:10-17

This is the first of at least 3 occasions when evil spirits gave terrified testimony that Jesus was indeed God's Son.

Mark 3:11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

Luke 4:41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

James 2:19 would later write of this:

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Luke 4:33-34 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴ Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

It can be truly said that in the demonic world, unlike the world of sinful men, there are no atheists! These evil spirits knew exactly with whom they were dealing.

1. The demon called Him "Jesus of Nazareth," acknowledging the Savior's humanity.
2. The demon called Him, "thou Son of God," acknowledging the Savior's deity.

- The first instance of demonic possession in Luke's gospel.
- First report of a miracle being performed on the Sabbath; NO protest
- The man was utterly dominated by the demon which so fully controlled the man that the voice and the spirit was the demon's.
- The demon in the man has more spiritual discernment than many in attendance.
- The holy, divine and powerful presence of Jesus seems to arouse intense fear.
 - ❖ The demon fears that Jesus will destroy its ability to influence the man.

Luke 4:35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

Jesus Shuts Up The Demons Who Are Speaking Truth!

Distraction: The demons are creating a scene, interrupting, and drawing attention away from Jesus' teaching. They are subverting His purpose and ministry. If they can turn people's minds from truth to the spectacular, they can prevent truth from working change and freedom.

- The demons knew He was the Christ. [Luke 4:41; Mark 3:11-12]
- It is not time to declare Jesus' Divinity and Messiahship.

Jesus prohibits some of the people He heals from disclosing it, because to do so would cause Jesus to be mobbed in every village He comes to [Mark 1:45].

- Jesus seldom speaks of himself as "Son of God," but as "Son of Man."

Using the term "Son of God" would cause Him to be accused of blasphemy and sidetrack His ministry [John 10:33; 19:7]. The demons at Capernaum are wittingly or unwittingly involved in subverting Jesus' own timetable for his ministry and self-disclosure.

- Jesus does not want demonic endorsement.

Luke 4:36-37 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.

³⁷ And the fame of Him went out into every place of the country round about.

Luke 4:40-41 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

⁴¹ And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God.

And He rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

- Jesus commanded them to be silent to show His authority over them.
- He wanted his listeners to believe he was the Messiah because of His words and not because of the devil's words.
- He would be revealing His identity according to God's timetable.
- Jesus would show himself as the suffering servant before He becomes the great King.
- To reveal his identity as King too soon would stir up the crowds with the wrong expectations of what he came to do.

Jesus delivered this poor wretched man of his demon and restores his speech and sight.

- Only specific NT example of a person who was blind, mute, and demon-possessed that was healed of all three ailments.

The wicked Pharisees accused Him of doing this miracle through the power of Satan.

- Jesus warned them regarding the unpardonable sin.

Matt. 12:31-32 Wherefore I say unto you, of All manner sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Mark 3:29-30 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.³⁰ Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Note: The unpardonable sin is in the context of the Pharisees attributing His actions to the power of Satan. The Pharisees knowingly despised the work of the Spirit.

- It is not something one does accidentally.
- It is a rebellious rejection of God The Spirit's activity.

When Jesus warned the Jewish leaders, He was actually warning the Jewish nation.

- They could reject the Son of God while He was on earth and God would not judge them immediately: "Father, forgive them." Luke 23:34

But when the Spirit of God came at Pentecost as proof that Jesus was the Christ and was alive and the believers did many marvelous works, the leaders still refused to believe.

They stoned Stephen.

- This was their last opportunity: they rejected the evidence and died in unbelief.
- They rejected the witness of the Spirit and could not be forgiven.
- The result is eternal damnation. [Mark 3:29-30]

Wiersbe: Can this sin be committed today?

Key Point: Jesus made it clear that God can and will forgive all sins.

The work of the Holy Spirit in a sinner is to bring conviction of sin and the need of a Savior.

Many will respond to the work of the Holy Spirit, repent of their sin and confess their need of a Savior. The Holy Spirit will then indwell the believer.

Rom. 10:9-10, 13 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Key: Many will reject the working of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and refuse the Savior.

Result: Unpardonable sin = Eternal damnation [Mark 3:29-30]