

Luke 4

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Introduction:

The Content:

The Temptation of Jesus
His Preaching at Nazareth
A Demoniac Cured at Capernaum
Peter's Mother-in-law Healed

1. Now we have reached the ministry of Jesus. As a test before he begins, He is tempted by the devil — Satan. These were very real temptations and Jesus could have succumbed to one of them. While He was Deity, He also bore the susceptibilities of humanity.
2. All of us are subject to sin from three broad categories:
 - a) the cravings of the body that are contrary to God's will,
 - b) the desires of the eye to see what God has restricted for our own good, and finally,
 - c) the pride of life - not our own satisfaction with accomplishments, but an inordinate desire to be great in the eyes of others.
3. Heaven had just proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God (Luke 3:22), and the claim did not go unnoticed by the devil. Three times he said to Jesus, **"If you are the son of God . . ."**
 - a) In the first case recorded here, God had provided a condition for fasting. For Jesus to terminate the fast with a miracle would have conflicted with the Spirit who led him there.

- b) In the second case, (“**If you are the son of God**” is implied) he was shown all of the kingdoms of the empire. Airline pilots have commented on the amazing visibility at times in the Mediterranean area. The devil offered to set up a one-world government with Jesus as the head if Jesus would worship him just one time. The temptation was countered with Deuteronomy.
- c) The final case was for Jesus to put himself in harms way and expect the Father to rescue him. Jesus used the same strategy this third time. He answered with Deuteronomy.
4. The first Adam had *failed* these three trials in a perfect environment in the Garden of Eden. The second Adam *succeeded* in an awful desert place.
5. Where did Luke get this story? Jesus must have repeated it to his disciples and Luke learned it from one of them. It is in Matthew’s account as well.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(4:1.) Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, (2) where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.

- **Full of the Holy Spirit:** The Spirit had come upon Him at His baptism in 3:22.
- “The wilderness sets in back of Jericho and extends thence along the whole western shore of the Dead Sea. The northern end of this region is in full view from the Jordan as one looks westward, and a more desolate and forbidding landscape it would be hard to find.” - **J. W. McGarvey**

(3.) Then the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread." (4) But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" [Deuteronomy 8:3]

- To restate: **People will never find life in material things.**
- Just as the defeat in the Garden of Eden centered on food, so the **devil** uses it as his first tool on Jesus.
- Jesus had not performed any miracles yet. He had the power — and knew it— or else there would have been no temptation. Later He fed thousands with bread, showing that He had the ability.
- “We should note that Jesus wrought no selfish miracle. Such an act would have been contrary to all Scripture precedent.” — **McGarvey**
- Any of us can prepare to use the same defense of quoting **Scripture** that he did. There is power in memorizing. The lesson here is there is power in the written Word. All believers must see this and all who teach the Word to others must learn that it is not their views, but the written Word where the Holy Spirit's power is located.

(5.) Then the devil took Him up and revealed to Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. (6) "I will give You the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. (7) I will give it all to You if You will worship me." (8) Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only Him.'" [Deuteronomy 6:13]

- **“Because they are mine to give to anyone I please.”**
This is an appeal to the eye. “It was the world's honors to one who had for thirty years led the life of a village carpenter. . . .” —**McGarvey**. The devil had usurped this authority. It had not been handed over to him. Liar that he is. Ephesians 2:2.
- This is a direct attack on the first commandment not to have any gods before the God of Heaven. He was tempted to *compromise* just a wee bit. It would take only a moment for Jesus to worship Satan. However, Jesus knew that black is black and white is white and not an indefinable gray. His followers must believe the same.

(9.) Then the devil took Him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If You are the Son of God, jump off! (10) For the Scriptures say, 'He will order His angels to protect and guard you. [Psalm 91:11-12] (11) And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" [Psalm 91:11-12]

- This is an appeal to pride. “As a temptation, Satan’s words appeal to Jesus to be more religious; to put more trust and reliance upon the promises of the Father; and he puts him in the place—the temple—where he might argue that God could at least afford to let his promise fail.” — **J. W. McGarvey**
- The quotation shows “The devil's head is full of Scripture, but to no profit, for his heart is empty of it.” — **J. W. McGarvey**
- The passages quoted promised protection, not miraculous support for a bad choice.

(12.) Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'" [Deuteronomy 6:16]

(13) When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left Him until the next opportunity came.

- The departure of the devil was only temporary. See John 6:15 and Luke 22:28.

HIS PREACHING AT NAZARETH

(14.) Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about Him spread quickly through the whole region.

(15) He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.



- Just as Jesus had been led by the Spirit into the wilderness in verse 1, so now the Spirit was operative in His ministry in a miracle-working way.
- Communities were just a few miles apart in the Galilee of that time. Josephus claimed there were 240 towns and villages with a total population of about three million. Each village had its **synagogue**.
- **Synagogues** arose following the Babylonian Captivity. They were the religious center in each community. There is no Biblical command to have them.

(16.) When He came to the village of Nazareth, His boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. (17) The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. He

unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

- Jesus customarily attended the meeting each Sabbath — each Saturday. This must have been tedious for the Word made flesh, but He attended anyway. We can do no less.
- The assembly included reading the Scriptures -- the Old Testament as we know it. The scroll owned by the **synagogue** was delivered to Him and He read from **Isaiah**.

(18.) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, for He has anointed Me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, (19) and that the time of the LORD's favor has come. "

- Quoted from Isaiah 61:1-2. It follows the LXX generally, but not precisely. Jesus would have read from Hebrew and translated on the fly to Aramaic for his listeners. Luke writes in Greek for His readers. And of course, we are reading an English translation.
- In verse 14, Luke has said the **Spirit** was giving Him power. Here we learn this is a fulfillment of Isaiah. He read so the listeners understood that He was applying these statements to His own work. He preached without pay and taught His men to do the same.
- He proclaimed **release** from sin and recovering of sight, both physically and spiritually. He set at liberty those that were held by the devil.

(20.) He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at Him intently. (21) Then He began to speak to

them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

- The **attendant** was called the *Chazzan*. He is the one authorized to handle the **synagogue scrolls**. Jesus stood -- probably behind a speaker's stand that held the **scroll**. Then he **sat down** to speak. He flatly asserted that He was the **fulfillment** of the Isaiah passage (vs. 21).

(22.) Everyone spoke well of Him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from His lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

- His presentation would have been the envy of a *Toastmasters Club*. He was a skilled speaker, but their evaluation was superficial. How could a local man do this without training? How could he be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord?

(23.) Then He said, "You will undoubtedly quote Me this proverb: 'Physician, heal yourself'—meaning, 'Do miracles here in Your hometown like those You did in Capernaum.' (24) But I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in His own hometown. (25) "Certainly there were many needy widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the heavens were closed for three and a half years, and a severe famine devastated the land. (26) Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a foreigner—a widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon.

- He had been healing at rival **Capernaum** (vs. 23). We might paraphrase it "Charity begins at home." "Then do your healing here, too." (Vs. 23.)
- "In Nazareth Jesus was no more than the son of a carpenter . . . while abroad He was hailed as the prophet of

Galilee, 'mighty in word and deed' (Luke 24:19)." —

McGarvey

- **Israel** had rejected their own prophet **Elijah** and God sent him to a **foreign widow**. He was not acceptable in his own country. 1 Kings 17:8-16.
- The hungry widows in Israel did not ask for help from the prophet **Elijah**. God sent him to a Gentile lady.

(27.) And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian."

- **Elisha** was sent to heal the gentile **Naaman** from **leprosy**. **Elisha** was not viewed as a man of God in his own country. 2 Kings 5:1-14.
- The **lepers** in Israel had not ask for cleansing from **Elisha** even though he was a local **prophet**.

(28.) When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. (29) Jumping up, they mobbed Him and forced Him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push Him over the cliff, (30) but He passed right through the crowd and went on His way.

- His sermon was understood and angrily rejected, even though it came straight from the Living Word. **Barclay** says, "What angered the people was the apparent compliment that Jesus paid to gentiles. The Jews were so sure that they were God's people that they utterly despised all others. They believed that "God had created the gentiles to be fuel for the fires of hell." And here was this young Jesus, whom they all knew, preaching as if the gentiles were specially favoured by God. It was beginning to dawn upon them that there were things in

this new message the like of which they had never dreamed.

- They didn't mind working on this Sabbath Day because they cast Him forth and intended to murder Him. This is one of many "minor miracles" in Luke. God intended that He should die, but *not now* and *not this way*.

JESUS HEALS AT CAPERNAUM

(31.) Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day.

(32) There, too, the people were amazed at His teaching, for He spoke with authority.

- Along about this time, Jesus moved the family to **Capernaum**, making it His headquarters. Matthew 4:13.
- Capernaum was at the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee while Nazareth was in the hills. Jesus, unlike their customary teachers, did not quote earlier teachers and the written traditions. He was primary **authority** with statements like, "I say to you . . ."

(33.) Once when He was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon—an evil spirit—began shouting at Jesus, (34) "Go away! Why are You interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

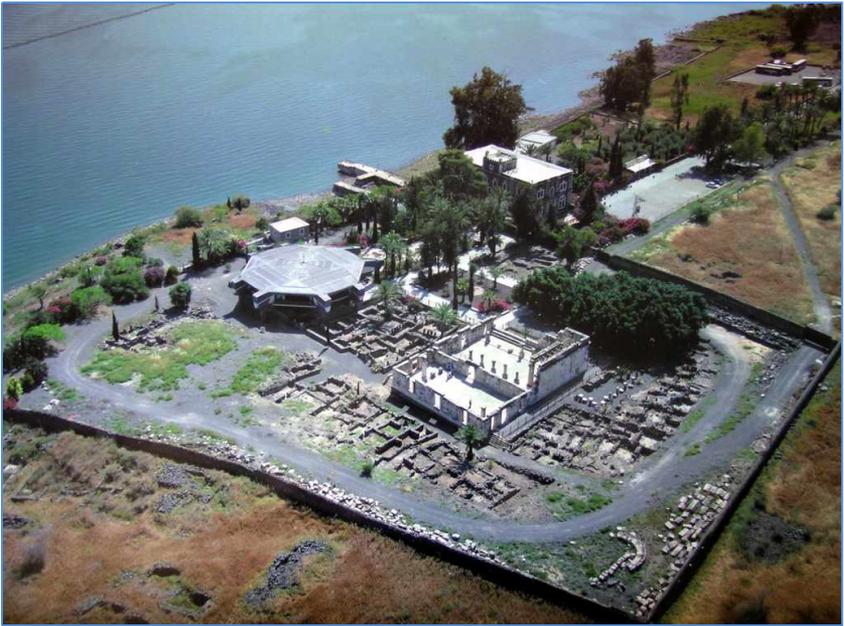


Photo of Capernaum. The synagogue building is in the center without a roof. Peter's home is under the visitors dome to its left.

- The heavenly connection of Jesus was verified by a **demon-possessed** man who came to the synagogue meeting.
- Luke the doctor accepted demon possession as real and did not confuse it with a disease. The spirits within the man knew Jesus' name and purpose to destroy them (vs. 34).
- **The Holy One:** Used of Jehovah in Isaiah 48:17 and 49:7.

(35.) Jesus cut him short. "Be quiet! Come out of the man," He ordered. At that, the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched; then it came out of him without hurting him further. (36) Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this man's words

possess! Even evil spirits obey Him, and they flee at His command!" (37) The news about Jesus spread through every village in the entire region.

- This **demon** believed, confessed and obeyed. Jesus had power over this **demon** and separated him from his unwilling host. If there is demon possession today, it is voluntary.
- **Evidence for the miracle:**
 - The exchange between Jesus and the **demon** was reported to Luke years later by a witness.
 - This event took place among reliable witnesses.
 - The multitudes were convinced that a demon had been cast out (vs. 37).
 - The report agrees with Matthew's and Mark's record.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED

(38.) After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where He found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. (39) Standing at her bedside, He rebuked the fever, and it left her. And she got up at once and prepared a meal for them.

- The **synagogue** met on the sabbath, Saturday. So this healing was on the sabbath. **Simon** Peter's house was a stone's throw away from the synagogue, near the shoreline of the lake. It has been excavated and can be seen today. See photo on page 9.
- **Evidence for the miracle:**
 - Dr. Luke calls it a **high fever**, but it was gone instantly.

- She began to work immediately. There was no long recovery period.
- Witnesses believed. See the results in vs. 40.

(40.) As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of His hand healed every one. (41) Many were possessed by demons; and the demons came out at His command, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But because they knew He was the Messiah, He rebuked them and refused to let them speak.

- The **sick** could not be carried until the sabbath was past at sundown. Now they came. Leviticus 23:32.
- Jesus did not heal selectively. He healed all who came. Jesus was doing the very things He had talked about in the Nazareth synagogue recorded in verses 18-19 above.
- "Those who are disposed to frequent spiritual seances and to seek information from mediums should remember that the Son of God permitted His disciples to receive no information from such sources. He forbade demons to speak in the presence of His own, even on the most important of all topics." — **J. W. McGarvey**

(42.) Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for Him, and when they finally found Him, they begged Him not to leave them. (43) But He replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent." (44) So He continued to travel around, preaching in synagogues throughout Judea.

- Mark informs us that Jesus had arisen early in the morning and had gone to a solitary place for prayer. Mark 1:35. But the crowd found him.
- They wanted the security of a healer, but Jesus had not come to operate a clinic, but to preach about the coming **kingdom of God**.
- Jesus was a man on a mission. He was **sent** by the Father. He kept His goal in sight in spite of temporary success.
- A textual problem arises in verse 44. Some ancient texts read *Galilee* while others say *Judea*. We think the context calls for Galilee, as the *American Standard* text has it.
- OR, Luke, writing to Theophilus in a distant place may have called the entire nation Judea.

The ministry of Jesus is underway. The Father has equipped Him with power and his arch-enemy has tested Jesus and He passed the test. He began his work in Nazareth where he grew up and they tried to kill Him. He moved on and had success in Capernaum and other localities.