

LEARNING FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS:

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matthew 4.1-11

Have you ever been misled by a slick salesman? Did you think it was a great deal until after the purchase, and then found out the product was not what you were led to believe? Most of us have probably experienced this to some degree – and hopefully learned one of those important “lessons of life.”

Satan, the “*father of lies*” (John 8.44), has been practicing deceit from the beginning of time and is busy today looking for easy marks that he might “*sift them as wheat*” (Luke 22.31). Or, as our adversary, the “*devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet. 5.8). The deceiver of the whole world works hard to attract those who belong to God, just as he tried to attract Jesus. In fact, Jesus “*was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (Heb. 4.15).

In the Gospels, the story of the temptation follows the account of Jesus’ baptism. After baptism, temptation comes. As people begin their Christian lives, Satan redoubles his efforts to destroy babes in Christ. The Scripture says that Satan is at war with all “*who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*” (Rev. 12.17). He will lie to us, promise us the moon, fill our minds with doubt, and do whatever it takes to deter us from the path of light.

Jesus taught us how to effectively deal with temptation – even on Satan’s turf. The devil used all three avenues of temptation: “*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (1 John 2.16) by appealing to Jesus’ hunger, position and opportunity, but Jesus answered each temptation with the same response, “*it is written*” (Matt. 4.4,6,10; cf., Deut. 8.3; 6.16; 6.13). It has been well said that if Jesus could beat the Devil with three little passages out of the book of Deuteronomy, we should be able to do so with the entire Bible in our possession!

Jesus prayed continually, meditated daily on the Word, and practiced denial of the flesh through fasting. His efforts to stay close to God carried Him through the toughest temptation. Similar efforts will do the same for us. Are you resisting Satan? Are you working at drawing near to God? Remember 1 Corinthians 10.12: “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*”

[BTW]