

The Temptation of Jesus - (Luke 4:1–13)

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’”

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;
¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

¹² Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. ¹

The temptation of Jesus - Notes from *The Bible Guide*

By his baptism, Jesus is commissioned for his life’s work. Immediately, he is subjected to fierce temptation by the devil. He spends forty days and nights in the desert—working out with prayer and fasting how he shall rightly use his power and status.

The devil tries to undermine Jesus’ sense of being God’s Son. He tempts him to use his power to turn stones to bread and feed himself. He tempts him to build a world empire—taking all the power of Caesar but using it for God. To do this would entail an endless series of compromises with evil. He tempts him to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, to land dramatically in the court of the Gentiles—always assuming that God’s angels will catch him!

Each of these temptations attacks Jesus at one of his strong points—his power to work miracles, his longing to change the world and his need to spread his message. But, in each case, Jesus answers Satan with words of scripture. He draws on the hard-won lessons that the Israelites learned in their wilderness years with Moses.

If Jesus is to fulfil the calling of Israel, he must worship God alone (Deuteronomy 6:13). He must rely on God’s word for his life, just as he relies on bread for his body (Deuteronomy 8:3). There is to be no complaining, no cheating and no turning back (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Jesus wins this first struggle with the devil, but Satan will return.

These temptations are crucial for Jesus. In the months that follow, he will feed a multitude, refuse to become king and resist the taunts to escape from the cross. These are the very choices he made in the desert.²

¹ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Lk 4:1–13). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² Knowles, A. (2001). *The Bible guide* (1st Augsburg books ed., pp. 475–476). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.