

LUKE

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Chapter Four

Luke now reports on the first ministry of Jesus beginning with His temptation by the devil. This account is particularly interesting for it could not have come from anyone other than Jesus. Also note that these could not have been temptations unless He knew that He had special powers to actually do what the devil asked Him to do. Matthew has the second and third temptations in reverse order for unknown reasons. The temptations are important for they reveal what sort of Messiah He was to be. He was not to use His powers for personal gain or for personal pleasure (number 1). He was not to do pointless miracles (number 3) or to establish a mighty empire to rule the world in righteousness (number 2). He had just been baptized by John the Baptist and was now setting out to spread the message of the Kingdom of God.

Luke 4:1-4

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness (2) for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. (3) And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." (4) And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

Matthew and Mark inform us that He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit but only Luke tells us that He was full of the Spirit. Being led by the Spirit informs us that God's plan was for Jesus to understand the type of Messiah He was to be. Forty is the number for trials and so Jesus was led around in the wilderness by the Spirit for this time period. Without eating during that time would have left Him humanly very weak and thus, humanly speaking, more susceptible to temptations. We know from 3:22 that Jesus had just heard a voice calling Him 'Son' and Satan tells Him to verify His Sonship by turning a particular stone to bread to satisfy His hunger. Jesus quoted from Deut. 8:33. Jesus knew that what did not correlate with scripture was not from God so He knew that the voice was not from God and so quoted the true Bible reference to the challenge (Deut 8:3). We are not just animals living on food and drink as Jesus would later state: *Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. (John 4:34)*

Luke 4:5-8

And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. (6) And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. (7) "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." (8) Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Matthew states that the devil took Jesus to the top of a high mountain to give Him this vision but Luke only states that the devil led Him up to show Him the pomp of the world. The devil claimed it as his own as indeed it is:

- John 12:31 *"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*
- John 14:30 *"I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;*
- John 16:11 *and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.*

However the kingdom of Jesus is very different from the kingdom of the world:

- John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."
- Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- 1Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

The only way that this temptation could have been tempting at all to Jesus is if He looked at such an offer as a way to have righteousness rule the world but to do so would require worshiping the devil and that would indeed take away any righteousness result. So Jesus again answered with scripture (Deut 6:13).

Luke 9-12

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; (10) for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' (11) and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" (12) And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Here the devil is learning from Jesus and quotes scripture (Psa 91:11) but he misquotes scripture to twist it to his need as often people do in preaching their points rather than a true exegesis of scripture. Eisegesis is the interpretation of a text or portion of text so that the process introduces one's own presuppositions, agendas, or biases into and onto the text. This is commonly referred to as reading into the text. Eisegesis is the work of the devil whereas the true preacher will use exegesis. Jesus rejected the temptation by referring to the real meaning of the Bible (Deut 6:16). We would do well to remember this and never test God. The portions of Deuteronomy referred to by Jesus are all related to the wilderness experiences of Israel and so are very appropriate for His experience.

Luke 4:13

When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Satan failed in his attempts to get Jesus to yield to his temptations but he was not through with Jesus. He knew the task of Jesus and would continue to tempt Him throughout His ministry. The same is true for all followers of Jesus for we will also never be rid of the temptations of the world that is controlled by Satan:

- Matt 6:13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'
- Matt 26:41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- Luke 8:13 "Those on the rocky *soil are* those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no *firm* root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.
- 1Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
- 1Tim 6:9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.
- 2Peter 2:9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

Luke 4:14-16

And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. (15) And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. (16) And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

It is not clear why news about Him spread for Luke has not reported Jesus as having done anything yet. Luke does report in verse 23 that Jesus had done some works in Capernaum. Perhaps it was evident that He was in the power of the Spirit by His demeanor and that is what news had spread. Luke elsewhere reports that Jesus started His ministry in Galilee:

- Luke 23:5 *But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."*
- Acts 10:37 *you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.*

Stating that Jesus taught in their synagogues implies a preaching tour. Finally He came back to Nazareth, His hometown. This is the earliest description of a synagogue service and our later understanding of the process would dictate that the meeting would begin with prayer and then a reading of the Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy). Then someone would read from the prophets. There were no ministers as we understand the term today but the local synagogue authorities would invite someone to read and teach. The synagogue was used for instruction and for worship. Jesus is stated as standing to read that indicates a respect for the scripture and is often used by ministers today when they read from the Bible. However there is no indication that the congregation was also asked to stand. The actual preaching seems to have done sitting: *At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me.* (Matt 26:55)

Luke 4:17-22

And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, (18) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME,

BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, (19) TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." (20) And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. (21) And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (22) And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

He did not choose the particular book but the book of Isaiah was given to Him. He then chose the particular passages:

Isa 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; (2) To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

The words of Isaiah prophesy of the Messiah's ministry to people in distress. This scripture originally developed themes from the Jubilee year or the year of release (Lev 25:10). However Jesus did not apply it to a forgiveness of physical debts but for the forgiveness of spiritual debts. It is important to note that He did not complete Isaiah 61:2. It would not have been acceptable ordinarily for a reader to stop in the middle of a sentence so this must have some meaning. The rest of the sentence is about the vengeance of God and His comfort to those who mourn. This portion of the ministry of Jesus would not occur until His Second Advent or the End Times. Instead of reading that portion He ended with: "*to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord*". He is proclaiming what Isaiah wrote before this:

1. preach the gospel to the poor. Jesus came to deliver the gospel of hope to those who know they are spiritually poor. The rich often do not realize that they are spiritually poor for they think they are secure in their wealth. It is the worldly poor who usually also understand their spiritual poverty.
2. proclaim release to the captives. This does not necessarily mean those in physical prison cells but those who are captive by the power of sensuality, drugs and alcohol, unclean living, evil tempers and dispositions, and all that Paul writes about in the first chapter of Romans.
3. recovery of sight to the blind. We will see that Jesus will restore sight to some who were physically blind but the primary meaning here is that His message will bring light to those who are spiritually blind.
4. free those who are oppressed. Humanity was oppressed by the Fall and such continues today. Jesus came to free those who are spiritually dead because of the Fall.

This list reminds me of the beatitudes:

Matt 5:3-11 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (5) "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (7) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (10) "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11)

"Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Jesus then rolled up the scroll and handed it back to the attendant and sat as was the custom of the one chosen to preach. Everyone was fixated on Him as they must have been wondering what He was going to say about the verses He carefully chose. He then applied the scripture to Himself and none of the scribes had ever said that so the crowd was sitting in amazement. They were impressed by His gracious words or His attractive way of speaking but Luke does not write of their acceptance. They were astonished that someone from their home town, a person whom they could call Joseph's son, meaning that they thought they knew Him, could speak this way.

Luke 4:23-27

And He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.'" (24) And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. (25) "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; (26) and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. (27) "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

The precise meaning of this proverb in this context has brought trouble to a number of people. Attaching it to the next sentence, it probably means that they want Him to heal people in His hometown as He had done in Capernaum. Luke does not report what Jesus did at Capernaum until later in his book (4:31; 7:1; 10:15), and some critics think that this portion was moved forward by an editor. However a better explanation is that Jesus saw with prophetic insight how the people from His hometown would react to what He was to do at Capernaum. The original Greek transliterates "amen" from the Hebrew word rather than "in truth" or "truly" as some translations have the beginning of verse 24. Amen was a word used by prophets and Jesus seems to be using it here to accent the truth of His prophetic work. He knew that He would not be welcome in His hometown and told them that He was not surprised at their rejection of Him. His reply would anger them terribly as He told them that the prophet Elijah came only to a Gentile widow in a time of great famine. Similarly Jesus told them that the prophet Elisha cleansed only a Gentile of leper (2 Kings 5:1-14) rather than many lepers in Israel. It is important that He said Naaman was cleansed for the Jews taught that a Gentile could be healed of the skin disease but would never be clean.

Luke 4:28-30

And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; (29) and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. (30) But passing through their midst, He went His way.

The reaction was certainly anticipated and even fueled by the words of Jesus that could have led them to think that He was saying that God was going to bypass unrepentant Israel and Gentiles would receive the blessings of God instead of them. The group does not just want to throw Him out of town. They wanted to kill Him! It could be that Satan was leading the people to put Jesus in the position of the third temptation but Jesus did not let them do that. Jesus is said to have only walked through them and went away. This seems like a rather calm reaction by Jesus to this angry mob and Luke does not elaborate. The discussion of this rejection at Nazareth by Matthew (13:54-58) and by Mark (6:1-6a) does not include the cliff episode and they both report that Jesus came into the synagogue with some disciples. The omission of the cliff episode by Matthew and Mark is not bothersome for different writers have different perspectives and reasons for specific reporting. It is not known why Luke does not report the choosing of disciples until later for the reporting of the events at the synagogue are very similar among the three reports. Perhaps he wants to only show the actions of Jesus as the Christ without the complication of additional disciples. It does not seem that Jesus ever returned to Nazareth indicating that a rejection by Jesus can be final.

Luke 4:31-34

And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; (32) and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority. (33) In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, (34) "Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"

This is the first of Luke's five healings on the Sabbath so certainly the proper use of the Sabbath was of considerable interest to Luke. Originality was not a highly praised trait of the rabbis who would cite predecessors for their statements so the people were amazed that Jesus taught with authority. There is little in the Bible about demon possession either before or after the incarnation but much is stated during His ministry. Those who have studied Revelation with us understand that the reason for this change is that Satan and his followers were cast down to earth at the incarnation of Jesus. Of course the devil has been active in the world since its creation but Jesus came to destroy his works: *the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.* (1 John 3:8) This man was controlled by a demon who recognized Jesus and the opposition between Him and his kind. Mark also wrote of this event: *Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, (24) saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"* (Mark 1:23-24) John also used this unusual title for Jesus: *"We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."* (John 6:69) This outcry of the demon demonstrates the attitude of demons taught Jesus: *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.* (James 2:19)

Luke 4:35-38

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any

harm. (36) And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, "What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out." (37) And the report about Him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district.

Jesus was not frightened by this outcry but simply rebuked him as He told the demon to be silent and to come out from the man. The demon evidenced one last control over the man as he threw him down before the people. Mark states that the demon also convulsed him but there was no lasting damage done to the man: *Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.* (Mark 1:26) Jesus showed His absolute control over the demons. The people were amazed at this demonstration of power over evil. The verb tense indicates that the people were discussing other such events so this was not an isolated showing of power by Jesus. They again commented about His authority that was demonstrated not just in His teaching but also in His actions against evil. The last verse indicates that His feats were spreading throughout the region.

Luke 4:38-41

Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. (39) And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them. (40) While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. (41) Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Luke does not introduce Simon so he assumes the reader already knows him although Luke does not introduce Jesus choosing Simon as a disciple until the next chapter. Mark adds "and Andrew" and writes that James and John went with Him. Perhaps he is assuming that the reader has already read the account of Mark of the choosing of the disciples. Luke's rendition of the choosing of the disciples seems to be an aside that he includes later as he is now emphasizing the power and authority of Jesus.

In this era a fever was assumed to be an illness by itself and not a part of some other illness. Luke states that it was a high fever indicating its severity. The way that Jesus approached the problem indicates that He knew it to be a force that had gripped her and it needed His rebuke certainly indicating some sort of outside force like that from a demon. It immediately left her and her wellness was established as she rose and waited on them. Luke does not elaborate on who the "them" were.

Stating that the sun was setting was a way that Luke marks the ending of a day and perhaps the ending of Sabbath restrictions. They would not have been allowed to bring sick people to Jesus on the Sabbath. Saying that they were bringing in the sick while the sun was setting implies they were rushing to bring them in to Him when they would be allowed to do so. Jesus showed great compassion and patience as He healed all of them from various diseases. Luke differentiates

from the diseases and the demons as he writes in verse 41 that Jesus was also casting out demons. The demons all knew that He was the Messiah as they proclaimed Him to be the Son of God but He was not ready to make that announcement so He did not allow them to speak. His identity as the Son of God had been announced by the devil (4:3, 9), by God's angel (1:32, 35), and by God (3:22) but Jesus does not want demonic testimony. Also if word spread that He was the Messiah He would have been made out to be a rebel hero and such was not His mission.

Luke 4:42-44

When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. (43) But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." (44) So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

In Mark's rendition the disciples seek Jesus but in Luke's narrative the disciples had not yet been called so he reports the ones seeking Jesus to be the crowds. Mark also tells us that Jesus went there to pray (Mark 1:35). There is a huge difference between the reactions of the crowds at Nazareth and at Capernaum but the reasons are similar. The people at Nazareth wanted a miracle man to serve them only but Jesus instead told them about how God had helped Gentiles and not Jewish people with similar problems. The people at Capernaum also want a miracle man to serve them but their reaction later against Jesus shows how insincere their motives are:

Luke 10:13-15 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (14) "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. (15) "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!"

Luke emphasizes that Jesus is more concerned about preaching the good news rather than emphasizing the goodness of the good news. The Greek verb "to proclaim good news" occurs 25 times in Luke/Acts, never in Mark and only once in Matthew. The noun "good news" occur 12 times in Matthew and Mark but never in Luke. Luke clearly states that the purpose of Jesus is to preach the kingdom of God and Luke also states that God speaks through His preaching: *"The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)"*—(Acts 10:36) This is the first mention of the Kingdom of God by Luke although such is the favorite theme in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught that the KOG had already come in Him so it came in one sense with the incarnation of Jesus and in another sense it will come in its fullness later. Luke writes that Jesus says He was sent for the purpose of preaching to other cities and not to just one city. Thus He is emphasizing the authority of His mission is from God and not just on Him. Mark states that Jesus went around Galilee (Mark 1:39) and Judea would be better known to readers as a Roman province.