

Life Lesson New Testament 7
The Temptation of Jesus
Matthew 4:1-11, Mark: 1:12-13, Luke 4: 1-13

Introduction

Did you ever wonder where Satan, the devil, came from? Why he is so busy trying to get Christians to sin and be separated from God? Is he as powerful as God? We'll answer all those questions in our story today.

The Story

Our story actually starts in Heaven. Lucifer, was one of the most glorious angels. His name means "light" or "son of the morning." Evidently he was a higher-level angel, like Gabriel and Michael. We know he was "perfect in beauty." But he became proud of his beauty and was lifted up in his heart. He said, "I will be like the most high God."

That's a good definition of sin – wanting to be God. We are all born with the self nature that says, "I want to run the universe. I want my own way. I want to be in charge."

We are naturally in rebellion. Jesus was the only one ever born who was completely obedient to God.

So you can imagine that Satan was determined to make Jesus sin!

After Jesus was baptized, God's Spirit led him into the wilderness. He was there for 40 days and 40 nights. He fasted all that time. That means he went without food.

Did you know that it's possible to go that long without eating? Some people start dying before then. You have to be in good shape to be able to fast for 40 days. That's more than a month! If we miss even one meal, we say, "I'm starving!" but after going nearly six weeks without food, Jesus was really starving. He was weak from lack of nutrition.

When Jesus was physically at his weakest, Satan came to tempt him. What would you use to tempt a hungry person? That's just what Satan did. He used food.

“Are you hungry?” he asked. “Why not turn these rocks into bread to eat?”

That doesn't sound so bad, but Satan was being tricky. He tried to get Jesus to use his special powers for Himself.

Jesus answered with a verse from God's Word. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Well, that didn't work, so Satan took Jesus up to a high mountain. From there he could see for miles and miles around.

“If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world,” Satan said.

Wow—Jesus could have the whole world worship and serve Him and He wouldn't have to go to the cross to accomplish that!

Since Satan does have lots of followers here and he does have power on earth –he's known as the Prince of the Power of the Air – he could have given Jesus that prize. Jesus knew that it was true. It must have seemed alluring, especially because Jesus was so tired from being without food.

But Jesus didn't fall for that temptation either. He said, “The Scriptures say, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’”

Satan wasn't finished yet. He took Jesus up to the top of the Temple in Jerusalem. He could look down and see all the people crowded below.

“Why don’t you jump off,” Satan whispered to him. “The Bible says that God has put angels in charge of looking after you.”

Satan should know that, since he once had an important job as an angel in Heaven.

Once more, if Jesus fell for this temptation, it would be sin. He would be getting fame and attention, all without having to go through the pain and agony of the cross. Everyone would follow him after seeing him jump off that high Temple peak. Just that one stunt would do the trick, and no one would bother to listen to His preaching or make the hard choices of either believing and following Jesus, or rejecting Him.

For the third time, Jesus said, “No.”

This time he said, “It is written, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.””

He knew that God isn’t pleased when people try to prove Him. It’s almost like they are trying to make Him do tricks. He told us not to do that.

Satan had tried his best, but Jesus defeated him. Jesus wouldn’t sin and couldn’t be tricked into sinning.

After Satan went away – *for a while*. God knew how sick and weak Jesus felt and let the angels come and take care of Him. After that, Jesus was ready to start His ministry on earth. Soon people everywhere would know that He is the Son of God.

The Life Lesson

Do we need to fear Satan? No, we need to realize that he is an enemy and he would love to see us sin and be miserable. He and his helpers are the ones who whisper in your ear to do say “No” when you feel God calling you. Maybe he says, “You’ll have to be baptized, and that’s scary.” (It really isn’t!) Or maybe he says, “You’ll have to give up your favorite TV show if you

are a Christian.” Maybe he says, “You really don’t want to sit still and listen to the sermon today.”

But being a Christian is about surrender to God and believing in Him. God is much more powerful than Satan. We don’t need to fear him at all, because Jesus defeated him forever when He died on the cross to pay for the sins of His people. Because Jesus has power over Satan, he has given Christians power over Satan, too.

Jesus didn’t fall for temptations the enemy used to try to trick Him. He can help us stand against Satan’s tricks, too.

Review Questions

What is another name for Satan or the devil?

Lucifer

Why was Lucifer cast out of Heaven?

Because he wanted to be like God -- the boss, the one in control.

Where did Jesus go after His baptism?

Into the wilderness.

How long did He fast -- go without food?

Forty days.

What was the first way Satan tempted Jesus to sin?

To turn rocks into bread.

What was the second temptation?

Bow down and worship me and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world.

What was the third temptation?

To jump off the top of the temple -- so that everyone would see the angels catch Him and would immediately follow Him.

How did Jesus answer every temptation?

With Scripture.

After Satan left Him for a while, who took care of Jesus?

The angels.

Is Satan more powerful than God?

No, he is a created being and is under God's control.