

LESSON EIGHT

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

A. JESUS WAS TEMPTED IN EVERY POINT:

Scriptural References:

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

We must accept the truths stated in these Scriptures literally. There is no temptation that comes to man but that Jesus has already experienced. The sufferings and temptations of our Lord cover the entire field of weakness and tendency to yield to sin, physical, mental, and spiritual.

This truth carries a great source of strength and victory. Jesus knows and understands because He encountered the same struggle. Because He gained the victory, there is victory for everyone.

There were two times in His ministry when He was tried the greatest: 1) In the wilderness following His baptism and 2) In Gethsemane. Gethsemane will be studied in a later lesson; it is chiefly the temptation in the wilderness that we shall consider here.

Although these were the two greatest trials and testings, the life of our Lord was one of continual cross bearing and testing.

B. THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS:

References: Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.

The place of the temptations was in the wilderness. According to tradition the temptations took place on a mountain, some six or eight miles from the place of baptism, some fifteen hundred feet above the Jordan valley. Adam met his temptation in a beautiful garden; Jesus met his temptation in the barren waste with poverty and hunger.

It may seem strange that immediately following the experience of baptism and anointing, there should be an experience such as this. Frequently depression, doubt and discouragement follow a time of great peace, joy and communion with God. Just as night follows day, storms follow sunshine; temptations and battles follow blessings and exaltations.

There was a divine purpose in the temptation immediately following the blessing. This is expressed in the statement, *"And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12).*

Although God never tempts any man with evil, yet He permits temptation to come (James 1:13). It is His will that every man be tested. It is God's will that every man be tested and tried. It

would seem that the greater the ministry of a man, the greater that the temptation is that he must encounter. Thus it was with our Lord.

C. THREE-FOLD TEMPTATION:

Scriptural Reference:

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, and is of the World" (I John 2:16).

All that is in the world may be summed up by this three-fold evil: 1) lust of the flesh, 2) lust of the eyes and 3) pride of life. Both Eve and Jesus were tempted in this three-fold manner.

Eve's Temptation (Genesis 3:6):

The tree	"was good for food"	- lust of the flesh;
	"pleasant to the eyes"	- lust of the eyes;
	"desired to make one wise"	- pride of life.

Christ's Temptation:

"Command this stone that it be made bread"	- lust of the flesh;
"The Devil showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world"	- lust of the eyes;
"Cast thyself down from hence, for ... He shall give His angels charge over Thee"	- pride of life.

Eve yielded to temptation because Satan succeeded in planting a doubt in her heart. *"Yea, hath God said?" (Genesis 3:1).* The devil tried to do the same thing with our Lord. At Jordan the voice from Heaven had declared, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Now the devil comes suggesting a great doubt with the use of an "IF." *"If thou be the Son of God."*

Jesus won the victory by using the Word of God. The victory came by the use of God's Word. *"It is written"* brought the victory each time.

This teaches us the great lesson that we also may have the victory by the use of God's Word.

D. A DEEPER INTERPRETATION OF THE TEMPTATION:

Although the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness may be explained by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, there is a deeper meaning here that we must not overlook.

They must be summed up as follows:

1. To use His power to satisfy self, to minister to Himself;
2. To use His power as a sign of His power, to display His power for show only;
3. To use worldly means to gain power.

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Jesus came to minister to others. Jesus was no ascetic. He came "eating and drinking." Yet if He had yielded to the suggestion the very purpose of His coming would have been defeated.

We should pay careful attention to the lessons to be learned here. Only too often a man's ministry is defeated because he yields to the temptation of ministering to himself, to make a

display of his ministry and gift, and to permit his ministry to be defeated by a carnal ambition of using wrong means to gain power.

D. FREEDOM FROM TEMPTATION FOR A SEASON:

Scriptural Reference:

"And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season" (Luke 4:13).

This Scripture teaches us that the temptation continued later on. The devil left Jesus alone for a season.

Let us carefully note the order of events for this is the way it happens in the lives of true Christians:

1. Baptism - blessing.
2. Temptation - testing and suffering.
3. Strength - ministered unto by angels.
4. Later the battle is renewed.

LESSON EIGHT

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Compare the temptation of Jesus with that of Eve.
- B. "Jesus came to minister to others." Explain the relationship of this truth to His temptation.
- C. Write a paragraph explaining the truth: "Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are."