

“Things Accomplished Among Us” (Luke 1:1)

Selected Reflections From Luke

The Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:1-13

The account of the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4 (also in Matthew 4) should not be taken to mean that Jesus was never tempted before or after. We should not infer He was under no temptation while fasting for the previous forty days. This account describes what might be regarded as a specific attack.

The devil invites Jesus to make His own bread, rather than depend on God. Jesus gave a clear negative reply, citing Scripture as His response. The devil invites Jesus to turn from worshipping God to worshipping the devil, to which Jesus also responded negatively, again, citing Scripture. The devil promises to give Jesus “all the kingdom of the world,” which yielded another negative response, with yet another passage from Deuteronomy.

With each attempt to deceive and entice, Jesus resisted. With each misuse of Scripture by the devil, Jesus countered with a proper use of text.

First, this episode shows Jesus to be sinless, thus perfectly qualified to be the spotless Lamb. Second, it dramatically demonstrates His power over the devil.

Beyond that, where does this history take us today? I refer now to 1 Peter 4:1. “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” The mind of Christ was made up long before the day the devil came directly to Him. It behooves us to be armed with that same mind, that defiant attitude toward sin.

In addition, this history reminds us that God's Word is our defense. Jesus didn't negotiate with the devil. He didn't exchange arguments with him or reason from the physical situation (the weakness of hunger). He just said "no."

And that must be our response. James said, "Submit yourselves to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded," (Jas. 4:7).

-Warren E. Berkley