

JESUS

Our Perfect Substitute and Important Example!

Sunday, March 10 – 8:00 & 10:45

First Sunday in Lent – 2019

Wednesdays of Lent: Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: The 40-day season of Lent **▶**began last Wednesday, **▶**continues through Holy Saturday, and **▶**does not include the Sundays. So 46 total days, minus 6 Sundays, equals 40 days.

The 40 days of Lent **▶**are patterned after Jesus' 40 days of temptation in the wilderness ([Ma 4:1-11](#); [Mark 1:12-13](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#)) and **▶**recall the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness by the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ([Numbers](#)).

Today, *we come to a time of intense temptation for Jesus; even though we and all others fail and fall, Jesus did prevail and stand in our place, as our perfect substitute!* He also taught us how to stand in the face of temptation ([1 Co 10:13](#))!

- Setting:** ¹ **And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led 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 were ended, he was hungry.**
 - Jesus was like us in many ways – *thirsting, hungering, and feeling pain*, but He is also the **▶**only begotten and **▶**sinless *Son of God!* Furthermore, prior to Jesus' temptation, He was **▶**baptized by John and **▶**anointed with the Holy Spirit.

- b. That same Holy Spirit is the One who led Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days; *during that time* Jesus ate nothing and was being tempted by the devil. We don't know the details of those 40 days, *but we do know that Jesus did not sin* (He 4:15)!
 - c. Lenski wrote that Jesus **“was God’s Messiah who had come to crush and rob Satan, destroy all his works, and erect the kingdom of God among men. The devil at once resolved to break this divine champion”** (225).
 - d. Now we focus on three specific temptations, *which took place at the end of the 40 days – when Jesus was hungry.*
2. **Test 1 – Focus on Your Physical Needs:** ³ **The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”** ⁴ **And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”**
- a. As the devil tried to get Adam and Eve to doubt by saying, **“Did God *actually* say...”** (Ge 3:1 ESV), so the devil tried to raise doubt in the mind of Jesus. Then the devil gave Jesus an easy way to prove he was wrong – *just turn this stone into bread!* But Jesus showed His trust in His Father and did not doubt!
 - b. Somehow, for a number of possible reasons, *Jesus did not hunger until the end of the 40 days.* Then, when hungry, *the devil tempted Jesus to focus on His physical hunger and provide for Himself,* but Jesus answered the devil by quoting from **Deuteronomy 8:3**, **“Man shall not live by bread alone.”** In order to draw a sharp contrast between the *first Adam* and the *second Adam*, Lenski wrote: **“What succeeded in Eden, in the land of plenty, failed in the destitute desert”** (231).

3. **Test 2 – Take a Sinful Shortcut:** ⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.””
- a. The devil SAID that authority over the kingdoms was *his to give*, but he is also “the father of lies” (Jo 8:44 ESV). And we know he was lying because *God the Father actually gave that authority to Jesus (Ma 28:18)* after He had won His victory over sin, death, and the devil!
 - b. Somehow the devil was able to show Jesus all the kingdoms of the world; then the devil offered Jesus authority over those kingdoms – *merely in exchange for worshiping him*. That would have been so much easier than being arrested, beaten, and crucified; however, it would have been **✦ a sinful** and **✦ an unsuccessful** shortcut. So Jesus answered the devil by quoting from **Deuteronomy 6:13**, regarding the LORD, “you shall worship [only] Him” (NAS). So only the true God, *the Triune God*, is worthy of worship – *not great men (Ac 14:8-15), not even great angels (Re 22:8-9)!* Since we have all taken sinful shortcuts, let us ever embrace Jesus – *our Champion, Savior, and Lord!*
4. **Test 3 – Put God to the Test:** ⁹ And he took him to Jerusalem and set him 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 [protect] you,’ ¹¹ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike

your foot against a stone.””¹² And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

- a. With all three temptations, *Jesus did not sin*, but He did permit the devil to ♦speak to Him, ♦show Him, and, ♦take Him to the highest part of the temple.
- b. With the first two temptations, Jesus ♦expressed His confidence in the Bible as the Word of God and ♦demonstrated His trust in His Father to provide His needs. Therefore, here, even the devil used the Word of God as his basis for challenging Jesus to *prove His trust* by throwing Himself down. Even though the passage quoted by the devil from **Psalm 91** is true, *we should never endanger ourselves for the purpose of testing God’s Word*. So Jesus quoted **Deuteronomy 6:16**, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”

5. **Conclusion:**¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. // We all have different weaknesses, so ♦the devil, ♦the world, and ♦the sinful nature seek to attack us where we are vulnerable – not to *immediately* rip us away from Jesus, but to do so *inch by inch!* Today’s focus is on Jesus being our Champion! But let us also follow His example by using the sword of the Spirit, *which is the Word of God!*

This Week’s Challenge: Pick one Bible verse and memorize it! Need help choosing one? See a Bible Topics brochure by our main entrance!

Let Us Pray: Dear H.S., keep us in Jesus and, *with the Bible written on our hearts*, help us to use it wisely! In Jesus name!

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