

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” ⁷Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (NIV84)

Theme: Jesus Overcame Temptation for Us.

1. To doubt God.
2. To tempt God
3. To Worship a False God.

Adam and Eve were created in God’s image and likeness. That means they were perfect and holy and that they knew his will. God put them in a great garden called the Garden of Eden. They were free to eat from any tree in the garden except one—the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. If they did, they would certainly die. Things were perfect. But then, as we read in today’s first lesson, Satan came in the form of a serpent. He questioned the truth of what God said about the tree. He created doubt in Adam and Eve’s minds by convincing them that God was lying to them—he didn’t want them to eat from the tree because then they would become like him. Doubting God’s Word and his love for them, Adam and Eve rebelled against God and ate the forbidden fruit. They fell to Satan’s temptation. Sin entered the world, and death through sin.

Ever since then, mankind has been nothing but sinners. As descendants of Adam and Eve we do nothing but sin by nature. And we even now as Christians, we constantly fail to obey God’s commands. In one way or another, we all fall to the devil’s temptation—numerous times a day. And the result of our sins is the same as Adam and Eve’s—death.

But God has compassion on us. Even though we rebel against him God still shows us mercy. By warning Satan, God promised Adam and Eve that one of their descendants would defeat Satan for them. **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”**

It would be thousands of years before God would fulfill his promise to send mankind a Savior from their sins. But about 2000 years ago, God sent his Son Jesus. When Jesus was about 30 years old he was baptized began his ministry. After his the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness. And there in the desert Jesus fasted—for 40 days and 40 nights.

Satan, as he always does, was tempting Jesus the whole time. But at the end of these 40 days he that Jesus was at his weakest. So he launched a full-fledged attack against Jesus. All Satan had to do was to get Jesus to sin just once. If Jesus sinned just once than he wouldn’t be perfect and his perfect life couldn’t be credited to us. Thus he wouldn’t be our Savior. And we would still die in our sins.

Satan came to Jesus and he said, **If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.** Remember that Jesus had fasted for 40 days. He was hungry. All he had to do was turn those stones into bread and he could eat. His pain and agony would be over. His stomach would be full. His strength would be restored. It shouldn’t be that hard for Jesus to do anyway. After all he is the Son of God. All he had to do was perform a miracle—use some of his divine power. Why is he, as the Son of God, suffering so much in the first place?

This first temptation for Jesus was to take matters into his own hands instead of trusting in God to take care of him. If Jesus would have used his divine power to satisfy his hunger, he would not be trusting in

his Father for care. Jesus would have acted contrary to his Father's will for himself.

So he fought off the devil's temptations. He responded to him by quoting Deuteronomy 8. **Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.** There was no need for Jesus to perform a miracle for himself so that he would no longer have to suffer. Jesus' point is this: All the bread in the world couldn't save him from death if he had sinned against God. And if his Father wanted him to live, he would live. No amount of bread in the world could keep him alive if the Father wanted him dead. So bread isn't important. Obeying God is important. Doing is will. And his Word. That is important.

Jesus fought off that temptation from Satan. So he tried another.

The devil led him to the highest point of the temple, which itself was high above the rest of Jerusalem and the surrounding area. One scholar estimated that if it was the part of the temple that hung over the Kidron Valley, it was about 450 feet above the floor of the valley. And Satan told Jesus to throw himself down. No one would be able to survive such a fall. But Jesus is the Son of God. And if he is the Son of God, God would certainly protect him. Satan was trying to create doubt in Jesus' mind in the same way he created doubt in the minds of Adam and Eve. "Perhaps God wouldn't save me" is the thought the devil hoped to cast in Jesus' mind. "And if that would be the case, then I wouldn't be the Son of God."

And then Satan used one of his favorite tricks. He used Scripture to back-up his false teaching. Jesus used Scripture against him last time, so the devil thought he could use it against him this time. **It is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."** Satan ripped the quote out of context. He misinterpreted and misapplied the Scripture passage to make it seem as if God promised to save Jesus no matter what. He still pulls that trick off today—and we often fall for it. A false teacher claims that God says this or that, and many believe it. He may even quote Scripture to back himself up. But he will use it out of context, or misinterpret it. And we often fail to study that passage on our own to see what it truly

means, we take his word for it. And we fall for the lie and deception. And we fall to the devil's temptation once again.

Jesus knew the devil's trick. Like he did with Adam and Eve, Satan twisted God's Word. Jesus was ready for such an attack. And he responded with correctly interpreting Scripture. This time he quotes from Deuteronomy 6. **Do not put the Lord your God to the test.** If Jesus would obey Satan he would be testing God. He would be putting himself in a situation in order to force God to do something. The Israelites had demanded signs from God in the wilderness. They wanted God to prove that he was with them and that he cared for them. So they demanded that God give them some water to drink. They put him to the test and demanded a sign from God to prove his love and protection. Jesus didn't need to test God in this way. Jesus didn't need to god to prove that he loved and cared for him.

Foiled by Jesus once again, Satan tried one last temptation.

He took Jesus to the top of a high mountain. Somehow he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world.. And he also showed him the glories and honors that went along with those glories. Satan told him, **All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me.** Jesus could have it all. He could rule over all the kingdoms of the earth. He could have all their wealth, power, and glories. And he didn't have to do anything to gain it. It would all be given to him. And he wouldn't have to suffer and die. Right now Jesus as those things. He sits on this throne in heaven, ruling over the whole creation. All kingdoms of the earth belong to him. Their glories and honors belong to him. But to get them Jesus had to take all our sins upon himself. He had to pay the eternal consequences for our sins. He had first to be crucified and killed on the cross. He was beaten, abused, betrayed, crowned with thrones, and crucified. But he wouldn't have had to go through all of that if he would have bowed down to Satan. He could have avoided all of the pain and torment.

Of course there were a number of problems with Satan's proposal. First off, Satan, didn't have the authority to give this away.. All the kingdoms of the world and their glories didn't belong to Satan. They weren't his to give away. They belonged to God. Jesus already had

them. Secondly—the major problem is that Satan said all he had to do was bow down and worship him. Satan wanted Jesus to forsake himself and worship the devil. Jesus would then break the first commandment. He would worship the one who caused all of this problem in the first place.

Of course Jesus wasn't about to do that. We do it all the time. Sure, we may not actually bow down and worship Satan, but we still break the first commandment. Satan places obstacles in our way. He convinces us that the things of this world are more important than God. He tempts us with relaxation, happiness, money, or so on. He convinces us that other things need to be done. Or that God's Word isn't all that important. So we fall into sin. And we constantly break the first commandment.

But not Jesus. He responded as we should. **Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'** Jesus refused to bow down to Satan because it goes against God's Word. And there was no possible way that Jesus would ever sin against God. So he sent Satan away. He wanted nothing to do with Satan any longer. He didn't want to be tempted by him. So he commanded Satan to get away. And Satan had to listen. For even in his state of humiliation, he still had complete control over the devil. And it shows us that Christ was in control the entire time—and that there was no way he would ever sin.

So why would Jesus willingly do this? Why would the Holy Spirit lead Jesus out in order to be tempted by the devil? And if Jesus was in control the whole time, why did he put up with Satan for so long? Because he was tempted to save us.

Adam and Eve sinned when they were tempted by the devil. They brought sin into the world. Ever since then, we have been nothing but sinners. We constantly fall to the devil's traps. And along with the sin Adam brought into the world, death came.

So God sent his Son Jesus, who brings life and immortality to the world. If Adam brought sin and death into the world, Jesus Christ brings forgiveness and eternal life. For Adam succumbed to the devil, and so do we. But Jesus, the descendent of Adam and Eve promised by God in the garden, never once succumbed to the devil's temptations. He always obeyed God. So that, when he died for our

sins he gave us his perfect life and so that through him we could be saved. As Paul says at the end of our Second Lesson, **Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.** Amen.