

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What two servant women bore children to Jacob?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Og, king of Bashan, Deuteronomy 3:11

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The Temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13)

Mike Wilson

It was the classic confrontation, an epic struggle between flesh and spirit. When Luke writes that after 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus “became hungry,” he focuses on the flesh of which Jesus “partook” (Hebrews 2:14). Enter Satan, who proceeds to issue a challenge: “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answers, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” Thus begins the first of three stages of unforgettable conflict.

There is much in this episode for Christians to learn, but one cannot forget the power the Gospel of Luke has in building the fragile faith of those whose minds are still blinded by the god of this world. For the benefit of earnest seekers who have not yet escaped the power of the evil one, we offer a few comments.

What was so wrong with Satan’s idea? After all, what sin would have been committed if Jesus had miraculously turned a stone into bread in order to satisfy His intense hunger? First of all, it should be noted that Jesus never performed a miracle for self-serving purposes. Miracles were pictures of the messianic kingdom and credentials of messianic power. They illustrated some aspect of God’s benevolent purpose, but they were never intended to undermine simple trust in God’s day-to-day provisions. The three tests presented in this text offer shortcuts

to something Jesus wanted badly: 1) food without work; 2) a crown without a cross; and 3) risk without danger. All three of Satan's proposals are detours, bypassing trust in God to provide basic human needs (food), power (kingdom), or glory (angelic protection). All three of Satan's propositions necessitate a violation of trust. They offer an impetuous alternative to patiently waiting on God to provide what is needed in His own time and in His own way.

One of the most obvious lessons is that Jesus emerged victorious, and He overcame without resorting to a mysterious, superhuman arsenal. In the game Satan was playing, our Lord's divine Sonship was in question:

"If you are the Son of God ..." Jesus refused to take the bait. He knew who He was (and is), and did not need to prove it on the devil's playing field. Instead, the Son of God won a victory over sin the same way that we must do so: in the human arena, with an unwavering appeal to God's Word. Jesus answers every temptation with the statement, "It is written ..." or "It is said ..." With the Word of God in His heart, and sheer determination in His soul, He refused to surrender. The temptations we face may seem insurmountable at times, but we, too, can overcome, the same way Jesus did. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Jesus is not the only one who cites Scripture in this encounter. In diabolical craftiness, Satan quotes portions of Psalm 91:11–12, misapplies them, and proceeds to challenge Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple so that angels will catch Him. Such an attempt to force God's hand, however, would violate the very trust which dominates the psalm. The title of Psalm 91 is "Security of the One Who Trusts in the LORD." Those who properly use it can say, with the psalmist, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" (91:2). The

devil could just as well have used it as a text authorizing jumping into a snake pit (91:13), but the whole context is poetic and highly symbolic. The main lesson is God's protective care for those who rely on the LORD. Satan misuses Scripture three ways: 1) he takes a figurative passage literally; 2) he takes a complete passage partially (entirely out of context); and 3) he takes a conditional promise (i.e., the requirement of faith) unconditionally. People still misquote the Bible in these ways, so we must be on guard!

Jesus, on the other hand, used the Bible as a lamp to His feet and a light to His path (Ps. 119:105). His responses reveal a profound respect for the Bible as the authoritative, unbending Word of God. Furthermore, every response comes from the Book of Deuteronomy, a book originally given to the Israelites after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. During His 40 days of deprivation in another wilderness, Jesus no doubt meditated deeply on the meaning of these powerful words, and in them He found the strength to overcome. "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test" (Luke 4:12; Deuteronomy 6:16). Instead, you must trust Him with all your heart. "You shall worship the LORD your God and serve Him only" (Luke 4:8; Deuteronomy 6:13). There is no room left over for Satan, or any other competing "god." "Man shall not live on bread alone" (Luke 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). Indeed, the context of Deuteronomy 8 shows that God had tested the Israelites in the wilderness, to see if they would keep His commandments (8:2). He preserved their clothing and protected their health (8:4). He also fed them with manna from above, that they might learn total dependence on Him to provide (8:3). Manna was not "bread alone" (obtained apart from the Father's care). The Israelites did not always practice this total dependence on God because they were short on faith. Not so with Jesus. The victory He won on another wilderness battlefield is a profound demonstration that God's Word is powerful, effective, and eminently relevant. With the Word of God as His chief weapon, Jesus defeated Satan, so that you too might be victorious.