

John’s Ministry and Jesus’ Temptation (Lk. 3-4)

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST’S MINISTRY IN THE WILDERNESS (LK. 3:1-14)

A. John’s public ministry (Lk. 3:1-2) most likely began in the summer AD 26.

¹Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ²while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. (Lk. 3:1-2)

1. ***Tiberius***: History teaches us that the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar was either in AD 27 or AD 29. ***Pilate***: Pilate was governor (prefect) of Judea from AD 26-36 (Lk. 13:1; 23:1-56). ***Herod Antipas***: ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch from 4 BC to AD 39. The title *tetrarch* means a “ruler of a fourth part.” He was the son of Herod the Great and half-brother of Philip the tetrarch (a son of Herod the Great). Antipas imprisoned and executed John the Baptist. ***Annas and Caiaphas***: Caiaphas the actual high priest (AD 18-37) ruled with his father-in-law Annas who had been the high priest (AD 6-15). “High priest” was a lifetime title.

B. John preached a baptism of repentance (Lk. 3:3-6). John described Jesus’ ministry under the New Covenant—speaks of fullness and wholeness. A valley speaks of a low area and a mountain speaks of a high area. The gospel lifts us where we are lacking and lowers the mountains of pride or strongholds that dominate lives.

³And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, ⁴as it is written in...Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord...’⁵Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low...⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” (Lk. 3:3-6)

1. ***Baptism of repentance***: John’s message was in agreement with the gospel that Jesus and the early church proclaimed. Faith and repentance are two aspects of committing our life to Jesus. Repentance is a *change of mind* that eventually leads to a change of behavior. Baptism is the outward sign of inward repentance. A change of perspective transforms our approach to life. ***Remission of sins***: Forgiveness is a most amazing gift, giving us a new beginning with confidence before God. ***Prepare the way for the Lord***: John’s ministry consisted of preparing the Jews by getting their hearts right with God so when Messiah appeared they would be able to recognize Him.

II. THE PREACHING OF JOHN: THE CALL TO REPENTANCE (LK. 3:7-14)

A. Many in Israel trusted in their religious heritage, saying, “Abraham is our father.” Today, some trust in their church background or their parent’s faith instead of having a relationship with Jesus.

⁸Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father”...¹⁰So the people asked him, saying, “What shall we do then?”¹¹He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.”¹²Then tax collectors...said to him, “Teacher, what shall we

do?”¹³ *And he said to them, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you.”*¹⁴ *Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “And what shall we do?” So he said to them, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.” (Lk. 3:7-14)*

- B. **Repentance:** Repentance is a *change of mind* that eventually leads to a change of behavior. Outward change is the evidence of repentance. Sincere repentance eventually results a changed life.

III. THE PREACHING OF JOHN: THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS (LK. 3:15-20)

- A. John spoke of Jesus as the coming Messiah (Mt. 3:11-12; Mk. 1:7-8; Lk. 3:15-18).

¹⁶*John answered..., “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”*¹⁷ *His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” (Lk. 3:16-17)*

- B. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire:** Fire refers to a blessing of the purifying work of the Spirit and of His judgment on rebellion. This gives revelation into who God is. **Winnowing fork:** A forklike shovel was used to throw grain and chaff (husk and straw) into the air. The wind carried the chaff away from the heavier grain which then fell to the ground.

IV. JESUS BAPTIZED BY JOHN (LK. 3:21-22)

- A. Jesus was baptized by John (Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11; Lk. 3:21-22) probably in autumn AD 26. At His baptism, Jesus received the anointing of the Spirit and God’s audible affirmation over His life. With this supernatural, divine endorsement, Jesus was ready to begin His ministry.

²¹*...it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.*

²²*And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.” (Lk. 3:21-22)*

- B. **My Beloved Son:** The Father summed Jesus’ childhood and young adult years with one statement. This is the greatest insight we have into 30 years of Jesus’ life about which we know very little.

- C. **Holy Spirit descended on Him:** Jesus, as a Man, was anointed for ministry.

- D. **Like a dove:** This seems to have been a theophany—God appearing in “bodily form.”

¹⁴*John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”*

¹⁵*But Jesus answered...“Permit it...for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” (Mt. 3:14-15)*

1. Jesus’ baptism was an acceptance of His Messianic responsibilities. The baptism was a type of consecration to God’s priestly call over His life. The priests under Moses were consecrated by being washing with water (Ex. 29:4; Lev. 8:6).
2. Jesus submitted to baptism as a symbolic anticipation of his death (Lk 12:50; Mk. 10:38-39).

V. JESUS' TEMPTATION (LK. 4:1-13)

¹Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ²being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. (Lk. 4:1-2)

A. **Led by the Spirit:** This conflict was initiated by the Spirit, not Satan. God tests, but does not tempt anyone (James 1:3; cf. Ex. 16:4; 20:20; Deut. 8:2; 13:2; Judg. 2:22; 3:4; 2 Chr. 32:31).

B. Jesus spoke God's Word to Satan— All three scriptural quotations come from Deuteronomy when Israel was being tested in the wilderness for 40 years (Deut. 8:3; 6:13, 16).

1. Jesus was victorious in the wilderness in contrast to the failures of Adam in the garden of Eden and Israel in the wilderness. All three— Jesus, Adam, and Israel—were referred to as "God's son" (Ex. 4:22-23; Hos. 11:1; Lk. 3:23, 38). Jesus answered the temptation by being armed with the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17).

C. The purpose of Satan's temptation was to get Jesus to do something independent of the Father. By doing this, Jesus would be disqualified to save us as our human high priest (Heb. 2:17).

¹⁹Jesus answered... "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (Jn. 5:19)

D. The three temptations represent the three categories of temptations that all people face (1 Jn. 2:16): the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life—sensuality, greed, and pride.

¹⁶For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 Jn. 2:16)

1. **Lust of flesh:** pleasure without reference to the will of God—"sensuality". **Lust of eyes:** possessions without reference to the will of God—"greed". **Pride of life:** position without reference to the will of God—"pride"

E. Sensuality, greed, and pride were the three sins that Adam and Eve were tempted with in the garden (Gen 3:5-6).

F. **Principle:** Although Jesus was never less than God, He lived on the earth as though He was never more than a man. He always possessed the fullness of deity, yet lived on earth dependent on God by the activity of the Spirit as we are. He had to live totally as a man to be a sacrifice for man's sin.

G. Jesus stood in the same position that the first Adam facing the same three temptations. Everything Jesus did, He did as a man. He demonstrated how people are to relate to the Father.

VI. THREE TEMPTATIONS

A. **Stone to bread:** The first temptation was to gratify His physical desires without regard to God's will or trusting God. Sensuality is not just sexual; it is physical indulgence without reference to the Spirit.

³*And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”*

⁴*But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word [promise] of God.’” (Lk.4:3-4)*

1. God is our source—obeying God’s will requires waiting on God’s timing for His provision.

B. **Glory of all the kingdoms:** The second temptation was combination of pride and lust of the eyes. Satan showed Jesus as all the glory or splendor (NIV) of the nations— without embracing the cross (24:26). Like every believer, Jesus was faced with the need and choice to take up the cross (9:23).

⁵*The devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶*And he said to Him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.” ⁷*If you worship me, it will all be yours.”* (Lk. 4:5-6, NIV)**

1. Authority was handed to devil by the first Adam and won back by the second Adam. God gave dominion or authority over the earth to Adam as a representative of the human race.

²⁶*“Let Us make man in Our image...let them have dominion...over all the earth...” (Gen. 1:26)*

2. In sinning, Adam forfeited his authority to Satan (Gen. 3; Lk. 4:6). Jesus came to win back the dominion originally given to humans. Jesus, as the last Adam, won the rights to the dominion of the earth.

C. Jesus rebuked Satan and spoke the Word to him .

⁸*And Jesus answered and said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” (Lk. 4:8)*

D. **Throw Yourself down:** The third temptation was related to acting in pride. This temptation was to get Jesus to *test God* by His insistence on when and how God should fulfill His promises to Him. In this case, it was related to one of God’s promises of protection over His life.

⁹*Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, 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 shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,’ ¹¹and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” ¹²*And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’” (Lk. 4:9-12)***

E. Satan quoted the Scriptures to make his case to Jesus (Ps 91:11-12); Jesus instantly saw how Satan twisted the Scripture. He responded by speaking the Word to Satan (Deut. 6:16).

¹¹*For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. ¹²In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. (Ps. 91:11-12)*