

LUKE 04:01–02 TEMPTATION (PERIRAZO)

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. Luke 04 01-02

The word temptation is used here in both a good and a bad sense. In the good sense it means to test, to try, to prove. It does not mean to seduce into sin. Its purpose is not to defeat or to destroy. The idea is not that one is tempted, seduced, enticed and pulled into sin by the Holy Spirit (see Jas. 1:13); but one is tested, proved, strengthened, reinforced, and purified through the trials of temptation.

In the bad sense, it means to tempt, to seduce, to entice, and to pull someone away from God into the way of sin, of self, and of Satan (Mt. 4:1; 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Th. 3:5; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 1:13-14).

Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tested. The Spirit did not seduce or entice Jesus to do evil, but He led Jesus into circumstances whereby He could learn obedience and discipline. Through such trials, Jesus was to be perfected and enabled to succour all those who suffer trials (Heb. 4:15-16; 5:8).

Six things need to be said about overcoming temptation.

1. Temptation has its bottom root in passion and appetite (Mk. 7:20-23; Jas. 1:14). It comes directly from within, from man's heart, not from without. And it does not come from God. "For God cannot be tempted by evil; nor does he tempt anyone" (Jas. 1:13). God does not tempt any man in a bad sense. What He does is look upon His people as they endure temptation, and He strengthens them to bear the temptation. By such He teaches them discipline and obedience for a greater work (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Heb. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:6-7).
2. No man confronts any temptation that is not common to all men (1 Cor. 10:13).
3. God does not allow the believer to be tempted beyond what he is able to bear. There is always a way to escape (1 Cor. 10:13).
4. Jesus Christ understands temptation. He was tempted in all points just as all men are tempted, yet He never sinned (Heb. 2:18; 4:15).
5. Jesus Christ is a sympathetic High Priest in helping the believer through temptation (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15).
6. Temptation is overcome (a) by submitting to God and resisting the devil (Jas. 4:7-8; 1 Pet. 5:8-9), and (b) by using and obeying Scripture to combat temptation (Lk. 4:4; see Deu. 4:8; 4:12; 6:13, 16; 8:3; 10:20). □