

~THE BOOK OF LUKE~
~Chapters 3-4~

When It Was Written: The date is probably around 60 A.D when Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea (**Acts 23:31-35**). The reasons for this as a date are as follows. **One**, it was before 70 A.D. since the destruction of Jerusalem is still future (**Lk. 21:5-38**). **Two**, it was written before the Book of Acts according to **Acts 1:1** and Acts was written around 61 or 62 A.D. **Three**, it was written after Matthew and Mark (see **Lk. 1:1**) who wrote most likely between 50-60 A.D.

Who Was It Written To: It was addressed specifically to Theophilus, a cultured Greek who was either a seeker or had come to faith in Christ. But in general, the Gentile world would have been an audience in mind.

Why Was It Written: **One**, it set Christ forward as the “ideal man” to the Greeks. **Two**, it was written either to confirm or challenge Theophilus regarding his faith (**Lk. 1:3-4**). **Three**, it was a defense of Christianity to the Greek (Gentile) world in general.

Looking At Luke 3 – The **Birth of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Mary’s visit with Elizabeth**

A) **Lk. 3:1-22** records the ministry of John the Baptist. Note some key things of his ministry:

- Baptism follows repentance (**vs. 3**), not as a means of repentance.
- **Vss. 4-6** show that John fulfilled prophecy.
- **Vss. 7-14** is John’s explanation that true repentance will be seen in how we live.
- **Vss. 16-17** speak of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire. **What does fire represent and what does vs. 17 tell us?**
- In **vss. 18-20** John is thrown into prison for calling out Herod’s sin.
- In **vss. 21-22**, Jesus is baptized. Note that Jesus also prayed after being baptized. Why was He baptized. He did not need to repent of sin.

Here are some thoughts on why Jesus was baptized:

- 1) To identify with us who would be baptized in obedience to Him.
- 2) **Mt. 3:14-15** might give us another reason. It tells us in those verses Jesus said He was being baptized to “fulfill all righteousness.” This statement, though, is hard to interpret. One thought is that it meant that Jesus would accomplish God’s mission and advance God’s work in the world. Another thought on this passage is that Jesus identified with sinners since He would provide righteousness to those who came to Him.
- 3) Priests would wash with water on the Day of Atonement, consecrating themselves for God’s service on that day. Jesus may have been baptized as a visible sign of His public ministry.
- 4) One commentator says the following about Jesus being baptized, that He did so “**to confess sin on behalf of the nation, as Isaiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah had done.**”
- 5) To show support for the ministry of John.

B) Luke 4:1-13 records the temptation of Christ.

As we look at the temptation of Christ, **Warren Wiersbe** gives some good insights into our passage here in **Luke 4**,

“Also, in His temptation, Jesus exposed the tactics of the enemy and revealed to us how we can overcome when we are tempted. This experience helped prepare our Lord for His present ministry as our sympathetic High Priest, and we may come to Him for the help we need to overcome the tempter (Heb. 2:16–18; 4:14–16).”

1) One commentator noted that **“Jesus took the offensive against the enemy, the Devil, by going into the wilderness to face temptation.”** Note that Christ was under the full influence of the Holy Spirit (**vs. 1**), which is what we all need to be to deal with temptations.

2) He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness (**vs. 1**) and for forty days was tempted and did not eat during that time. He was continually tempted and harassed by the enemy.

3) In **vs. 3** the enemy is challenging Jesus’ identity and authority. Note the statement, **“If you are the Son of God...”** The word “if” some believe can be translated “since.” Thus, this could say, **“Since you are the Son of God...”** I find this interesting if our enemy is questioning Jesus’ identity and authority since he knows Who Jesus is from eternity past. **Any thoughts on why the enemy approached Christ this way?**

4) The enemy plays the mind game by telling Jesus that if He is the Son of God, command these stones to turn to bread (**vs. 3**).

Chuck Swindoll makes some good points regarding this temptation in **vs. 3**. He writes,

“Satan’s helpful suggestion is subtly evil in at least three respects. First, the phrase “If you are the Son of God” subtly suggests that Jesus had a right to something the Father had withheld. In the Garden of Eden, humanity began to fall when Adam and Eve first doubted the goodness of God. Second, the temptation suggested that the Son should act independently of the Father, which would violate their unity. Third, the temptation undermined trust in God.”

5) Jesus responds to the temptation of **vs. 3** by quoting **Deut. 8:3** in **Lk. 4:4**. The Word of God is our defense against temptation. The Lord is an example to us about the need for Scripture to lead our life and to help us when we face sin. **Jesus would not act apart from the Father. He would not go against their relationship.** He followed the Father’s will. God would provide.

6) In **Lk. 4:5-7** is the next temptation. The enemy offers Jesus the kingdoms of the world if the Lord would worship him. He is offering Jesus power and control. We know the enemy does have some control of this world, as allowed by God (**Dan. 10:13; Jn. 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4**). **Were they actually his to give to Christ?**

7) The enemy did not offer anything that Jesus would not one day have as far as authority over the nations (**Ps. 2:7-9; Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 28:18**). The enemy is trying to get Jesus to “jump the gun” when it came to Christ’s rule and God’s plan. This would mean that Jesus would not have to die and rise again. The Lord would not have to go to the cross. Christ would have none of it. He responds by quoting in **Lk. 4:8** from **Deut. 6:13**.

8) Jesus came to conquer the enemy. He also was, though He could not sin, the God-Man, showing that temptation can happen, but we do not have to yield to it. He is our Great High Priest (**Heb. 4:15**), having faced the attacks of the enemy.

9) **Lk. 4:9-12** give us the final temptation. The enemy quotes from **Ps. 91:11-12** in trying to get Jesus to jump from the highest point of the temple. Of course, the text is misrepresenting God’s truth. If we choose to sin, there are consequences and cannot just expect God to intervene in our sinful acts.

10) Jesus, if He would have listened to His foe, and jumped, would have going against God’s will and testing God. **Psalm 91** has to do with God’s protection of those who serve Him and follow His will. Though we know some suffer for their obedience to God, the Psalm was taken out of context by the enemy.

11) Jesus responds in **vs. 11** by quoting from **Deut. 6:16**, “**You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.**”

12) **James 1:13-17** discusses the battle we have with temptation. What do we learn from this text and how has God provided a way to handle these temptations?

Note some of the following points from **James 1:13-17**:

- God cannot tempt us to sin for He cannot be tempted (**vs. 13**)
- We sin by choice (**vs. 14**). This is a fishing illustration. We are lured out from the protection of God by some sin, and we choose to be hooked.
- The result of sin, if we do not deal with it, is spiritual ruin (**vs. 15**).
- We must not be deceived into thinking that sin is not a big deal or that we cannot be tempted to sin (**vs. 16**).
- **Vs. 17** tells us that God continually gives us good and perfect gifts. He gives us what we need so that we do not have to sin or pursue things that will ruin us. God’s Word gives us the help we need to handle sin and shows how God takes care of us.

