

# **The Book of Luke**

## **Baptism and the Temptations**

Lesson #2 for April 11, 2015

Scriptures: Luke 2:21-22; 3:1-14; 4:5-13; Romans 6:1-6; Isaiah 14:13-14.

### 1. **Luke**

Most of us, most of the time, feel left out—misfits. We don't belong. Others seem to be so confident, so sure of themselves, "insiders" who know the ropes, old hands in a club from which we are excluded.

One of the ways we have of responding to this is to form our own club, or join one that will have us. Here is at least one place where we are "in" and the others "out." The clubs range from informal to formal in gatherings that are variously political, social, cultural, and economic. But the one thing they have in common is the principle of exclusion. Identity or worth is achieved by excluding all but the chosen. The terrible price we pay for keeping all those other people out so that we can savor the sweetness of being insiders is a reduction of reality, a shrinkage of life.

Nowhere is this price more terrible than when it is paid in the cause of religion. But religion has a long history of doing just that, of reducing the huge mysteries of God to the respectability of club rules, of shrinking the vast human community to a "membership." But with God there are no outsiders.

Luke is a most vigorous champion of the outsider. An outsider himself, the only Gentile in an all-Jewish cast of New Testament writers, he shows how Jesus includes those who typically were treated as outsiders by the religious establishment of the day: women, common laborers (shepherders), the racially different (Samaritans), the poor. He will not countenance religion as a club. As Luke tells the story, all of us who have found ourselves on the outside looking in on life with no hope of gaining entrance (and who of us hasn't felt it?) now find the doors wide open, found and welcomed by God in Jesus. (*The Message* - Introduction to the Gospel of Luke)

2. In contrast to the mighty men of power and influence that Luke used to date the birth of Jesus, John the Baptist was a humble man of the wilderness. He was sent for one purpose. He was sent to prepare the way for the most important event so far in human history: The coming of Jesus. Was John the Baptist considered to be an outsider?
3. What do we know about the life and times of John the Baptist? The place on other side (east side) of the Jordan River where John baptized has recently been found. Did he have any contact with the Qumran community which was not far from that place?
4. Read Luke 3:1-14. Luke named the famous men of those days to show us that the story of John the Baptist was real. John was a Levite, and the son of a priest. (Luke 1:5) He may even have been a descendant of Aaron. Did he ever consider ministering in the temple in Jerusalem? John did not beat around the bush. He did not sugarcoat his words. His message: Repent and be baptized; turn from your sins; share with the poor; do not cheat; and do not just claim Abraham as your ancestor, thinking that will save you.
5. All four of the Gospels talk about the mission and the message of John the Baptist. (Matthew 3:1-12; 14:1-10; Mark 1:3-5; Luke 3:2-22; 7:18-23; John 1:15-34) How do you think you would have responded if you had been in John's audience?
6. The mission and message of John had some very profound implications:
  - (1) Being Abraham's child did not guarantee that one would be the natural recipient of salvation. Redemption from sin or a claim to heaven is not tied to heritage or legacy but to a personal choice to walk in the way of the Lord.
  - (2) Walking in that way will lead to bearing good fruit for God's kingdom.
  - (3) Preparing to walk in God's way demands that we repent and be baptized.—*Adult Teachers*

7. When John suggested that those who were baptized with water must also be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, what did he mean? Fire is the ultimate purifier. As we approach the end of this world's history, we may go through all kinds of temptations, trials, and life-threatening situations; but, those are to purify us for the kingdom of heaven.
8. The Jews were familiar with baptism. For some time, they had baptized Gentiles who wanted to be counted as Jews. (Matthew 23:15) But, the idea that Jews needed to repent and be baptized was totally new and shocking to them. *Repentance* comes from the Greek word *metanoia* which means changing one's mind. Baptism represents the burial of the old man of sin and the rise to newness of life with Christ. But, John hastened to assure his audience that he was baptizing only with water. One who was to come after him would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Luke 3:16) Thus, we learn that baptism by water is only an outward symbol of an inward change—a change that can only be brought about by the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit. (Read Romans 6:1-6.)
9. Read Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:29-34; and Luke 3:21-22. Jesus was there, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and the voice of the Father was heard signifying that the ministry of Jesus was to begin. He was ready. Jesus and John had never met before that time so that no one could claim that they had conspired together to fool the public. God had revealed to John that he would see a dove descending on the One who was to be the Lamb of God, the true Son of God.

Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins, and closely related by the circumstances of their birth; yet they had had no direct acquaintance with each other. The life of Jesus had been spent at Nazareth in Galilee; that of John, in the wilderness of Judea. Amid widely different surroundings they had lived in seclusion, and had had no communication with each other. Providence had ordered this. No occasion was to be given for the charge that they had conspired together to support each other's claims.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* 109.2.

10. Only Luke mentioned that Jesus bowed in prayer on the bank of the Jordan as He came up from His baptism. The angels had never heard such a prayer. They wanted to respond, but the Father Himself responded. Only a few of the people present discerned the vision of the Dove or the Voice from heaven. John did and proclaimed Him the "Lamb of God." But, even John had no idea of the implications of what he had said. (See DA 111.6-112.5.) We see proof that all Members of the Trinity were giving Their seal of approval to the ministry of Jesus.
11. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be baptized? He certainly did not need to repent of any sins. Jesus was baptized as a human being by a human being to set an example for each of us. None of us is so saintly or so near to God that we do not need to repent and be baptized.
12. Read Luke 4:1-2. Is it true that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil?

At the Saviour's baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father's glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh," (Romans 8:3) the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity *through* Christ; now He communicated with humanity *in* Christ. **Satan had hoped that God's abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored.** (Compare 5BC 1078.3.)

While in the wilderness, Christ fasted, but He was insensible to hunger. Engaged in constant prayer to His Father for a preparation to resist the adversary, Christ did not feel the pangs of hunger. He spent the time in earnest prayer, shut in with God. It was as if He were in the presence of His Father. . . . The thought of the warfare before Him made Him oblivious to all else, and His soul was fed with the bread of life, just as today those tempted souls will be fed who go to God for aid [Compare John 4.]. . . . He did not realize any sense of hunger until the forty days of His fast

were ended.

The vision passed away, and then, with strong craving Christ's human nature called for food. Now was Satan's opportunity to make his assault. He resolved to appear as one of the angels of light that had appeared to Christ in His vision (Letter 159, 1903). (5BC 1080.2-3)

The life of Christ was a perpetual warfare against satanic agencies. Satan rallied the whole energies of apostasy against the Son of God. The conflict increased in fierceness and malignity, as again and again the prey was taken out of his hands. Satan assailed Christ through every conceivable form of temptation (RH Oct. 29, 1895). (5BC 1080.7)

**Satan saw that he must either conquer or be conquered. The issues of the conflict involved too much to be entrusted to his confederate angels. He must personally conduct the warfare.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 116.2-3.

These were real temptations, no pretense. Christ "suffered being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). **Angels of heaven were on the scene on that occasion, and kept the standard uplifted, that Satan should not exceed his bounds and overpower the human nature of Christ.** (1Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library 43.2; 1SM 94.2; TA 178.1) [Content in brackets and bold type are added.]

13. Satan would have loved to force Jesus to commit sin. That was always his first choice. But, he could not do that. He would have been happy to destroy Jesus before He could begin His ministry just as he had tried to destroy Him at His birth. (Matthew 2:16) But, he could not do that either. It has been said that there have been only eleven years in all of recorded history in which there was no warfare and that three of those years were during the ministry of Jesus. If you had been Satan, what would you have done during those years?
14. The human Jesus was raised to divine heights in the first 40 days in the wilderness as He contemplated the close relationship He was to have with the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the angels during His ministry on this earth. Did that prepare Him for the attacks of Satan which followed? How are we to prepare for temptations we know Satan will bring against us?
15. In his temptations to Jesus, Satan appeared as an angel of light. He wanted to raise doubts in the mind of Jesus about Jesus's Own relationship with God. He suggested that maybe Jesus was the fallen angel from heaven. But, Satan's first words, "If you are God's Son," (Luke 4:3, GNB) immediately betrayed his identity. (*Desire of Ages* 118.3; 119.2) They both knew very well what the truth was!
16. After 40 days of fasting, Jesus appeared emaciated and near death. In His first conflict with Satan in heaven, He had conquered and banned Satan and his hosts from heaven. (Revelation 14; *Desire of Ages* 119.2) The appearance of Jesus at this point in time certainly did not suggest that He was the mighty Son of God from heaven who had done that.
17. Read Luke 4:5-8. Satan and Jesus both knew that only God is to be worshiped. For Christ to bow to Satan would imply that He regarded Satan as equal with God. That is exactly what Satan has always wanted. (Isaiah 14:13-14)
18. Satan was presumably offering Christ a shortcut to accomplishing the task He came to do. Effectively, Satan said: "Why go through all those difficulties and all that suffering when just by bowing down to me [Satan] I will give you the world you have come to redeem?"
19. In response to Satan's offer to give Him the world, Jesus demanded that Satan leave Him.

Jesus said to this wily foe, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." **Satan had asked Christ to give him evidence that He was the Son of God, and he had in this instance the proof he had asked.** At the divine command of Christ he was compelled to obey. He was repulsed and silenced. He had no power to enable him to withstand

the peremptory dismissal. He was compelled without another word to instantly desist and to leave the world's Redeemer. [Bold type is added.]

And after it was ended Christ was exhausted and fainting. He fell upon the ground as though dying. Heavenly angels who had bowed before Him in the royal courts, and who had been with intense, yet painful, interest watching their loved Commander, and with amazement had witnessed the terrible contest He had endured with Satan, now came and ministered unto Him. They prepared Him food and strengthened Him, for He lay as one dead. (*Review and Herald* Sept. 1, 1874 par. 12,14; *5BC* 1083.6; *1SM* 288.1-2)

20. Read Luke 4:9-13 and Matthew 4:5-7. Jesus quoted Scripture in response to Satan's first two temptations. So, in the third temptation, Satan tried to trap Jesus by quoting Scripture himself. But, he misquoted the Scripture. He left out the part saying, "To keep you in all your ways." What are we supposed to learn about temptations from the experience of Jesus?

Note four major biblical teachings on temptation: (1) No one is free from temptations; (2) when God allows temptations to come to us, He also provides grace to resist and strength to overcome; (3) temptations do not come the same way every time; and (4) no one is tempted beyond his or her strength to bear (*1 Cor. 10:13*). (*Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 19.)

21. Temptations are not sins. Jesus was tempted just as we are. Temptations turn into sins when we make a conscious choice to yield.
22. The temptations of Jesus while He was in direct conflict with the Devil were a major battle in the great controversy over God's character and government. Is the great controversy a major theme in the Bible? Where do we find information about this great controversy? See *The Great Controversy Described in Scripture* (<http://www.theox.org/>—then go to *Teacher's Guides* and then *General Topics*).
23. What subtle temptations does Satan bring to each of us? Are we tempted to compromise in our observance of the Sabbath? Or, perhaps in being completely honest at work in order to gain some advantage?
24. Each of us is aware of at least some of our favorite temptations. Have we stopped to think of the best ways to use Scripture in answer to Satan's temptations? Will we be prepared for him the next time he comes with those same temptations? A good understanding of Scripture and a careful preparation are important in preventing our fall into sin.
25. The baptism and the temptations of Jesus were followed by His return to the Jordan River where John was baptizing; there He acquired some disciples. That was the beginning of Jesus's public ministry. From that time on, He was in an all-out, full-strength war with the Devil.
26. As we noted last week, Luke wrote his Gospel to the whole world. He wanted everyone to feel a relationship with Jesus Christ. But, he also went to considerable length to point out that the birth, the life, and the ministry of Jesus were anything but ordinary. God's approbation of Jesus recorded in Luke 3:22 was the fulfillment of prophecies in Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. This was the beginning of the journey that would end only with Jesus rising from the dead in His Own Divine power and coming forth from the grave to ascend to heaven.
27. Fortunately for us, at the end of His life, Jesus was able to say: "The ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me."—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update* (1995). (John 14:30). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.
28. What can we learn from these experiences of John and Jesus that will help us to prepare for the daily battles that we fight with Satan and his angels?

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