

## **I. REVIEW & INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Last week we saw the great work of John the B.**

#### **1. John the B. preached and baptized by the River Jordan.**

- a. He preached the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom where men and women repent of their sins and receive the forgiveness of sins.
- b. He preached judgment upon the wicked, even the wicked among the Jews.
- c. He baptized people as a sign of the washing away of sins, which Christ would do.

#### **2. There were different reactions to John's preaching**

- a. Some people thought that John was the Christ, but he said he was not the Christ.
- b. Some people confessed their sins and were baptized, others (esp. the religious leaders) thought that they were too good already. They did not need the salvation which John preached.
- c. Herod and Herodias were angry because John preached against their sins: they killed him.

### **B. John did one more important work before he died: he baptized Jesus!**

#### **1. One day when John was preaching Jesus came to him and asked to be baptized**

- a. John did not want to do this: baptism is a sign of the washing away of sins. Jesus was the Son of God. He had no sins of His own. In fact, said John, "I have need to be baptized by thee." *John understood that he was a sinner, and that Jesus needed to wash John!*
- b. But Jesus insisted. This is necessary for my work as the Messiah. Jesus had no sins of His own, but Jesus had come to bear [carry] the sins of His people. Because He would wash away their sins, He would be baptized as a sign of what He would do on the cross.
- c. Amazing! God put our sins on Jesus. Jesus took the punishment and as a sign of that Jesus was baptized. It was another step on His long road of suffering.

#### **2. God was pleased with Jesus' baptism because He spoke from Heaven.**

- a. God is three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is Jesus; the Father spoke from Heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the form of a dove. We call the three persons of God the Trinity.
- b. God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit to fill Him with heavenly power. No man ever had the Holy Spirit in the way Jesus did. *The first thing the Holy Spirit did was to bring Jesus into the wilderness.*

## **II. THE THREE TEMPTATIONS**

### **A. In the wilderness Jesus was tempted by the devil and tested by God. The devil wanted to make Jesus sin; God wanted to show the holiness and obedience of His Son.**

#### **1. The wilderness was a terrible place**

- a. Remember in the Old Testament that God's people wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. It was lonely there, there were wild beasts, and there was nothing to eat.
- b. After 40 days in a lonely, dry, hot wilderness with no food Jesus was very hungry.

#### **2. After 40 days, when Jesus was weak with hunger, the devil came to him.**

- a. The devil is the enemy of God: in the Old Testament the devil always tried to stop the Seed of the woman from coming. He failed. Now, when Jesus came, the devil wanted to stop His work of salvation.
- b. To destroy the work of salvation, the devil wanted to make Jesus sin by turning Him from the path of obedient suffering which the Father had planned for His Son. *The devil will try to turn Jesus away from that difficult path which leads to the cross.*

### **B. The 1<sup>st</sup> Temptation: "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread" (Matt. 4:3)**

#### **1. Jesus was very hungry, and since Jesus, as the Son of God, had power to change stones into bread, why not do that?**

- a. Why be hungry when you can make yourself food by a miracle? But that is the easy way, the way without suffering, not the way the Father commanded.
- b. Jesus could do miracles, but not for Himself. He did miracles to glorify God, and God had told Him by the Spirit to go into the wilderness.
- c. And "Command stones" is only the beginning. Later, the devil would say, "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross."

#### **2. Jesus' answer was simple. He did not argue. He answered by quoting the Bible, "It is written."**

- a. That is the answer to every temptation: it was Jesus weapon against the devil. But how can you *use* the Bible unless you *know* the Bible? Jesus had learned it and so must we.

- b. The Bible says, “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4)
- c. This was an answer that showed Jesus’ trust in His Father: God’s way is good.

**C. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Temptation: “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down” (Matt. 4:6)**

- 1. This time the devil took Jesus out of the wilderness into Jerusalem to the temple, and brought him to the top of the temple.**
  - a. If you really trust God, the devil said, prove it! Jump off the temple. God will send His angels to save you.
  - b. The devil even quoted the Bible (Psalm 91:11): See, the devil said, the Bible says that God will send His angel and you will not even hurt your foot against a stone. Jump!
  - c. But the devil misquotes and twists the Bible: he leaves out the words “in all thy ways.” God promises to protect us when we walk in His good ways, not when we jump off buildings!
- 2. Jesus answered again by quoting Scripture, “It is written again ...”**
  - a. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Matt. 4:7). *To tempt God is to put God to the test* by doing something you know is wrong and dangerous and then expect God to save you from trouble.
  - b. Jesus would tempt God if, on purpose, He threw Himself off the temple and said, “Father, save me!”
  - c. Can you think of ways in which we could tempt God? or in ways in which the devil suggests to us that we should do something which would tempt God?
- 3. In this 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation the devil again was trying to turn Jesus away from the way of the cross.**
  - a. What would happen if Jesus jumped from the temple and the angels rescued Him as Psalm 91 says? The people would see it; the people would be amazed; the people would worship Him as King!
  - b. But, what will happen if Jesus takes the road commanded by the Father: the people will reject Him, the people will hand Him over to die, and He will be crucified.
  - c. The devil wanted Jesus to take the easy way, the way of popularity, not the way of suffering. But Jesus loved His Father and He loves us. *He will not take the easy way. He will take the way of the cross. Only that way will save us from our sins.*

**D. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Temptation: “All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matt. 4:9)**

- 1. This time the devil took Jesus to the top of a high mountain so He could have a good view**
  - a. In a vision the devil showed Jesus the world, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of it.
  - b. Do you see this, Jesus? Do you see the power, the riches, the glory. You can have it all!
  - c. All you have to do, Jesus, is one little thing: worship me! Call me your God! I will give it all to you. You can be a king over all the world.
- 2. Jesus was angry with the devil: “Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 5:10)**
  - a. God had already promised to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Read Psalm 2:8. But because the kingdoms of the world are under the power of sin, Jesus could only receive them in the way of suffering and dying.
  - b. You see, the devil saw glory in the kingdoms of the world; but Jesus saw something else: He saw His own people suffering under sin and death. He came to save the world and then rule over it.
  - c. But we see again how the devil offered an easier way to Jesus: Jesus, you can have the world without suffering. Just worship me! But Jesus would never worship the devil or follow him!
  - d. Can you think of ways in which the devil says to us, “I will give you the world if you worship me.”? Can you think of ways when following and obeying God is more difficult than following what the devil suggests we do? When the devil tempts us to do wrong, we must pray and turn to the Bible for the answers
- 3. Jesus was tested and tempted three times. The devil failed! Now Jesus was ready to begin His official earthly ministry as our spiritual king who will save us from our sins!**