



LESSON 3

Jesus overcomes temptation

LUKE 4:1–13



Jesus passed the test to be the Messiah.



“And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve”’” (Luke 4:8).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus never sinned.
2. Jesus was tempted as a human.
3. Unlike anyone else, Jesus perfectly obeyed the Father.
4. Beware of Satan's strategies.
5. Imitate Jesus to overcome temptation.

Objectives

1. State that Satan was unable to get Jesus to sin.
2. List several ways this passage shows Jesus' humanity.
3. Contrast Jesus with Adam, Israel, and you.
4. List several strategies Satan used to tempt Jesus and uses to tempt you.
5. List several principles Jesus modeled to overcome temptation.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus overcomes temptation • Luke 4:1–13



Lesson Summary

When Jesus was baptized, Jesus embraced His mission and God declared His approval. But to prove that Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. After 40 days, when Jesus was hungry and weak, Satan tempted Jesus three final times in an attempt to ruin Jesus' relationship with the Father. But every time Jesus responded by faith in the Father's word, and Satan went away defeated.

Spotlight on the Gospel

It was Satan who first marred God's good plan for mankind by luring Adam into sin in the Garden of Eden. But at that time God promised that the seed of the woman would defeat Satan (Gen 3:15). This was the first promise of a Messiah who, by His sinless life, would conquer Satan. When Jesus resisted Satan in the wilderness, He proved that He was indeed the promised Messiah. And because He is the perfect Son, He will bring many sons to glory.

LAST WEEK



John baptizes Jesus
Matthew 3:13–17

THIS WEEK



Jesus overcomes temptation
Luke 4:1–13

NEXT WEEK



Jesus calls the disciples
Mark 1:16–28

THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Lesson Commentary

Jesus passed the test to be the Messiah.

The Father had just called Jesus His beloved Son (Luke 3:22), and the whole gospel plan depends on this loving relationship (John 3:35; 5:20; 15:9). So that's where Satan chose to attack. If he could drive a wedge between the Father and the Son, he would undo the entire plan of salvation. So with three cleverly crafted temptations, Satan tried to get Jesus to act in His own power, in His own timing, and in His own way.

God tested Jesus for 40 days (4:1–2)

But here's something strange: the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the test (Luke 4:1b)! How can this be, if "God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one" (Jas 1:13)? The same trial is both a temptation from Satan and a test from God. God ordains it, and the devil carries it out, but they have opposite goals (Job 2:3–6). The devil tempted in order to destroy the Son's relationship with His Father and disqualify Him from being the Messiah. But God tested Jesus to prove that He was the faithful Son, qualified to be the *Messiah, the conqueror of Satan* (Gen 3:15).

This temptation was necessary because we need a Messiah who succeeded where the rest of us failed. We were made in God's image in order to reflect God's goodness and holiness (Gen 1:26, 31). But Adam, who was the first human and "son of God" (Luke 3:38), failed to trust God's provision and submit to God's commands (Gen 2:16–17). Sadly, he obeyed Satan's temptation to be "like God" in his own way (3:5), plunging himself and all mankind into sin (Rom 5:12). He acted *autonomously, on his own, not depending on God*.

Because Adam failed, God chose Israel as His "first-born son" to bring all nations back into God's blessing (Gen 12:3; Exod 4:22). To do this, Israel needed to be holy, acting as witnesses and priests to all nations (Exod 19:6; Deut 4:4–6; 14:1). But Israel also failed (Ezek 36:20; Rom 2:24), disqualified by Satan during their 40 years of testing in the wilderness (Deut 8:2). Just as Satan had tempted Israel, so now he was

tempting the perfect Son of God for 40 days in the wilderness (Luke 4:2).

When Jesus was tempted, God's plan for all creation hung in the balance. The destiny of Israel and of the entire human race depended on how Jesus would respond to Satan's attack. No one, from Adam to Israel to you, has lived out God's purpose for mankind (Rom 3:10, 23). Thus the nation of Israel and all of Adam's race, including you, are destined to die (6:23)—unless a perfect son of Adam and a perfect Israelite can overcome Satan's temptations, living out God's purpose for mankind.

Satan's First Temptation: Don't depend on God's provision (4:3–4)

Satan knew exactly who Jesus was (4:34), so when he said, "If you are the Son of God," (Luke 4:3, 9), he was not wondering who Jesus was. Instead, Satan was saying, "Since you have such power as God's Son, use your power on your own for yourself." He wanted Jesus to stop relying on His Father, as Adam and Israel had done. So while neither miracles nor bread are sinful (4:2–3), remember that it was the Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to fast (4:1–2). It was not up to Jesus to end that fast. So Jesus had a choice: use His divine power to satisfy Himself, or trust His Father to provide.

But Jesus was not fooled. He had learned from Israel's testing in the wilderness (Deut 8:3), when the people were hungry (8:2). Sadly, Israel failed to trust God to feed them each day (Exod 16:3; Num 11:4–6), and a whole generation of Israelites died in the wilderness. Unlike Israel, Jesus trusted God to provide food, even when it seemed like God had forgotten about His hunger. Unlike Adam, Jesus refused to stray from God's plan (John 5:19).

He refused to use the divine power He had set aside when He became man (Phil 2:7). Jesus faithfully obeyed God, and God was faithful to provide (Matt 4:11).

THINK ABOUT IT

Seek God's kingdom first, and know that God will provide food, drink, and clothes (Matt 6:33).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Satan's Second Temptation: Don't wait for God's timing (4:5–8)

Next, Satan tempted Jesus with supreme authority and glory. Again, it was not wrong for Jesus to have these things—the Father had already promised them (Ps 2). But Satan was tempting Jesus to be impatient. He was saying, “Why wait for what's already yours? Take what God has promised you now!”

Again, Jesus succeeded where all others failed. Unlike Israel, who impatiently turned to idols in the wilderness (Exod 32:1, 8), Jesus refused to worship Satan (Luke 4:7–8). By quoting Deuteronomy a second time (Deut

6:13–14), He proved His focus was on God's glory, not His own. Jesus patiently waited, enduring the cross, because He trusted in God to exalt Him at the proper time (Phil 2:9; Rev 11:15).



THINK ABOUT IT

Beware of the quick and easy way. Trust God's timing.

Satan's Third Temptation: Don't trust God's way (4:9–12)

For a third time, Satan tempted Jesus to claim something that God had already promised. He even quoted Scripture to prove it, twisting the meaning of a passage about trusting God in order to get Jesus to **test God** (Ps 91:11–12). But if Jesus had thrown Himself off the top of the temple, He would no longer have been the submissive Son, content to follow the Father's lead.

But Jesus, unlike Israel, refused to try to **manipulate God**. He again remembered Israel's failure (Deut 6:16)

and would not force God to prove His presence through miracles (Exod 17:1–7). Although God would allow Jesus to suffer, even to the point of death, He would miraculously raise Jesus from the dead.



THINK ABOUT IT

Are there ways that you attempt to manipulate God? Trust in God's way—even when He leads you through suffering.

Conclusion (4:13)

The test was done, and the Son had won (Luke 4:13). This test proved that Jesus is the Messiah because He is both human and sinless. Jesus is human, since He was hungry (4:2) and able to be tempted (Jas 1:13). Yet despite the temptation, He is sinless (1 Pet 2:22; 1 John 3:5). So as the perfect human, He is qualified to fulfill God's plan for mankind in general (Rom 5:19) and for Israel in particular (Isa 49:3, 6). Because Jesus is the perfect human, humans can once again be righteous reflections of God (1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 5:21). Because Jesus is the perfect Israelite, Israel will once again be the holy nation of God (Isa 49:5; Rom 11:26). What a great victory!

Jesus' victory saves us, but it also shows us how we can have victory today. We must anticipate Satan's schemes. Expect Satan to tempt you in your weakness, distort the truth, and lead you to a wrong understanding of Scripture. Expect Satan to try to get you to distrust God's provision, doubt God's timing, and demand that God prove His care for you.

Then overcome temptation as Jesus did. First, resist by faith. Since God is in control of all things, even over temptation (Job 1:12), trust that He will always provide a way for you to overcome temptation (1 Cor 10:13). Second, **be filled with the Spirit, seeking and submitting to the Spirit's control over every area of your life** (Luke 4:1; Acts 4:31; Eph 5:18). As you follow the Spirit's lead through prayer and God's Word, you will successfully deny your sinful desires (Gal 5:16). Third, resist by hiding God's Word in your heart (Ps 119:9–11; Col 3:16). Fourth, deny yourself and put God and others first (Phil 2:3–8). Fifth, depend on Christ in you (Gal 2:20). The same Christ who conquered Satan in the wilderness is able to conquer Satan in your own heart (1 John 4:4).

THINK ABOUT IT

Know the devil's plan and don't be fooled by him (1 Pet 5:8).



Lesson Outline

Jesus passed the test to be the Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



Jesus never sinned because . . .

1. He depended on God when He was hungry (4:1–4).
2. He worshiped God when He had to be patient (4:5–8).
3. He let God be in charge when it was hard (4:9–13).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **God tested Jesus for 40 days (4:1–2).**
 - Jesus was tempted when He was full of the Spirit (4:1a).
 - Jesus was tempted when He was hungry and alone (4:1b–2).
2. **Satan's First Temptation: Don't depend on God's provision (4:3–4).**
 - Satan told Jesus to stop fasting (4:3).
 - Jesus chose to depend on God's word, not on His own power (4:4).
3. **Satan's Second Temptation: Don't wait for God's timing (4:5–8).**
 - Satan offered Jesus immediate power and glory (4:5–7).
 - Jesus chose to glorify God, not Himself (4:8).
4. **Satan's Third Temptation: Don't trust God's way (4:9–12).**
 - Satan urged Jesus to make God prove His love (4:9–11).
 - Jesus chose to trust God, not manipulate God (4:12).
5. **Conclusion: Satan left defeated (4:13).**



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus overcomes temptation • Luke 4:1–13



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who led Jesus into the wilderness?**
The Holy Spirit.
2. **Who tempted Jesus?**
Satan tempted Jesus.
3. **How did Jesus answer Satan each time?**
With the Bible, God's Word.
4. **Did Satan get Jesus to sin?**
No. Jesus never sinned, and Satan lost.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Who led Jesus into the wilderness, and why?**
The Holy Spirit did. God was testing Jesus to prove that He was His faithful Son.
2. **Who else had Satan tempted? Did they resist?**
Satan had tempted Adam and Israel. Both failed to resist Satan's temptations and sinned against God.
3. **What happened when Adam fell to Satan's temptation?**
Sin broke man's relationship with God. Sin got in the way of God's plan for man to be good like Him.
4. **Why was it wrong for Jesus to turn the stone into bread?**
He would not have been trusting God's provision.
5. **Why was it wrong for Jesus to accept kingdoms from Satan?**
He would not have been trusting God's timing, and it would have required Jesus to worship Satan instead of God.
6. **Why was it wrong for Jesus to throw Himself off the temple?**
He would not have been trusting God's way of doing things.
7. **Why can you be confident in Jesus to save you?**
Because He is human and sinless, He is qualified to be the Messiah.
8. **How can you follow Jesus' example when you are tempted?**
(1) Resist by faith that God is in control and will provide a way of escape. (2) Be filled with the Spirit. (3) Hide God's Word in your heart. (4) Deny yourself and put God and others first. (5) Depend on Christ, who lives within every Christian.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

PERFECTION

Jesus was tempted in every way but never once sinned (Heb 4:15). Have some children try to pass a loop over a length of bent and twisted wire without letting the loop touch the wire. Allow them two or three touches at first. Give them a smaller hoop or a more twisted wire and let someone try to make it all the way along the wire without touching it at all (make sure it cannot be done). Explain that God's standard of righteousness is like this—He cannot accept even one sin. Can the children imagine going through their whole life without ever sinning even once? Only Jesus could accomplish such a difficult feat, as we will see in today's lesson.

TRIED AND TESTED

Before teaching the lesson you can remind the children about some of the realities of temptation by giving them a puppet show. Introduce your puppet and give him some very clear instructions. Then have a number of other puppets or situations tempt him and distract him. Involve the children by having your puppet ask them what he should do. In today's lesson we will be looking at some temptations Jesus faced and how He responded.



ILLUSTRATE

SETTING THE SCENE

Satan tempted Jesus when He was in the wilderness, hungry and weak (Matt 4:2). Bring a picture of a desert to class and compare and contrast it to pictures of other landscapes (lush forest, frozen tundra, lakeshore, flowery meadow, etc.). You might also bring different types of clothing to class to show the type of clothing needed in the wilderness (hat, shorts, short-sleeve shirt, sandals, sunscreen, water bottle, etc.). Bring in your favorite cereal, and talk about how hard it would be to go without breakfast (or lunch or dinner!) for 40 days. Finally, practice counting the 40 days and nights by alternately raising and lowering a sun and a moon (pictures or decorated paper plates on sticks can be used).

1-2-3 POSTERS

Hang large posters on the wall with the numbers 1, 2 and 3. When you talk about Jesus' first temptation, decorate the number 1 by gluing stones and bread on it. For number 2, draw or glue on a city skyline (with a castle) to represent kingdoms. For number 3, put a cutout of a man (Jesus) standing at the top of the number, just like standing at the pinnacle of the temple.



APPLY

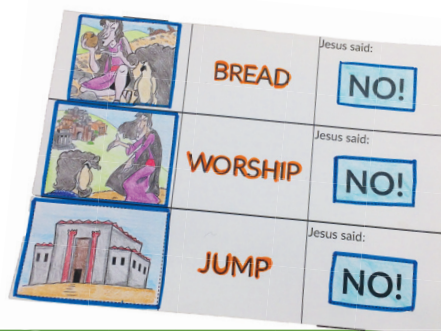
JESUS IS TEMPTED

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Have students color and cut out pictures from the craft sheet. Students should then glue the pictures to the appropriate places on the other craft sheet.

Jesus is Tempted
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus overcomes temptation • Luke 4:1–13



AGES 6–8



WILL HE PASS THE TEST?

As Jesus entered into the wilderness to be tempted, the reader is faced with the question, “Will He pass the test?” Break the class into two groups. Each group must elect one representative to represent them in a series of tests (catch a ball, balance a stick, skip over a rope, etc.). A team can only score if their representative passes the test. In today’s lesson we will be learning about a big test our representative, Jesus, faced at the beginning of His ministry. Let’s see whether He passes the test.

OPERATION

Operation is board game that tests players’ hand-eye coordination. Players use tweezers to remove humorous plastic ailments from small openings in the game board. However, these “ailments” must be removed without touching the sides of the openings. Bring this game to class and let the children try to remove a few pieces. Talk about how hard it would be to remove every piece without touching the sides. Use this activity to introduce the concept of Jesus’ perfect, sinless nature. Explain that Jesus was tempted in every way but never once sinned (Heb 4:15).



TESTED AND APPROVED

After engineers have carefully designed a structure, they “load test” it in order to verify that the structure can indeed withstand all the forces for which it has been designed. Bring some Styrofoam blocks to class and stack two or three on top of one another. Explain that each of Jesus’ temptations verified His strength. Place a heavy object on top of the blocks to see whether they will hold up. As you teach through each of the temptations, add heavier and heavier objects onto the blocks. End the lesson by posing the question, “Can Jesus carry me, with all my weight of sin?” Christ has proved His strength by resisting temptation in the desert, by resisting temptation even to the point of death on a cross, and ultimately by rising from the dead. The question is, “Will we trust Him with our lives?”

CALLING ALL FISHERMEN

Bring various fishing lures to class. Hold them up and describe how each lure is specifically designed to tempt fish into “taking the bait.” Explain that Satan’s temptations are like these fishing lures: they may look good on the outside, but they ultimately lead to misery and death.



TEMPTATION TRIARAMA

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, yarn, glue, scissors, crayons.

Directions: Have children draw pictures for each of the three temptations. Cut along the sides of the square, and then along the dotted line from the bottom right corner to the center. Model how to fold the square inward along the lines from corner to corner. Fold on the solid line first, and then repeat with the other line that was cut to the midpoint. Fold the triangle with Luke 4:8 printed on it on top of the triangle that says, “Glue here!” Spread glue on the correct triangle to assemble the triarama. Attach a piece of yarn to the top.

Temptation Triarama

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

NAVY SEALS

Very few people become Navy Seals. The training is rigorous. Using the training requirements listed on the official Navy Seal website (www.navyseals.com), describe the different mental and physical tests that must be passed before one can qualify to serve with the Seals. Now imagine a test so difficult that only one human has ever passed. All else, including me and you, have failed. The test is perfect obedience to God, and the man is Jesus Christ. In today's lesson, we'll learn about His test.

NEVER GAVE IN

Invite two or more children to get into push-up position. Challenge them to maintain this position (chest and knees off the ground) as long as possible. While they hold this position, invite the rest of the class to turn to Hebrews 4:15. Explain that Jesus experienced temptation just like us. However, unlike us, He never gave in (sinned). As the children begin to tire and are unable to maintain their form, remind the children that Jesus never gave in to sin.



ILLUSTRATE

WAY OF ESCAPE

Describe or show the class a picture of a runaway truck ramp. Explain that these traffic devices are there to help vehicles with braking trouble stop safely. These ramps are placed next to the highway on a downhill portion of road and are filled with sand or gravel. They are a "way of escape" for runaway vehicles." Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 as a class. Explain that God has also provided us a "way of escape" in each temptation.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR SWORD?

Before firearms were invented, a soldier's sword was his constant companion. He ate with it, slept with, traveled with it, worked with, and fought with it. It never left his side! He knew every inch of his sword and cleaned and sharpened it often. What about you? The Bible, the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17), is our only weapon in the fight against Satan's attacks. Find out who knows their "sword" the best by racing to look up the following references that describe the power of God's Word in our struggle against Satan's temptations: Psalm 119:11; Ephesians 6:17; Colossians 3:16.



APPLY

TEMPTATION

Scripture is clear that we are all tempted in many different ways (1 Cor 10:13). However, children are not always aware of the nature, process and outcome of temptation. After the lesson, take some time to discuss temptation with them. James 1:12–15 and 1 John 2:15–17 give some useful insights into the mechanics and sources of temptation. Help the children identify what sorts of things tempt them. Temptation always makes sin seem appealing and always offers what it cannot deliver. Ask the children what they think they should do when they are tempted to sin.