

## **Lessons from Luke: Jesus' Baptism & Temptation, 3:21-4:14**

Intro Stories: *The Bourne Identity* is a book and a movie series about a man who can't remember who he is. He has survival skills. There are evil men and governments (including the CIA) who want him dead. Jason Bourne must remember who he is before they kill him. It's fiction.

Non-fiction: In 2016, a 51-year-old man with a developmental disability living in Ontario, Canada, began having flashbacks of his earlier life. He suddenly remembered who he was: Edgar Latulip, of Kitchener, Ontario. When he told a social worker, she looked up his details and found a missing person's notice from 1986. It turned out that Latulip went missing while on his way to Niagara Falls, when he suffered a head injury and forgot who he was. He had forgotten his identity for 30 years! He had a joyful reunion with his parents. That's an identity crisis.

In Luke's gospel, which is non-fiction, we have the stories of Jesus' baptism and temptation. If Jesus forgets who he is then the devil will be able to deceive him.

### Confirmation: Identity Affirmed, 3:21-38

This was the beginning of Jesus ministry. Jesus was about 30-years old when he began his ministry. Jesus came to be baptized by John. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. Jesus didn't need to repent of sin. Jesus received baptism to affirm and complete the ministry of John. It was also a public testimony to his identity.

Jesus identity was confirmed at his baptism and in his genealogy.

The baptism was a very visible confirmation of Jesus' identity as a member of the triune God. The heavens were opened. The HS descended on Jesus in bodily form, like a dove. (I find it interesting that the HS can take on a visible form, but he is primarily an invisible Spirit for us.) The Father's audible voice was heard, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am will pleased." Prayer preceded this confirmation. "When Jesus was praying, the heavens were opened." Your confirmation as a child of God will be felt when you are praying and worshipping.

Jesus' genealogy also confirms his identity. How far back can you trace your genealogy? I can trace it back to my great grandparents on my mother's side who lived in New Jersey. I don't even remember my father's parents. So, it is amazing that Jesus' genealogy can be traced back to Adam! Dr. Luke did his homework.

Jesus' genealogy confirms his identity. The genealogy works backward from Jesus to Adam. It contains 77 names representing generations. (I counted them all, so you don't need to! Let's say it is 100 years for each generation; that's approximately 7700 years from Adam to Christ.) Dr. Luke wrote for a Gentile audience. The primary point of the genealogy is to establish Jesus as *a* son of man, Adam, who was created directly by God as a son of God. Jesus is *the* divine Son of God. God began the genealogy to Jesus with Adam and preserved it. We are not going to read the genealogy. I only want to recognize two unusual links in Jesus' genealogy:

- Obed the son of Boaz, verse 32. This is explained in the OT book of Ruth who was a non-Israelite. This is a powerful story of loyalty, faithfulness, and God's amazing grace. Ruth was loyal to her mother-in-law Naomi and believed in the God of Israel. God rewarded her loyalty. Read it.
- Perez the son of Judah, verse 33. Tamar, the mother of Perez was a Canaanite, and Judah's daughter-in-law. Yes, Judah's daughter-in-law! I don't want to tell the story now. Read Genesis 38. Judah was immoral and repented of his sin. God graciously preserved the genealogy of Jesus despite human sinfulness.

Jesus' baptism and genealogy confirm his identity as the *one and only* fully human and fully divine Son of God.

#### Confrontation: Identity Attacked, Luke 4:1-14

Jesus confronted his primary opposition, the devil, at the beginning of his ministry. Our primary opposition as Christians is not people; it is Satan. This is called spiritual warfare. We are engaged in a confrontation with the enemy of Christ and the Gospel. *You* are engaged in a confrontation with the enemy of your spiritual growth and obedience to Christ.

Jesus immediately went from confirmation to confrontation. Jesus went from having his identity affirmed to having it attacked. His obedience was tested by temptation.

The primary objective of the temptations was Jesus' identity and then his obedience to God the Father. Two of the three temptations start with "IF you are the Son of God..." If the devil can get Jesus to doubt his identity as the Son of God, then Jesus may disobey the Father and sin. If Jesus were to sin, then we wouldn't have a Savior.

T1: “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” In other words, “If you are the Son of God then you have God’s power to turn stones into bread and eat. You’re hungry after fasting forty days. Use your power and feed yourself.” The devil attacked Jesus’ human nature, his physical need. Jesus answered **Deuteronomy 8:3**, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” Man is not just a physical being; he is also a spiritual being who lives in relationship with God and lives by obedience to God. Our spiritual need to be in relationship with God is more important than our physical needs. (We come to eat Friday night and satisfy a physical need, and then we ought to attend a Bible study for our spiritual need.)

The rest of the verse is to live by Word of God. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy and that book is about the Hebrews living in the wilderness for 40 years. Deuteronomy 8:2-4: And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, *that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.* Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. (I have been driving my car for 11 years now. I pray for it not to wear out for 40 years.)

T2: I don’t know how Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time and I don’t know if Satan’s claim is true because he is a liar. But Satan does have a temporary, secondary sovereignty over the kingdoms of the world, but he possesses them under God’s permanent, primary sovereignty. God is the owner. God owns the house and the devil is a bad tenant who will be evicted when Jesus moves in.

Satan tempts, “Worship me and I will give you authority over all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory will be yours.” It is still a temptation to disobey the Father’s plan. Jesus answered **Deuteronomy 6:13**, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’” Jesus knows that his kingdom, the Kingdom of God, will be established in all the kingdoms of the world after his death, resurrection, and ascension to God’s right hand. *If you were promised a brand-new car after training for and running a marathon, would you skip the marathon and settle for a rusty old car?* I don’t think so. Jesus doesn’t want the rusty old kingdoms of the world and their cheap glory. Jesus ran his marathon

through the cross, the grave, and hell, and then arose and ascend to God's right hand. God the Father gave him authority over all the kingdoms of the world. Now we go and make disciples of all nations with Christ's authority.

T3: Satan said, "IF you are the Son of God, then jump off the highest point of the temple and God will save you. It is written in the Psalms that God will protect you from harm." This is from Psalm 91:11-12. In other words, "Jesus, if you want the people to believe you are the Son of God, then this would be a spectacular way to prove it. Your Father has promised to protect you. Jump off and everyone will see angels appear and catch you. When you are safely on the ground then you can ask everyone to believe in you." Jesus answered **Deuteronomy 6:16**, "It is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" This temptation is a test of Jesus' identity and obedience to God the Father. If the Father told Jesus to jump off the temple, then he would do it. But to do it without the Father's permission would be disobedience and therefore testing God – forcing God to act when it isn't his will. Also, Jesus will not do a spectacular act of disobedience to get people to believe in him.

Notice that Satan uses Scripture the wrong way! Satan is very capable of producing wrong interpretations and applications of Scripture by taking scriptures out of context. Satan also didn't quote verse 13 about the serpent getting trampled underfoot because he's the serpent. Psalm 91:11-13: For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. *You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.*

#### Application: Spirit and the Word

Jesus overcame by the power of the HS and the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word work together.

#### **Jesus' Baptism: Identity Affirmed**

Jesus' baptism was a unique event that marked the beginning of his ministry, but it has parallels for us. (It is applicable to our experience.) Jesus' identity was affirmed at his baptism. The HS filled him, and the Father said, "You are my beloved son and I am pleased with you."

You are born-again when the Holy Spirit breathes life into you and you repent and receive Christ. The Holy Spirit is active in you before you are baptized. Baptism is a symbolic act that represents the grace of regeneration. Have you heard a voice

from within (not an audible voice from heaven) saying, “You are my beloved child, my son, my daughter, with you I am very pleased”? If you are a born-again baptized believer, then the HS is inside you and speaks from within. You will hear the HS affirming in your heart your identity as a child of God as you pray, worship, and read the Word. There are times you will also hear the devil attacking your identity as a beloved child of God; attacking with doubts and fears in your mind.

### **Jesus’ Temptation: Identity Attacked**

The HS descended upon Jesus at his baptism. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Luke’s gospel puts a unique emphasis on the role of the HS in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus lived as a man filled with the HS. The only way to live a Christ-like life is to be full of the HS. We must be full of the HS and led by the HS to resist the devil’s temptations.

Jesus resisted the three temptations with “It is written...” The devil didn’t argue with Jesus when Jesus responded, “It is written...” The devil was silent, stopped, and moved to the next temptation. Why? Because the Word is truth and it is backed up by the power of God. Skeptics question the authority of God’s Word, but the devil doesn’t. He knows it is true. We need the Word of God to live a Christ-like life and resist the devil.

This was not a “one-and-done” temptation. The devil departed from Jesus until he had another opportunity (4:13). The devil waits for the right opportunity to tempt us. *(My daughter’s wedding was a wonderful event, but I also felt the pressure of temptation to compromise. I wanted the wedding to be a witness to Jesus Christ. A group of people attending the wedding were millennials – a group of rock climbing friends of my daughter and the groom. Many millennials have a worldview that goes along with the secular culture. The secular culture does not agree with the Bible. The secular culture accepts marriage equality, i.e. same-sex marriage and transgenderism. During the wedding ceremony, before exchanging the vows and rings, I gave a homily on biblical marriage from Genesis and Jesus Christ’s affirmation of Genesis – Matthew 19:3-6.*

*Matthew 19:3-6: And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” Jesus answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”)*

What would be an opportune time for the devil to tempt you? Marriage struggles, sickness, money, sex, food, power, lying, anger, or unforgiveness? The devil knows your weaknesses.

Have you ever yielded to a temptation and then doubted you were a child of God and loved by God? “I can’t believe I yielded to that temptation again! When will I have victory over that temptation? I wonder if I’m really a child of God and the Spirit lives in me.” Every time a rude driver tailgates me and I react, I feel this way!

We must be full of the Holy Spirit to confront and resist temptation. We cannot do it in our own strength. We need the Spirit and the Word of God working together. The Spirit works through the Word of God, like a scalpel in the hand of a doctor. **Be filled with the Holy Spirit and know the Word of God. That’s the only way to resist Satan and live a Christ-like life in this world.**

One final question for consideration: Do you really know who you are in Christ and what He can do through you with His power and your faith?

Optional example of opportunity for temptation: *(While I was in Pensacola doing chaplaincy training I went for walks by myself along the beach. I was enjoying the sunset and praying. I had been away from my wife for 3 weeks and was feeling lonely. An attractive woman walked over to me and started a conversation, “Hi. It’s a beautiful evening. What’s your name? Where are you from?” I’m not naive. I knew she wanted something more than conversation. It was an opportune time for temptation. Finally, she asked me, “Are you married?” I said, “Yes.” She said, “Oh, I’m sorry,” and walked away.)*