

Mark 1:12-15 The Temptation of Jesus and Beginning of His Ministry

12 And immediately the Spirit *brought Him out into the wilderness.

The same Holy Spirit who rested on and blessed Jesus is the One who now guides Jesus into the wilderness, and He goes, obedient to the Will of the Father. He must confront the wilderness, and the enemy.

13 And He was in the wilderness for forty days,

These 40 days mirror the 40 years that Israel wandered in the wilderness being tested and refined by God (Num 14:33), and many other periods of testing, trial, refinement and preparation. Jesus passed through this period of testing, and came out victorious, by the power of God, and the use of His Word to defeat the attacks of the enemy, who sought to divert Him from God's plan for His life.

being tempted by Satan;

The idea that Jesus was intentionally directed by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil is a challenging concept. Yet that is precisely what the Gospels indicate: **"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil"** (Matthew 4:1; cp. Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–2). The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted because God wanted His Son and His followers to understand the Lord's messianic mission clearly—that Christ had not come to earth as Israel's Conquering King but as the Suffering Servant.

Temptation itself is not a sin. Jesus was **tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin** (Heb 4:15; see also 2 Corinthians 5:21 **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**). The Lord was not tested to see if He would fail. Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted to demonstrate how we can resist the temptation to sin, and how, through Christ's power, we, too, can overcome (Heb 2:18

18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

In the temptations of Jesus, we see both the tempter, the accuser of the Brethren, Satan, and also the three main types of all human temptation, The apostle John labeled these **as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"** (1 John 2:16). Jesus' temptations make clear the necessity of both the Holy Spirit, and the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, the Bible. As Paul reminded Timothy, **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work** (2 Tim. 3:16–17). The Holy Spirit helps us to stand firm in the Christian life, as He applies God's Word as we study to our lives. This is just what Jesus is going to do, as he faces temptation from the Enemy—combat him with the Word of God.

Jesus, Our Example in Overcoming Temptation

We are not left to speculate about the identity of the sword – it is "the word of God". The term "word" here is not the Greek word, *logos*, a term referring to a broad or general word. The Greek word used here is *hrema*, which refers to a specific statement or utterance. The "sword of the Spirit" refers to the specific statements of God. It is not enough to say "I believe the Bible" when we encounter Satan in spiritual combat. We need to know the specific principles of Scripture to deal with the specific temptations of Satan.

As always, Jesus gives our example of how we are to handle the "sword of the Spirit" in specific temptations is found in Matthew 4:1-11. There we are shown how our Lord dealt with Satan's attack of temptation. In each of the three temptations, Jesus quoted a specific Scripture from the book of Deuteronomy related to the temptation. He didn't flail His sword around indiscriminately. He used

it in a precise way dealing with exactly the temptation that Satan shot at Him. He had been fasting for forty days and forty nights, personally reenacting Israel's wilderness wanderings. But, He had also been praying for 40 days. He was physically weak, but spiritually strong. During that fast, the devil came to Jesus three times and presented him with three different temptations, each mirroring one of the temptations that Israel faced—and failed—in the wilderness. . First, Satan said to Jesus, **"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread"** (Matt. 4:3), mirroring Israel's complaining over their lack of food. In reply to the devil's first temptation, Jesus quotes Deut 8:3, stating, **"man shall not live by bread alone but by every word [ῥῆμα] that proceeds out of the mouth of God"** (Matt 4:4). This is not preaching the gospel but speaking God's word against his foes. These situations presented three powerful temptations for Jesus to achieve good ends by the wrong means. There is nothing wrong with wanting food to eat or desiring divine protection, and Jesus had come into the world to rule the nations. But the significant point to notice is how Jesus answered these temptations. Each time he got out his sword. Three times he quoted the Bible to the devil. Turn these stones into bread? The Bible says, "Man does not live by bread alone" (Deut. 8:3). Throw myself down from the temple? The Bible says, "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test" (Deut. 6:16). Worship you? The Bible says, "It is the LORD your God you shall fear" (Deut. 6:13). Stab, stab, stab! And after that, we are told, the devil left him for a season (Matt. 4:11). There is the sword of the Spirit at work, effectively countering temptation.

Read and Memorize the Word

Get into God's Word daily. Find resources that assist you to see how the Bible directs your steps, how it addresses you in your struggles, how it confronts your pet sins, and how it points you back repeatedly to Christ and the gospel. Put it to work in the little challenges so that when great challenges come, you know how it works.

Remember whose sword it is. The Spirit is the ultimate author of God's Word and the One who can help us to understand and apply it properly. Before you start to read the Bible, pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher, to help you to understand what you are reading and to see how it affects your life.

Learn from others and share what you are learning with someone else. That's the beauty of Bible studies and community groups—we learn together from God's Word. Such gatherings encourage us to become more filled with the good news of the gospel. The Christian life was never meant to be lived alone but in community.

and the angels were serving Him.--Jesus achieved victory by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God, and so can we. And when we do, there is a time of spiritual rest, recuperation and blessing; having our needs met by God, just as for Jesus.

14 Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, --Jesus remains in the wilderness preaching "repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand", and that the time is fulfilled for God has sent the Messiah. His ministry is alongside John's for a while, until after John the Baptist has been arrested. It's not until this happens, that Jesus moves the central location of His ministry from the wilderness of Judea, and enters into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God.

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the gospel."

The time, Kairos, the appointed time for God to send Jesus into the world for ministry has come at this particular time in history. The emphasis upon the fulness of time grounds Jesus' proclamation securely in the history of revelation and redemption. It focuses attention upon the God who acts, whose past election and redemption of Israel provided the pledge of his activity in the future. Jesus declares that the critical moment has come: God begins to act in a new and decisive way, bringing his promise of ultimate redemption to the point of fulfilment by sending Jesus the Messiah.

The emphasis upon the “kingdom,” links his proclamation to the self-revelation of God in the OT and stresses the continuity between the new testament and old, revealing it as God’s plan of salvation from the beginning. In announcing “the kingdom of God,” belongs to the God who comes and invades history in order to secure man’s redemption. God is acting to save mankind. John’s ministry had centered upon the urgent demand for repentance because God was about to act decisively in bringing among the people “the Coming One.” Jesus then proclaims that the kingdom has drawn near, and while his proclamation is veiled. John preached that the Kingdom of God was at hand, coming soon, Jesus preached that it was here! In the person of Jesus men are confronted by the kingdom of God in its nearness. A faithful response to the proclamation of the gospel is called for by God. “whosoever will, believe on Jesus for salvation”.