

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing
St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 3

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

CONTENTS

1. The Ministry of Jesus Christ heralded by John the Baptist.
2. Jesus Christ was baptized by John.
3. Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan.

INTRODUCTION

In our last lesson, we learned that Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with the child Jesus because King Herod sought to kill the child Jesus. He had commanded to have all the babies in Bethlehem two years and under to be killed. When King Herod died, Joseph and Mary returned to the land of Israel. An angel of the Lord told them that those who sought to kill the infant Jesus were now dead. When they heard that Archelaus, the son of Herod ruled in Judaea, they went to live in Nazareth, which was an obscure town of central Galilee in the north. When Jesus was twelve years old, Joseph and Mary brought him to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Apart from this event, nothing else was reported for the next 18 years of Jesus' life, except that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

This lesson looks into the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not suddenly present Himself to the people and proclaim His message of salvation. He was heralded by John who later baptized Him. He was then led by the Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted for forty days and was tempted by the devil.

UNDERSTANDING

***The Ministry of Jesus Christ
Heralded by John***

JESUS WAS HERALDED by John "the Baptist" before beginning His ministry. John was called "the Baptist" because he was baptizing people in the river Jordan. Jesus paid the highest tribute to John when He declared (Luke 7:28): "*Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.*"

JOHN WAS A RELATIVE of Jesus. He was the son of a priest named Zechariah, who was a descendant of Aaron. There is very little information about the youth of John, even less than that of Jesus Christ. His birth was extraordinary because his mother, Elizabeth, was barren. His birth reminds us of the births of Isaac, Samuel and Samson. He was dedicated to the service of God, and became a Nazarite. His hair was uncut, and he abstained from all strong drink. He clothed himself with camel's hair and had a belt of skin around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.¹ John preached and

¹ Leviticus 11:21-22, "Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald

baptized people in the desert regions of Judaea. Crowds of people flocked to hear him. He called the people to repent and to prepare for their coming King. When he saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees who came to hear him, he rebuked them for thinking that they could enter the kingdom of God on the basis of their lineage to Abraham.

Although JESUS honoured John with the greatest of praise, the fact is that he was only the forerunner of Jesus Christ. John himself testified that he was not greater than Jesus Christ, “whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose” (John 1:27). John’s ministry as the precursor of Jesus Christ’s was predicted by the prophets Malachi and Isaiah.² John is the connecting link between the Old and the New Testament. His ministry was to call the people of Israel to repent of their sins for “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). When the people asked him what they should do, he told them that those who had two coats should give one to those who had none. When the publicans (the tax collectors) came repenting to him, he told them to stop cheating and taxing the people more than what was required. He told the soldiers not to intimidate and extort money from the people, and not to accuse them falsely.

locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.”

² Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

JOHN TESTIFIED that the One who was coming after him would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, and would thoroughly “purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.”

The Baptism of Jesus by John

JESUS CHRIST KNOWING that His time had come left Nazareth for Jordan where John was baptizing. Jesus came to be baptized by John. By some divine insight John realized that Jesus was without sin and that He did not need his baptism. In fact John confessed that he was the one who need to be baptized by Jesus. Jesus answered: “Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15) Jesus told John to go ahead and baptize Him so as to fulfil the righteousness and will of God. It was God’s will that Jesus be baptized by John. Through it, Jesus identified Himself with the people. John consented and baptized Jesus.

LUKE REPORTS that when Jesus came out of the water, He was praying. The contents of His prayer were not revealed. Immediately after that John saw the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus like a dove, and a voice from heaven declared: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). This manifestation was known to John only. The people did not hear nor see what happened. The voice was that of God the Father. It clearly affirmed who Jesus was, His mission and that the Spirit of God was with Him in the mission that was set before Him.

The Temptation of Jesus Christ by Satan

JESUS WAS FILLED with the Holy Spirit, and after He returned from Jordan where He was baptized by John, He was immediately led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He fasted for forty days and was tempted of the devil, Satan. Jesus did not straight away begin His ministry. There was the ready crowd listening to John. Instead He was deeply moved by the Spirit to withdraw Himself to another part of the desert alone. Jesus showed His obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In fact His whole ministry was characterized by His obedience to the Spirit and submission to the will of God. He was going through a spiritual struggle and conflict. He did not even let food interrupt this inner spiritual conflict that He was experiencing. The spiritual conflict was real. The adversary who tempted Jesus was a real personal agent of evil. The temptation of Jesus by Satan was a real struggle. It is not a myth as some believe and teach. The writer to the Hebrews commented that Jesus was tempted as we are, and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).³

IN THE FIRST TEMPTATION, the devil said to Jesus (Luke 4:3): “If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.” In a way, Satan was repeating the first temptation he put to Eve in the Garden of Eden. The first temptation and this temptation are related to eating. Satan’s “if” clause does not doubt the power and the ability of Jesus

to use His supernatural powers as the Son of God to turn the stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. It was a temptation based upon a genuine need. There is nothing wrong to satisfy one’s hunger—why should Jesus die in the wilderness because of hunger. Turn the stones into bread and live. Jesus could easily have done it. Moreover, if Jesus should fail to turn the stones into bread, it would be a denial of His true personality and supernatural power. This temptation is testing Jesus as to what kind of preaching and teaching He would be doing. Was He going to tell people to trust God even when they are hungry to the point of death? Was He going to preach and teach that physical needs take priority over spiritual needs? It was a test of whether Jesus would trust God the Father for His basic needs.

JESUS KNEW SATAN’S ploy. His reply was stunning (Luke 4:4): “It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” Jesus, who knew the Scriptures, used the Word of God from Deuteronomy 8:3 to rebut Satan’s tempting suggestion.⁴ Jesus’ answer made it clear that man’s spiritual need is greater than his material needs. Man needs to feed on the Word of God.

IN THE SECOND TEMPTATION, Satan brought Jesus to Jerusalem and set Him on the highest point of the Temple and said to Him (Matthew 4:6): “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself

³ Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

⁴ Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Since Jesus used Scripture in His first rebuttal against Satan, the latter now quoted Scriptures to tempt Jesus. Unlike the first temptation, here Satan asks Jesus to create a need. Satan quoted Psalm 91:11, 12 but he used it out of context. God promises providential care and protection to His people who love and trust Him.⁵ This temptation is not to lure Jesus to make a public demonstration of His power and affirm His relationship with God. There is no mention of a great multitude waiting to see what Jesus would do. Not only did Satan quote out of context, he also omitted the conditions attached to this promise of God. Jesus’ reply shows the real diabolical intent of the tempter (Matthew 4:7) “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:6.⁶ Once again, Jesus used the Word of God to counterattack Satan’s devious temptation. Satan tried to make

Jesus doubt God’s providential care. Jesus, the Son of God, trusted His heavenly Father wholeheartedly. There was no need to test His Word. God is in control of His life, and if He lived by faith and in obedience to God, He is assured that God would providentially take care of Him.

IN THE THIRD TEMPTATION, Satan transported Jesus to a high mountain and was shown all the kingdoms of the world. Satan then said to Jesus (Luke 4:6-7): “All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” Satan’s ability or power to effectively offer to Jesus what he promised here is not questioned. So in a way, the offer was real, except for the truth that God is the ultimate arbiter. God is still on the throne. This is one of Satan’s tactics. He is deluding people into believing that he has more authority and power than he actually has. Satan was calling Jesus to bow down and worship him. It means telling Jesus to deny the will of God His Father. Jesus would then have accomplished His mission to rule the world and bring about a world where there would be peace, plenty of food, no war, no injustice and no poverty not by way of the cross but by bending his knees to Satan. Jesus’ answer to Satan’s third temptation is strong and uncompromising (Luke 4:8): “Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” This third temptation was the most dangerous of all. It was a frontal attack on Christ’s purpose for coming into this world to die for sinners. It is deadly.

⁵ Psalm 91:9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. 11 *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* 12 *They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* 13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. 14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. 16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

⁶ Deuteronomy 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

Jesus did not tolerate Satan and commanded him to go away. Jesus cited Scripture that God commanded man to worship and serve Him only and no one else (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).⁷ As a child Joseph and Mary had brought Him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord God (Exodus 20:2-3): “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” He recited Deuteronomy 6:4-5 to rebut and overcome Satan’s diabolical temptations.

After this third temptation, Satan left Jesus “for a season” (Luke 4:13). Throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ, Satan actively opposed the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul remarked correctly when he said that our battle is “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). Matthew recorded that angels came and served the Lord Jesus Christ.

MEANING

JESUS CHRIST’S ADVENT into the world is not an accident in human history. It was planned and purposed by God. No detail is spared so that there can be no doubt concerning the person and ministry of Jesus. He is the greater son of David, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam, the Son of God—the God-Man incarnate! John was

sent as the forerunner to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any one who having heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and believe in Him will be sealed (baptized) with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:14).

JESUS’ COMING TO John for baptism is an act of humility and obedience. John recognized the superiority of Jesus over him. Christ should baptize him and not the other way round. But it was done so as to fulfil the righteousness of God. Jesus submitted to the will of God. Humility and obedience are two supreme qualities in life. It is because of Christ’s humility and obedience to the Father’s will that we have salvation. Similarly if we humble ourselves and confess our sin to God, we will receive salvation from Him. A life of humility and obedience to God produces the inner peace that passes all understanding and the joy, strength and victory to withstand the raging storms of life.

JESUS’ VICTORIOUS OVER-COMING of Satan’s temptations shows us that in order to overcome the temptations to sin, we must use the Word of God to counterattack the tempter. The Word of God is powerful for by it was the heavens and the earth and all that are therein created! There is power in the Word! Satan tried to undermine Jesus’ trust and obedience to God and tried to divert the ministry of Jesus, but he failed. Victory comes in knowing the Word of God and in completely trusting Him.

THE THREE TEMPTATIONS which Satan put to Jesus are relevant and instructive for us. *The first temptation* involves the priority between material things and spiritual things. If man is created to

⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

live forever and to glorify God then the spiritual things must take precedence over material things. Christ showed us that even in time of need we should not use our resources to downplay the importance of the spiritual against the material. *The second temptation* involves perverting the Word of God. Satan was adept in quoting the Word of God. But he used it and applied it to cause us to sin. We see this kind of usage of the Word of God today—being slain by the Holy Spirit because none of God’s people should be sick; all diseases will be healed because God has promised that in His Word; the higher law of God overrules the law of government of a country. *The third temptation* involves worshipping or serving something else. Daily we have to make this choice. Some have succumbed to the irresistible lure of money, erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:9-10).⁸ Some have submitted to rich, intelligent and powerful men rather than obey God.

RELECTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. We can prepare people for His return by encouraging fellow Christians to walk worthy of their calling and by witnessing to unbelievers.

⁸ 1 Timothy 6:9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Are we faithfully and diligently studying the Word of God? The Word of God will transform our character and conduct. Only by being conversant with the Word of God can we overcome the many difficulties and troubles in life and have peace and joy.

Do we go to our Lord Jesus Christ every day to seek His grace and help in times of need? He was tempted as we are, yet was without sin, so He knows our problems and our plight. AMEN

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LESSON 3

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Luke 3:1-18; Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8.

TUESDAY: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23; John 1:15-18.

WEDNESDAY: Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13.

THURSDAY: Hebrews 4:11-16, 2 Timothy 3:12-17.

FRIDAY: 1 Timothy 6:6-16.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of John’s baptism?

2 In what way does the ministry of John the Baptist prepare the way for Jesus?

3. After their repentance, several groups approached John for advice regarding what they should do. What is the motive underlying John's answers?

4. How can we learn from John about preparing someone to receive Christ?

5. What are the signs that authenticate the person and

ministry of Jesus at His baptism?

6. What is the major difference between the baptism of Jesus and that of the others?

7. Since Jesus is sinless, why does he need to be baptized?

8. How is each of Jesus' temptations relevant to us today?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

9. Did Satan direct his temptation to Jesus' human nature or to His divine nature?

10. What kinds of temptation might present day spiritual leaders encounter?

11. How do Jesus' responses in the face of temptations help us to overcome our temptations?

12. What is most important to you in this lesson?
