

So Much Better Than...

A dozen sweet, freshly baked donuts that beg to be eaten... Items collected in an online “wishlist” quickly ordered with only a few keystrokes... Exciting, binge-worthy television shows ready to be watched for hours... We all have our little temptations. They often take the form of food, stuff, and comfort. And while those previously suggested temptations may seem insignificant in the grand scheme of things, they nevertheless can become major problems for health, finances, or relationships. Moreover, when it comes to serious temptations, the stakes are even higher. The dangerous deception of a temptation is not simply that it causes us to question God’s character, but scarier still, that it leads us to respond in selfish disobedience. Yet, in Luke 4:1-13, **God’s beloved Son provides us with a wonderful example of how to live a victorious Christian life.**

In its surrounding context, the temptation of Jesus confirms that the Father’s approval expressed at Jesus’ baptism was warranted and properly placed in His beloved Son. When the Father exclaimed, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Lk 3:22), it was an expression that demonstrated Jesus’ readiness to defeat sin and begin His undaunted, submissive journey that would lead Him to the cross and fulfill His Father’s redemptive plan.

So, as the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for 40 days, Luke’s account brings to mind another temptation account that took place approximately 1500 years earlier, when Israel grumbled their way through the wilderness after their flight from Egypt. Yet, Jesus’ submissive faith stands in stark contrast to Israel’s repeated failure. **He is better than Israel!**

Furthermore, He is better than Adam (Lk 3:38; Rom 5:12-19). Jesus experienced the full force of Satan’s assaults and responded to each with undaunted trust in God, His character, and in His written Word. Every temptation our Savior experienced - from the three Luke records, the others that constituted His time in the wilderness, as well as the many that He would face on His way to Golgotha - were as real as every temptation that we face. They were powerfully custom designed by the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:1-3) to entice Jesus to seek comfort, pursue fulfillment, and find care *outside* of God’s will. So, as the incarnate Son of God, Jesus was [fully human](#), a high priest “who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). This is a big deal! In short, because He is both the perfect, eternal high priest and the once-and-for-all sacrifice (Heb 7:26-28). He is the only means for salvation. There is no other!

But there is also a very practical, daily application of Jesus' victory, because His wilderness encounter gives us a model for success in the midst of a sinfully seductive world that aims to win our affections (1 Jn 2:15-16). When the enemy dangles the shiny lures of this world in front of our noses in an effort to coax us from the protective shadow of our Hiding Place, let's draw upon the stored-up Word (Ps 46:1-11; 91:1-2; 121:1-8) and trust in our Sustainer, Shepherd, and All in All. In other words, we can "with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).

Psalm 91:1-2 (ESV) - *"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"*