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An Account of Jesus' Temptation

By Scot Aaron

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This account will penetrate various spiritual dimensions of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness of Judea. Experience the purity of Jerusalem's temple, the greed of moneychangers, the lustful opulence of kings and rulers, the brutality of war, the humility of servants, the subtlety of Satan's ploys, and ultimately Jesus' triumph. Then, reflect upon today's immorality and materialism!

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In this article I will recreate a known experience from the life of Jesus, the temptation in the wilderness. According to the Bible in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus' temptation was said to occur after John the Baptist baptized Jesus. From here Jesus went alone into the wilderness for what was claimed to be a forty-day fast. The devil was said to tempt Jesus here. By telling the story in my own words, I hope to clarify spiritual depths within the experience.

Jesus walked up to the river wherein John was baptizing fellow Jews. When a willing soul is submerged, flowing water brought a purifying effect. The entire body felt cleansed, inside and out; or so this was what John taught. The experience confirmed the reality of scriptures referring to "living water." It was as if John's hand was the hand of God that could lift every burden from the soul. Even the men would shed tears after their baptism. The warmth of the sun, smells from nearby fires, hushed reverence, and the taste of the river water on the lips were memorable experiences, well worth the journey to see John the Baptist.

When Jesus partook of the experience, an immediate bond formed with John. As eyes met, they clearly recognized their responsibilities. They were alive to glorify God. With this, Jesus experienced the living water. When underwater Jesus' presence seemed to extend throughout the river. More than connecting to the source within every stream, water discovered its true solace within tides of every sea. It seemed as if Jesus recognized the struggle of every effort, lifted as beads of water evaporating to form billowing clouds that fertilized life within every raindrop.

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As Jesus rose from the water, his eyes released tears. Some people clearly recognized the sacredness of the occasion. The atmosphere became alive. The glory of God's Creation shone. Every aspect of life was precious, yet others easily found diversion and distractions. How many never experienced the precious moment or too easily forgot its worth? John was so well known that people came just because of his name. Then there were a few that hid conspiratorial thoughts. Others sought to take advantage of easy targets. Who was focused on the attractive women coming fresh out from the water? How many were there to catch John at improprieties? Jesus could pinpoint the ones spying on John, waiting to report any improper remarks against Jewish or Roman authority.

Rather than being disturbed by the many people around or questions asked by his friends, Jesus left for the wilderness. Here he could completely commune with God and know more of what would be expected of him. He needed to understand — within the depths of his soul — how to best serve God.

Ever since a boy he knew that he had something very special to do for God. At the age of twelve he felt the weight and responsibilities of High Priests in the temple. It was within those consecrated walls of the temple that all sins were atoned for. The sacred name and words of God seemed clear, as if he was meant to interpret them. Yes, he would fill the Scriptures with life.

Jesus would remain in solitude until God clearly revealed his will — regardless of how long it took. Going without food or water heightened his spiritual awareness. When he was one with himself and one with God, he would feel and know the intent within all scripture. Here he could commune with living prophets, prophets as alive as John baptizing in the river, or prophets risen to heaven and alive with God like Enoch or Elijah.

The longer he thought, the more he concentrated on the temple. Here he could experience a direct connection with the unblemished lamb brought for a sacrifice. This creature was so soft and fragile. Innocence and purity were within its eyes. For a moment the lamb would almost smile from the attention of being treated extra special. A presence of royalty filled the atmosphere, as if everything was perfect. Then suddenly a firm grip clutched the neck. Fear overtook the small body in time to stare into the sharp knife ready to sacrifice the lamb's life. Rather than end there, an amazing change swept through the entire temple. Blood was poured on the altar. Sacred flames consumed the body in a brilliant blaze. The smell of incense mingled with lamb meat. Scripture flowed from the mouth of the priest. The presence of God filled the temple, drifting to the pinnacle where the true power of God met aspirations within every heart.

God felt close, as if Jesus could reach out and touch his Father in Heaven. In this moment Heaven was upon earth. Everybody whom Jesus recognized going in and out of the temple seemed like his own blood, like brothers and sisters he missed yet hadn't seen for years. He felt the tears of this homecoming. Each tear was a precious treasure. Here God's glory filled the hearts of everyone around, consummating each thought within the blaze of God's perfection. People gladly gave all of the money that they had for the purity of this experience. God's love was real.

Then a dark mist seeped along the ground and into the floors of the temple. As Jesus recognized greed and deceit within the hearts of priests working in the temple, shadows consumed the altar. Loud screams came from the courtyard where moneychangers lied about the value and exchange rates of

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different currencies. The glow from the temple seemed swallowed up. Chants of murder were heard. Within this darkness the value of human life became worthless, to be pawned at the whims of rulers. Here, a fierce knot tightened in Jesus' stomach and for an extended moment he felt the pain of real hunger.

Desire and longing propelled Jesus high above the evening lights of Jerusalem. He could peer in the luxuriant houses of the wealthy, or the opulent lives lived by kings. Being surrounded by so much physical pleasure evoked the scent of gorgeous women, dressed in the finest silks that revealed the smoothest curves of seemingly perfect bodies created by God. The smell of perfumes upon soft flesh filled his heart with an intense need to touch and hold such sweetness. These virgins were reserved especially for the king. Then suddenly Jesus noticed the innocence and purity of a simple servant girl. Seeking God's confirmation of such an exquisite being, Jesus lifted his eyes towards God.

How could such priceless humility exist? Here was a girl whose only care was to serve her master. Though her parent's servitude kept her from being one of the king's wives, she served her master with undying devotion. From this view Jesus saw how the love, honesty, and complete fidelity of this servant girl became the true motivation that inspired the king to perform any righteous action. It was

here that Jesus recognized the goodness in ordinary people who slaved their entire lives to provide a meager sustenance for their families. Mothers and fathers who loved God tried to do everything right as they labored to provide some opportunity for their children. Then children neglected their own ambitions to work and care for sick parents. Jesus realized the light of God within so many good, honest people. Then as if in a flash of thunder, entire families were ravaged, left dead in the wiles of war.

Jesus recognized cities invading cities. Blood from dead human and animal corpses filled lifeless landscapes, all in the name of God! War existed, but when fought in the name of God, motives were too tainted. Righteous indignation filled Jesus! As he scanned from countryside to continents he recognized the deception within numerous leaders. From dishonesty and lies came the bloodshed of innocent people. The molestation, rape and murder of the children enraged Jesus to such a degree that he wanted to wipe out every evil person. The heat of this anger became so powerful that it forced Jesus to gaze upon God. Did God not destroy all inhabitants except those on Noah's Ark? Retribution was not for Jesus to ordain. Within this humble consolation — like a child to his father, Jesus was lifted to the bosom of God.

Inside Jesus glowed. As Jesus reflected upon the burning radiance within, he rested securely with his Father. Gazing through the eye of God, he witnessed a tear. Becoming so close, Jesus and God were as one. Here, Jesus felt compelled to look and connect with all of the love God gave to everyone who had lived on earth. Jesus felt like he could touch each person ever born or those who would be born. More than recognizing people going about daily chores, dimensions of earth unfolded before him. Within these realms existed aspects of the afterlife. In one fiery pit people experienced pure torture. Much of this suffering stemmed from the pain caused to others that came back to haunt. These self-inflicted realities were too destructive to watch.

What attracted Jesus' attention were manifold dimensions encompassing generations after generations

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that were already dead. Jesus could almost perceive prior prophets inside the minds of so many people. Chosen prophets would be empowered at uncertain times and lead masses of people to God. It was here that choice truths were developed to connect and strengthen individuals within family bonds. The more people could feel God's love shared amongst each other, the more God's glory imbued each of them. With this Jesus sensed Moses and Elijah within his direct presence. The glory of these prophets stemmed directly from God. The glory of known prophets was within Jesus as he merged with the power of God.

When Jesus reached towards unknown lands throughout earth, his heart blossomed. He felt a oneness with unrecognized prophets. Within them God's love grew within realms that Jesus could not describe. The expansion of love and compassion extended from unique individuals. It was as if they came from unknown cultures throughout the earth. Jesus considered all of the different families radiating from Adam and Eve. At once a profound sweetness filled every sense, only to be suddenly overtaken by an almost unbearable bitterness.

In a moment's notice Jesus opened his eyes. Instead of feeling hunger and thirst, an emptiness filled his belly. The first thought was how someone like Adam's son Cain could be so deceived to think he'd profit by murdering his own brother Abel. Immediately millions of thoughts filled his mind. A predominant voice was heard, trying to coax Jesus into feeling better after such an intense experience. Like unwanted noise, the voice pried between thoughts. A prideful tone told Jesus that he had seen and experienced it all. Jesus was God! Immediately, Jesus saw and felt millions of people worshipping him. They each praised him as God. Like thorns in the skull turning into thrones, the voice continued to

coax, reminding Jesus that he had done it.

Jesus had all the suffering he needed. Now was the time to celebrate! Because of this experience, every day for the rest of his life should be a feast of pleasure. This was his time to enjoy, everything. He had the power. With this power he could heal anyone. He could amaze and dazzle everyone.

How Jesus wanted to believe that God was speaking to him, yet somehow this voice wasn't right. The voice was telling him that everything would be easy from now on out. And, how Jesus had already done all that was needed in this life. Beautiful women from his vision drifted into his mind, along with riches and luxury to satisfy any craving. Jesus experienced an uneasy feeling when realizing that each seductive image corresponded to the voice he was hearing. With this, a recognizable burst of laughter shot up through his spine, then quickly faded.

The Devil had no power over Jesus. All thoughts were immediately turned towards God. Constant praise filled Jesus' thoughts for the spiritual experience God provided. When truly in God's presence, Jesus felt his worthlessness. He was like the dust, yet God gave him the breath of life. This assurance from God overwhelmed Jesus with happiness and joy. God had given him so much. Right then and there -- as if done long ago -- Jesus promised God that he would do anything to serve. As God had given him life, he would gladly give his life for God. Complete comfort and security burned within. Jesus knew that his life was in God's hands.

Feeling strong again and a little hungry, Jesus stood up. It was time to get back to his friends and

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share what happened. As he thoughtfully took step by step, he considered the devil's temptation. He also realized God's presence, as if God watched everything, waiting for Jesus' reactions. Here, in the subtleties between thoughts and feelings, the clarity of truth was revealed.

When back to himself, having awareness of his body and surroundings, he recognized a completely different realm. The prince of darkness, even Satan, filled the air with greed and lust. For a prolonged flash Satan seemed to take control, or at least tried to.

Satan was aware of anyone who left the mundane dimensions and connected to the purity of truth. The surface of the earth became Satan's realm where he tried to bend God's will and inflict his own rules. Satan waited to corrupt and thereby trap the power from every authentic spiritual experience. He was there every time to trick, deceive, and turn truth on its edge. This way, captured light could be smothered, buried deep within his dungeons. From every individual's communion or attempted communion with God, Satan arrived to try and wrench away the spiritual power.

Jesus peeled through each ploy of Satan. People required undisturbed, untainted clarity. He would apply simple truths, containing eternal wisdom. As long as Jesus always put God first, God would guide every action. Now all that he had to do was to teach proper principles. The power of God would fill the law until it appeared new, as if etched in the heart. Love God and if true to the self and God, God's love would connect all neighbors.

Scot Aaron has a University degree in Religious Studies. He also created Independent Travel–Study Programs and spent years "backpacking" through many countries to learn about religion, history and culture. "Love Your Neighbors? Discover the Real World Religions" (ISBN 1–58916–777–5) is his most current book. Please visit his web pages at <http://PsalmPublishing.bei.t-online.de>

Common to Man

By Cathi Pope

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"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I Corinthians 10:13

There have been Christians that have wondered why does so many bad things happen to me. I know as humans we wonder that deep inside, many of us will not admit that on the outside, for fear of being judged by our peers about our faith.

Let's look at I Corinthians 10:13, I find this to be a very comforting verse.

The word "temptation" in this verse is the Greek word "ekpeirazo" which means, "to test thoroughly". What Paul is saying here, is that everybody will be tested thoroughly, one way or the other. But because God is faithful, He will not allow anything to come your way that you would not be able to handle.

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Now if in fact, you get in to deep with your troubles, then God will make a way for you to get out.

I do know that it has been very encouraging for me personally, every time I have had any kind of trouble that seems to come my way, I remember I Corinthians 10:13 and I know that there will be a way out. And there has always been a way out.

Hopefully, if you are a Faithful Follower of Jesus Christ, you can find the same comfort as I have with I Corinthians 10:13.

For more articles and resources visit Cathi Pope at <http://www.keepingthehope.com>



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