

Jesus - The Last Adam

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[0 : 0 0] this evening. The date was October the 12th, 1977. The occasion was the World Cup qualifying decider between Wales and Scotland at Anfield in Liverpool. The winner of the game would go on to Argentina to play in the World Cup. And if you were a Scotland fan of a certain age, that was a great night. A dubious penalty scored by Don Masson was followed by Kenny Dalglish's header three minutes from time. Scotland were on the march with Ali's army. You'll be glad I'm not going to sing that song. I remember watching the game on television and I remember celebrating, along with many others, including the match commentator Archie McPherson, when that Kenny Dalglish header went into the back of the net. We rejoiced. Scotland had won and would be competing in the World Cup once more. Now, I wasn't at the match. I wasn't part of the squad. I didn't play in the game. I didn't score the decisive goal. But nonetheless, I, along with thousands of Scotland fans, was able to say this, we won. And the reason we could do that was because those on the field of play were our representatives. They were representing Scotland. They were, in a sense, playing on our behalf.

When they won, we won. When they celebrated, we celebrated. And I think it's that concept of a representative, of someone acting on behalf of others, that helps us understand what we're being told here in this section of Luke's gospel. Indeed, that is why I think Luke places his genealogy of Jesus at this very point in his gospel.

He wants us to understand something very important about Jesus. And you'll have noticed how Luke's genealogy moves in a completely different direction to Matthew's. Luke starts with Jesus and works his way back all the way to Adam, God's first earthly son, in a sense. Now, why does Luke do that? And what is he telling us when he does it? He wants us to understand something. He wants us to understand that Jesus has come as the second Adam. He has come to reverse the failure of the first. Jesus has come as the Son of God and as the Savior of the world. This is the office and the ministry into which he was just baptized.

Jesus has come as the first Adam was baptized. Jesus has come to undo the tragedy of the fall. He has come to restore God's kingly rule. You'll remember how the first Adam was tempted and fell into sin while in paradise, in a situation where he wanted for absolutely nothing. Now here we discover Jesus.

He is the last Adam. He is also facing the tempter. Not in a paradise, but in the barren Judean desert.

[3 : 5 4] Where Adam once fell, Christ now comes to conquer. I think it was Augustine who once remarked that the entire spiritual and moral history of the human race revolves around just two people, Adam and Christ.

John Henry Newman in his hymn puts it like this, O loving wisdom of our God, when all was sin and shame, a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came.

And so here we read of the very first act of Jesus' public ministry. And it is to deal a crushing blow to the powers of darkness. These verses, I do not think, are to be understood as some kind of analogy with our own experience of temptation. They're not here to give us some helpful tips on how to deal with temptation. These verses are all about the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

His victory over Satan and over the dark powers of this world. You'll have noticed that Jesus is not a victim here. He is not taken by surprise. It is Jesus rather who is on the offensive. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days, being tempted by the devil.

Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit to confront the devil. The image really is of Jesus striding out onto the battlefield, a battlefield that is littered with broken promises and failed commitments to vanquish the evil one. Remember how the Apostle John says, the reason the Son

of God came into this world was to destroy, undo the works of the evil one.

[6 : 10] Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness are symbolic, of Israel's 40 years in the wilderness. The answers that Jesus gives here to Satan are all taken from the book of Deuteronomy, from passages dealing with Israel's testing sojourn in the wilderness. And it's these passages from Deuteronomy that give us the key to understanding the temptations. It was a test that you'll remember Israel failed. Now Jesus, God's true Son, must face that same test. This passage is not about us. It is about Jesus.

The picture is Jesus taking the field of battle as our representative, as our champion. Here is Jesus ready to live and fight on our behalf. Here is Christ achieving a mighty redemptive victory for his people.

Here is Jesus acting as the covenant head of his people, our representative, meeting Satan as our Savior, as our Savior, as our Savior, as our Savior, as our Savior. Here is Jesus standing in our place to win victory for us through his obedient life.

Here is Jesus succeeding. We are before him, Adam failed and Israel had failed. So let's look at how Jesus responds to each of them. The first one we find in verses 3 and 4, and we'll summarize that temptation in these words. Satan says to Jesus, you have needs, you have needs, meet them yourself, Jesus. You have needs, meet them yourself.

Luke tells us that Jesus' time in the wilderness was one of hunger. He fasted. He didn't eat for 40 days. Here Jesus entered all the weakness, all the frailty of human life and experience. He is denuded of his strength. He's starving. He's starving. And it's upon this area of physical need that Satan first comes to tempt Jesus. He ate nothing during those days. When they were ended, he was hungry. And the devil said to him, if you are the Son of God, command the stone to become bread. Now that phrase, if you are the Son of God, it might be, I think, better understood in the sense of, since you are the Son of God. I don't think Satan was so much casting doubt on Jesus' sonship as asking him to reflect on what it really meant for him to be the Son of God. In effect, the devil says to him, since you are the Son of God, Jesus, why don't you act like it? You're tired. You're hungry out here in the desert. You don't look very much like the Son of God to me. Haven't you got power? Haven't you got authority? You have a need.

[9 : 46] You're hungry. God isn't meeting your needs. But you have the power. You have the ability to meet them yourself. He calls you his beloved Son with whom he's well pleased. Look where he leaves you.

Starving to death out in a wilderness. You need to take charge of the situation, Jesus, or your mission will have failed before it's begun. You have needs. Meet them yourself. Now, the purpose of the temptation was not simply that Jesus should satisfy his hunger by turning a stone to bread. Nothing inherently wrong with that. Later on in the gospel, Jesus is going to feed 5,000 people with loaves and a few fishes. Now, the temptation here was Satan's suggestion that being hungry in the desert was incompatible with his identity as the Son of God. Jesus was being tempted to doubt his Father's care and provision and act independently and separately from his Father.

So, how does Jesus respond to Satan? Well, he quotes the Scriptures, and he specifically quotes a passage from the book of Deuteronomy. We find it in Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 2 and 3. This is what they say, and you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these 40 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, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that a man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. You see, in the wilderness, the Israelites were being taught to depend upon God. And of course, they spectacularly failed that the Lord's care and that he was not. And of course, they were being taught to be a man. And of course, they were being taught to be a man under God's testing. But he succeeds where Israel failed. Israel demanded its bread and died in the wilderness. Jesus denied himself bread and lived in faithful dependence upon his heavenly father. Where Israel grumbled and complained against God's provision. Jesus accepts God's humbling and testing without complaint. He submits himself to the mystery of God's ways. Satan said, your hunger is going to prevent your work, Jesus. Jesus said, my work is to be hungry in the desert. Remember what Jesus would say elsewhere in John 4, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and accomplish his work.

You know, sometimes God leads us into the wilderness. And it can be very hard. We can feel that our needs are not being met. Sometimes there appears no end to our troubles or our pains or our sufferings. And yet sometimes instead of trusting God, like Israel of the world, we grumbling, we grumbling, we grumbling, we grumbling, we grumbling, and our hearts are full of discontent.

And sometimes we will reach out independently of God, actually clearly disobeying his will, just to get what we want.

[14:04] We want our bread. We want our bread. And we want it now. Unhappy with God's provision, with God's providence, we decide just to take what we want.

I don't have enough to live on. Unhappy with God's providence, we'll be in the wilderness. In the testing wilderness. And wherever he places us, he also calls us to trust him. To be aware that he will provide for us.

Satan would have us believe that God doesn't really care, and he's not really interested. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Elsewhere in Matthew's gospel, I think when Jesus speaks of God's fatherly provision, he says, Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

[15:35] Matthew 7, 9. Words spoken from Jesus' own experience of his Father in heaven. Jesus knew God.

He knew and trusted his Father. He knew his love. He knew his care. He knew his provision. He did not doubt it. Do we?

Do you? Do you really believe that man does not live by bread alone? Are you trusting God to meet your needs? Or are you simply doing your own thing?

You have needs. Meet them yourself, says Satan. And then secondly, the temptation. In verses 5 through 8.

You're suffering. Take an easier road. You're suffering. Take an easier road. The second temptation here takes this appearance of a vision, I think, in which Jesus has shown all the kingdoms of the world.

[16:47] Had Jesus not come to establish a kingdom? Had his Father not promised him the inheritance of the nations? This is why Jesus had come into the world. Came for the kingdoms of this world.

Came to wrest them from Satan's grip. Came to wrench them from the hands of the prince of this world. The devil took him and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

He said to him, To you I will give all authority and their glory, for it's been delivered to me and I give it to whom I will. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours.

Here Satan presents all that Jesus had come to win by his suffering and death in one easy move.

All you've got to do, Jesus, is bow the knee to me. Here is the glory without the suffering. Jesus can have it all now. In an instant.

[17:53] It's a quick, easy shortcut to the kingdom of God. Here are the kingdoms of this world in a kind of cut price deal.

Jesus answered him, verse 8, It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. And it was again, this quotation of Jesus is from the book of Deuteronomy.

This time from Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 13. When Israel entered the promised land, she was tempted for political reasons to turn away from the worship of Yahweh, to turn to the idols and false gods of the neighboring nations.

And again and again throughout the Old Testament, this was a temptation to which Israel succumbed. And now Jesus is being tempted along the same kind of lines.

If he will turn from God's way, Satan will give him the kingdom. The promised land is going to be his. The end, says Satan, the end justifies the means.

[19:08] Compromise with me. Give me my place. It'll all be yours. There's no need for that long, painful road to the cross. Look, Jesus, there's a lot easier way than that. You can have it all now.

You've come to establish a kingdom. Here is a kingdom without a cross. You've come to save the world. Here is the world at a cut price rate. Price of compromise.

Here's glory without suffering. Remember how later on in the gospel story, Jesus will speak of his suffering and death, and Peter, you know, takes him aside and says to him, look, Jesus, that'll never happen to you.

Remember what Jesus told him? Get behind me, Satan. The temptation was for Jesus to fulfill his mission in a way that avoided the cross, dishonored his father, achieving the kingdom not for his father's sake, but for the kingdom's sake itself.

But the church or the kingdom is not an end in itself. It matters not just that the church is built. It also matters how it's built.

[20 : 27] It mattered not just that Jesus established the kingdom. It mattered how he established it. It's lovely to be in this beautiful building.

Nice to have lots of people attending our services. Nice to be well thought of in the community. These are good and godly aspirations for any congregation and for any church.

But we must not seek these things apart from God. We must not pursue those things in a way that dishonors God.

We must not pursue the glory apart from the cross. Without the gospel. For that is to make a disastrous error.

The ends never justify the means. Popularity must not be pursued at the expense of the gospel.

[21 : 29] For in truth, Satan's lies are still doing the rounds. His voice echoes all around us. He says to all of us, acknowledge me, give me my place. You can have it all.

An easy life. Health, wealth, success, popularity. It can all be yours if you'll just bow down and worship me. But what Jesus tells us here, that it's more important to worship the true and living God than possess the whole world.

I wonder if we really believe that tonight. Jesus believed that. That the worship of the true God is the most valuable thing in the entire world.

Jesus believed that. What about us? You're suffering. Take an easier road. You have needs. Meet them yourself. And thirdly here, you believe God's word. Well, put it to the test. Verses 9 through 12.

[22 : 41] The third and final attention, according to this account in Luke's gospel, is set in Jerusalem and the temple. He took him to Jerusalem, set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.

It's written, He will command his angels concerning you to guard you. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against the stone. So in this third temptation, Jesus is taken to the high point of the temple.

It's a sheer 450-foot drop overlooking the Kidron Valley. And Satan challenges Jesus really just to throw himself down. Jesus had demonstrated his trust in his Father.

And now it's that trust and dependence that become the focal point of Satan's attack. And his words on the surface appear to be an appeal to Jesus to again demonstrate his trust and dependence upon God as Father.

The location, I think, is very significant. Holy, a sacred place. We know that Jesus loved the holy city. We're told later in Luke's Gospel that when Jesus drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.

[24 : 01] He loved the holy temple. He was found there, we're told in Luke chapter 2, as a child. He was jealous for the purity of its worship. He chased out the money changers, remember, from its courts.

The holy city, the holy temple. There was no better place for Jesus to display his trust in God as Father. Because surely here above all places on earth, God could be trusted.

Satan quotes from the Scriptures, from Psalm 91. It was a text commonly associated with the Messiah. passage that promised the help of angels.

Satan says to Jesus, you say you're God's son, you say that you trust God, you say that you believe the Bible, why don't you prove it? I mean, how much faith do you really have, Jesus?

Obey the Scriptures. Give glory to God. Take that leap of faith. It sounds so spiritual. It sounds so biblical. So how does Jesus respond?

[25 : 10] And he answered him, that he said, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Again, this reply is a quote from Deuteronomy 6.16.

It refers to that time when the Israelites tested God at Massa. And that's a, we can read about that in Exodus chapter 17, verses 1 through 8.

And on that occasion, the people had demanded water. And they cried out, is the Lord among us or not? They doubted God and they put God to the test.

They demanded fresh evidence of God's care and provision for them. They asked God, God, you need to do a new thing for us. You need to prove yourself to us again. And the point is this, that Satan wasn't really asking Jesus to trust God. He was asking him to test God. He was suggesting that God's word was not enough and that he should put God to the test. [26 : 16] But friends, to test God is to doubt God. Jesus was confronted with a choice. Either it was to be a momentary act and display of faith, casting himself from the pinnacle of the temple, or a life of everyday trust and dependence upon God.

Satan's saying here, don't cast yourself on God every day. Do it just once and it'll be enough. And I think this is part of the reason that the demand for the miraculous is inherently wrong.

Because it's to put God to the test. You know, some churches, you know, it appears are full of the temple jumpers. Demanding of God, signs, wonders, miracles, healings, health, wealth, success, whatever you have.

Prove yourself afresh to us, God. And without these things present, they believe that faith is defective.

If there are no fresh signs or miracles, they wonder this, is the Lord among us or not? And it's easy for us to fall into that way of thinking.

[27 : 34] We say to God, do this and then I'll follow you. Give me a sign. Give me that and then I'll trust you. Give me a sign. Prove yourself to me, God.

But friends, that's simply a denial of trust. It's not the exercise of faith, but doubt. Because the greatest faith is not to be seen amongst the temple jumpers, but amongst those who choose to walk in humble dependence upon God.

Testing God is worldly, perhaps even blasphemous. Because it's saying this, it's saying, God, your word is not enough for me.

Genuine faith does not need dramatic miracles to keep on believing. Testing someone, and we know this, testing someone is a sign of mistrust, not trust.

There's a story, I think from the States, of a politician who was told that his biggest, most influential supporter was no longer going to vote or campaign for him.

[28 : 53] And in a state of confusion, the man, he met the man face to face and asked him what his problem was. Yes. Had he not helped his wife with that charity event? Yes.

Had he not helped out his daughter in getting a job as a researcher? Yes. Had he not helped his son when he was in trouble with the authorities? Yes.

Well, then he said, what is the problem? Yes, but what have you done for me lately? And friends, that's all too often how we are with God.

God, what have you done for me lately? Just because there isn't a dramatic miracle or deliverance does not mean that God is no longer with us or no longer cares for us.

Is the Lord among us or not? We don't need to look to supposed signs and wonders for that assurance. We look to the Word of God.

[29 : 56] We look to the cross of Calvary because it was there that Jesus proved himself, wasn't it? Not in jumping from a temple, but in being nailed to a cross.

And it's there and only there that we can have an assurance of God's love and care for us. Because when we see and understand the cross and what Jesus did for us there, we don't have to ask, is the Lord among us or not?

We know that He is. Paul says, if God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

After the cross, there is nothing further for Him to do to show us how much He loves us. And so our confidence rests, does it not?

Not on signs and wonders and miracles, but upon that once and for all sacrifice of God's Son. One where your confidence confidence in your faith lies tonight.

[31 : 11] Don't go your own way. Don't take the path of compromise. Don't put God to the test. Stand firm in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Rest your faith and trust completely in Jesus Christ. In truth, where temptation is concerned, friends, we are all failures.

The best and the worst of us. We have all yielded to the tempter's power. Satan's subtle lies swirl about our minds and hearts.

We are so afraid of trusting God and letting Him have control. But friends, God has not left us defenseless.

There is one who hasn't failed. There is one who hasn't fallen. Jesus Christ has gone before us into the very heart of the battle.

[32 : 17] The last Adam has won the victory for us. He has broken the neck of Satan. He is our great champion and conqueror in whom we too are more than conquerors.

And that means that at those times when we're struggling with temptation, as we all do, or we're enduring suffering, or we're facing troubles, or we're experiencing hurt, or we're simply tired and weak and weary, we can look away from ourselves and look to the Lord Jesus Christ and draw from Him the strength that we need to go on.

There's an old Victorian hymn, we sometimes sing it in our congregation, Yield Not to Temptation. It has the little chorus, Ask the Savior to help you.

Comfort, strengthen, and keep you. He is willing to aid you. He will carry you through. Friends, let's look to Jesus this evening, knowing that He, the last Adam, will carry us through.

Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.