

[Him for Herodias] / Gospel of Luke 3:9 – 4:13

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God is dropping in at the ninth verse of an almost indescribable chapter in the Bible; and if we didn't have Dr. Luke as our literary guide, we would be absolutely lost in one of the darkest and most remote sections of Scripture. Most Christians have no idea what the Bible really teaches, friends. The Bible, to most Christians, is like reading at a medical school textbook or peer review article – they have no clue what they are looking at or what it means. They might THINK they know, but, unless we have been trained to interpret the results by taking the time to pray in the Spirit of God for wisdom, judgment and discernment; and then have followed through on our part of that request – <crickets> – and disconnection in their minds. In our last report, we heard the first part of the sermon John the Baptist gave to his congregation way out in the wilderness. It was a one sentence introduction that cleared the hillsides of the make-believers and packed it with people who were actually interested in hearing the Word of God taught properly, correctly and completely....

III

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

~ When that applies to our works as ordinary Christians it's a tough message, but when it applies to the man who is preaching the Word of God it's downright frightful. I confess this is a dreadful section of the Bible - and even darker if we do not keep it in the perspective of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we line all of this up with what we just learned in Leviticus, we get a pretty bad picture of our health. If we lose sight of the redeeming love of God in this Gospel, then we go into outer darkness. John the Baptist wasn't called to give a redemptive message - as we can plainly see. This message is harsh; and a little bit goes a very long way. This is not generally recognized as one of the primary facets of the Bible, but I think it is totally relevant for today. Our Spiritual Safari is getting strong and tough and – maybe even dangerous. Well, John is saying if they don't bring some

fruit, the ax will be brought into their root. I think the Lord is saying that to those who claim they are of the church today, but who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ....

10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

~ The people John is speaking to had plenty of everything, but they weren't willing to share anything with others. Well, we're going to see many publicans turn to the Lord at this time because they believed John's very practical message; a message to all classes under all conditions - painted with a very broad brush....

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

~ Here, we have another revelation of the Trinity as the Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus, and the Father speaks from Heaven. We go from that to and through a very long genealogy of MARY – NOT the genealogy of Joseph! Luke gives us Mary's history only; and it's a little different than the other genealogies we have previously examined. In Matthew, we had a lot of begetting. This lineage begins with the father of Mary and goes back to Adam. The genealogy in Matthew begins at Abraham and comes down to Jesus. So, these are two completely different, and reversed in chronological sequence, genealogies. Mary, of course, is in the line of David, also. When Matthew brings the lineage down FROM David to Jesus, then Jesus gets the legal title to the throne! This bloodline must connect BACK to David; so that's the direction we're going with Luke. This is as important to understand as it is to read every single word from here to the end of His genealogy. We can absolutely trust our conclusions about this, and there is a whole lot more we could say about it - but further words might only serve to confuse the matter. Suffice it to say that we have not even made a scratch on the surface of the subject of Luke's genealogical account of Christ. I encourage you to study it further on your own....

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

26 Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

28 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

30 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

35 Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

37 Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

IV

1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, 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.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, it is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

~ Some call this the temptation of Christ - I call it His testing. We had this account presented previously in Matthew. Jesus has been filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan and is led out into the wilderness by the Spirit. The synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke each record the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness by Satan. Our next Gospel will not even refer to this account of the temptation, because John will present the Son of God with the emphasis on His deity. The three Gospels we have considered in this Spiritual Safari thus far have all set forth His humanity, and of Him being tempted as a man because, as God, He could not be tempted! That is a clearly remarkable statement to read – at least, to me it is.

Jesus is introduced as the Son of man in the Gospel of Luke as we just learned in chapter three. When the Bible says, ‘the Son of Adam,’ we all become equal members in the family of God. Jesus was tempted just like

we are - yet He remained without sin. There is a frightful and fearful darkness surrounding the temptation of our Lord Jesus Christ out there in the wilderness with the devil. It is an appalling enigma if you ask me. Well, guess what? Our safari is going right to the edge of supernatural sensationalism in this report to stand on the fringe of a spiritual truth that few people ever discover in the Word of God.

The unseen and hidden forces surrounding this event were purely powers of darkness and destruction. Jesus grappled with the basic problems of mankind. In the testing of temptation, the Lord Jesus Christ won a victory for you and for me. This study will be somewhat complex, so let's consider several preliminary facts. I will be forced to reveal personal information that I would never otherwise disclose. We were told that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. Now, the Son of God would necessarily and naturally have to have been filled with the Holy Spirit as a man on earth in order to meet the temptations in this testing. I do not know about you, but I cannot face the temptations in this world. I simply cannot make it in my own strength....

Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me ~

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit ~

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh ~

Deuteronomy 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no ~

Friends, God was testing them, and He is testing you and He is most certainly testing me. God never tests anyone with evil, though. With that, we see the Lord Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Remember, Mark said, "... immediately the Holy Spirit driveth Him!" In other words, the Lord Jesus was not breaking away on His own will and seeking some temptation to overcome. I hope you realize how deep the pit is opened here. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane to let this cup pass. We have a lot of Christians today who are lying on a board filled with nails, trying to magnify their troubles and, simultaneously, attempting to prove their resilience, for some reason. I've never understood why they do that when they don't need to.

Further, the temptation did not begin at the end of the forty days, either. Let's keep the calendar straight before we try to make a point. After the days had ended, He hungered. Well, it didn't end in the wilderness, friends. Gethsemane was another satanic onslaught and test. The record we just read says the devil departed for a season. That isn't very long; and it means he came back. This is something we need to meditate on and pay attention to. Our Spiritual Safari takes the ultra-extreme view that Satan is a person - mainly because Isaiah said so. That excludes about ninety percent of self-professing believers from believing what we believe. This account does NOT say Satan came as an angel of light. This account does NOT say the devil came as a spirit or a demonic representative; this account tells us the Lord Jesus Christ met Satan face to face.

The subtlety of Satan means that, at once, he is a roaring lion and a silently slithering snake seeking to devour souls that so desperately need salvation. If none of that works, he appears as an angel of light deceiving even the very elect, if that were possible. Friends, we're in deep - we're in real deep - with that statement. To 'tempt' has a two-fold meaning: it means to incite and to entice with evil. It also means to seduce, which always requires that something reside in an individual which causes him or her to yield to said temptation. Otherwise, it would not even be a temptation. There must be some innate desire in the individual. That statement cannot be made of Christ if we consider the historical record given in the Word of God concerning Him - and if we believe the deity of Christ, which John will lay out completely in his Gospel.

Christ is the only One Who could ever make the statement that, “the prince of this world cometh and finds nothing in Me!” I do not know about you dear readers, but every time the devil comes looking for me, he always knows right where to find me - and he knows all about my secret sins when he does find me, too. Satan is very clever and charming at easily getting his salesman’s foot in my door. Probably not you, of course; but most of you likely already guessed it could easily happen to me - and does. Well, at any rate, Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. I'm not. You aren't, either!

Moreover, “tempt” is used in another way. In the Old Testament, Abraham was "tempted" - so, "tested by God" was our reasonable conclusion. God said He tested the children of Israel in the wilderness - and He also says He PROVED Israel with that test! So, our theology works out in the long run. We’re going to Deuteronomy soon where we will reconsider all of this once again. Most readers probably completely missed Satan in Exodus and Leviticus. I intentionally refrained from making him a spectacle. We won't miss the testing in Deuteronomy, though; I can assure you of that.

A logical question becomes obvious now; one for which we must have a simple, reasonable, understandable answer. The question is: could Christ have succumbed to the temptation and fallen to Satan? The answer is an unequivocal NO! His testing was done to PROVE that He could not fall. Products are tested all the time. There is a megalopoly of industries which produce nothing EXCEPT testing of products and standards; and it's all done to PROVE that the products function as they claim they do. When Boeing Aircraft takes off in a new roll out jet model, they aren't seeing if it can fly – they are PROVING it can fly. It would be a little embarrassing if the plane got about halfway up and they figured out there was a problem. When a certificate says 24 karat gold bullion, the PROVING was in the assaying. They don't test to see if they have gold; no, the process is procured to certify the substance. It simply does not stand in reason that the Lord Jesus Christ could have fallen to satanic temptation and testing.

At the same time, Christ was tested in a way that you and I have never endured testing. When you and I are tested, there is always a point at

which we reach maximum flexibility - and we break. At that point, the pressure is relieved. It was never relieved with Jesus. Of course, for us, that breaking point means Christian Tragedy components are compiling quickly. To sum it up: the three-fold test was physical, psychological and spiritual. That temptation was to show us that we have a Savior, my beloved. He has proved to be everything that He said He is going to be to us in our Spiritual Safari. Jesus said He is the bread of life - and bread is a staff of life.

The devil didn't ask Jesus to commit a crime. Jesus fed thousands of people on separate occasions; so, what could the harm be? It would seem good to turn stones into bread because, in that land, it would have meant a whole lot of bread loaves to go around. Remember, Eve had seen the tree was good for food and she ate it. A man must live, so what's wrong with all of this? 'Eat to live' is the philosophy of many people today. Alright, I'll tell you what's wrong with that: it culminates into a clamoring crowd and meddling mob, crying, "... what shall we eat – what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" My friends, this is the ugly side of the pretty pictures. This is real life reality the Lord is talking about. It's no wonder they disguise reality on television because we cannot look upon true reality.

Man becomes dishonest and steals, gambles – sells drugs or liquor – anything to get something for the body. A woman will sell her virtue for a mink coat and a diamond ring – just to play a part in a Hollywood play. Satan obviously has a very low estimate of man's intelligence and laughs because he has tricked man into believing that man is simply a physical animal on this planet. Frankly, there is no deeper pessimism than that of an evolutionist. When Satan accused Job falsely Satan said, "... all that a man has will he give for his life." Well, Satan was wrong; Job was a man that did not yield. The Lord uses the Sword of the Spirit – a.k.a.: the Word of God – and says that man cannot live by bread alone - but by every Word of God. Folks, I highly suggest you read this report again super carefully AFTER praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment; and after reading the Bible text alone. It is SATANIC to try to build a kingdom on this earth without the Lord Jesus Christ. There are only two rulers. You will serve only one ~

II