

The Story of the Life of Christ – Lesson 9 26 A.D.

In Lesson 8 we concluded with the Baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist. It was at this point that Jesus began His public ministry which was to last just four days more than three and a half years. It lasted from His baptism on the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the seventh month in 26 A.D. to Passover at “twilight” of the 14th day of the first month in 30 A.D.

It was at this point in his Gospel that Luke recorded his genealogy of Jesus Christ, so we will study that genealogy here. We have already studied the genealogy of Christ recorded by Matthew in Lesson 2. Matthew’s genealogy documented the legal line of Christ which went through Joseph. Joseph was Christ’s legal, but not His biological, father. By contrast the genealogy in Luke is the biological line of Christ. Remember, the sperm which combined with Mary’s egg to produce the biological human body of Jesus Christ was provided by God when the Spirit came upon her.¹ That sperm was uncorrupted by the sin of Adam. In all other cases, the sin of Adam had always passed through the human father to the child. It didn’t pass through the egg of the mother since it was the first human father, Adam, that had been the original sinner. Thus, Jesus was born without the corruption of Adam’s sin. God was the biological “father” of Jesus because of this Virgin Birth and the biological line of His humanity passed down through His mother and her family.

The Genealogy in Luke

The Gospel of Luke was written in about 60 A.D. to a Church that was made up of many more Gentiles than Jews. Luke, who was himself a Gentile, had been the longtime companion of Paul, who was “the Apostle to the Gentiles.” Possibly, because Luke’s Gospel was Gentile centered, the Holy Spirit chose to take this genealogy all the way back to Adam, the common ancestor of both Jews and Gentiles. On the other hand, the genealogy in Matthew goes back only to Abraham, the ancestor of the Jews. It was just after Adam’s sin that God made the great promise that He would circumvent the sin of the man Adam by providing deliverance through the seed of the woman. The genealogy of Luke also showed that the covenant concerned all the Gentiles. This was the Adamic Covenant as described in Genesis:

Genesis 3:15 “And I (*the LORD*) will put enmity between you (*Satan possessing the serpent*) and the woman (*Eve*), and between your *seed* and hers; he will crush your head,² and you will *crush* his heel.”³

¹ *Matthew 1:17, Luke 1:35.*

² *Golgotha (“the place of the skull”) was the place the crushed skull of Goliath (who symbolized Satan) was buried.*

³ *Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross through His heels, by a spike driven into the vertical post through the heel behind His Achilles tendons.*

The “seed of the woman” referred to Jesus, who was born of a virgin without a human father. All other genealogies in Scripture go through the man.

The Genealogy from Luke (*I have italicized the names*)

Luke 3:23-38 **Now *Jesus* himself was about thirty years old ⁴ when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of *Joseph*, the son of *Heli*, the son of *Matthat*, the son of *Levi*, the son of *Melki*, the son of *Jannai*, the son of *Joseph*, the son of *Mattathias*, the son of *Amos*, the son of *Nahum*, the son of *Esli*, the son of *Naggai*, the son of *Maath*, the son of *Mattathias*, the son of *Semein*, the son of *Josech*, the son of *Joda*, the son of *Joanan*, the son of *Rhesa*, the son of *Zerubbabel*, the son of *Shealtiel*, the son of *Neri*, the son of *Melki*, the son of *Addi*, the son of *Cosam*, the son of *Elmadam*, the son of *Er*, the son of *Joshua*, the son of *Eliezer*, the son of *Jorim*, the son of *Matthat*, the son of *Levi*, the son of *Simeon*, the son of *Judah*, the son of *Joseph*, the son of *Jonam*, the son of *Eliakim*, the son of *Melea*, the son of *Menna*, the son of *Mattatha*, the son of *Nathan*, the son of *David*, the son of *Jesse*, the son of *Obed*, the son of *Boaz*, the son of *Salmon*, the son of *Nahshon*, the son of *Amminadab*, the son of *Ram*, the son of *Hezron*, the son of *Perez*, the son of *Judah*, the son of *Jacob*, the son of *Isaac*, the son of *Abraham*, the son of *Terah*, the son of *Nahor*, the son of *Serug*, the son of *Reu*, the son of *Peleg*, the son of *Eber*, the son of *Shelah*, the son of *Cainan*, the son of *Arphaxad*, the son of *Shem*, the son of *Noah*, the son of *Lamech*, the son of *Methuselah*, the son of *Enoch*, the son of *Jared*, the son of *Mahalalel*, the son of *Kenan*, the son of *Enosh*, the son of *Seth*, the son of *Adam*, the son of *God*.**

I have attached a simplified version of the table on the Genealogies of Christ which we looked at in an earlier lesson. It will be useful reference in our study of Luke’s genealogy of Christ.

<u>Matthew 1:1-17</u>	<u>Genesis 5, 11,21, 25,35, 38</u>	<u>I Chronicles 1-3</u>	<u>Luke 3:23-38</u>	<u>Ezra 3:2</u>	<u>Wife</u>
	Adam	Adam	Adam		Eve
	Seth	Seth	Seth		
	Enos	Enosh	Enosh		
	Kenan	Kenan	Kenan		
	Mahalaleel	Mahalelel	Mahalelel		
	Jared	Jared	Jared		
	Enoch	Enoch	Enoch		
	Methuselah	Methuselah	Methuselah		
	Lamech	Lamech	Lamech		
	Noah	Noah	Noah		
	Shem	Shem	Shem		
	Arphaxad	Arphaxad	Arphaxad		
	Cainan (LXX - Septuagint)		Cainan		
	Shelah	Shelah	Shelah		

⁴ As I have established in earlier lessons, by the usage of the time, “about thirty” meant closer to thirty than twenty-nine.

		Eber	Eber	Eber		
		Peleg	Peleg	Peleg		
		Reu	Reu	Reu		
		Serug	Serug	Serug		
		Nahor	Nahor	Nahor		
		Terah	Terah	Terah		
1	Abraham	Abraham	Abraham	Abraham		
2	Isaac	Isaac	Isaac	Isaac		
3	Jacob (Israel)	Jacob (Israel)	Jacob (Israel)	Jacob (Israel)		
4	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah		Tamar
5	Perez	Perez	Perez	Perez		
6	Hezron	Hezron	Hezron	Hezron		
7	Ram		Ram	Ram		
8	Amminadab		Amminadab	Amminadab		
9	Nahshon		Nahshon	Nahshon		
10	Salmon		Salmon	Salmon		Rahab
11	Boaz		Boaz	Boaz		Ruth
12	Obed		Obed	Obed		
13	Jesse		Jesse	Jesse		
14	David		David	David		Bathsheba
1	Solomon		Solomon	Nathan		Naamah/Ammonite (Matthew line)
2	Rehoboam		Rehoboam	Mattatha		Maacah daughter of Absalom. Was idolatrous (Matthew line)
3	Abijah		Abijah	Menna		
4	Asa		Asa	Melea		Azubah (Matthew line)
5	Jehoshaphat		Jehoshaphat	Eliakim		
6	Jehoram		Jehoram	Jonam		Athaliah, dtr. of Ahab (Matthew line)
			Ahaziah	Joseph		Zibiah (Matthew line)
			Joash	Judah		Jehoaddin from Jerusalem (Matthew line)
			Amaziah	Simeon		Jecoliah from Jerusalem (Matthew line)
7	Azariah/Uzziah		Azariah/Uzziah	Levi		Jerusha (Matthew line)
8	Jotham		Jotham	Matthaat		
9	Ahaz		Ahaz	Jorim		Abijah (Matthew line)
10	Hezekiah		Hezekiah	Eliezer		Hepzibah (Matthew line)
11	Manasseh		Manasseh	Joshua		Meshulemeth (Matthew line)
12	Amon		Amon	Er		
13	Josiah		Josiah	Elmadam		
14	Jeconiah		Jehoiakim	Cosam		
1	Jeconiah		Jehoiachin	Addi		
2	Shealtiel		Shealtiel	Melki	Shealtiel	
3	Zerubbabel			Neri	Zerubbabel	
4	Abiud			Shealtiel		
5	Eliakim			Zerubbabel		

6	Azor			Rhesa		
7	Zadok			Joanan		
8	Akim			Joda		
9	Eliud			Josech		
10	Eleazar			Semein		
11	Mathan			Mattathias		
12	Jacob			Maath		
13	Joseph			Naggai		Mary
14	Christ			Esli		
				Nahum		
				Amos		
				Mattathias		
				Joseph		
				Jannai		
				Melki		
				Levi		
				Matthat		
				Heli		
				Joseph/Mary		

We dealt with the two major problems in Matthew’s genealogy in our earlier study. There are also two problems in accurately comprehending Luke’s genealogy.

The first problem is that the genealogy is quite different from the one in Matthew. Except for two men, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel, the names listed between Jesus and David are different. How could both lists be accurate? I recently read a passage from a book on the history of Christianity which was written by an agnostic. The author stated that the difference between the two genealogies in Matthew and Luke was irreconcilable. The author argued that difference was the most powerful argument that the Bible had errors in it.

I hate to disappoint that author, but the reconciliation of the two genealogies is quite simple. The genealogy in Luke is the line of Christ through Mary’s family. The genealogy in Matthew 1:1-16 starts with Abraham and goes from father to son. It starts with “Abraham was the father of Isaac” and ends with “Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” It is explicitly the line of Joseph’s father. It tells us that a man named Jacob was the father of Joseph.

In Luke, the genealogy starts at the chronological end with Jesus. It begins with the statement “He (*Jesus*) was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat.” The genealogy ends with the statement “the son of Adam, the son of God.” In this genealogy Jesus is related as the “son of” or “male descendant of” each character in the list. Thus the last phrase is not saying that Adam was the son of God, but that Jesus was the son

of both Adam and God. ***It is critical to understand this!*** This genealogy does not relate each character in the list to the previous character in the list as “the son of” that character. It relates each character in the list to the first character in the list, who is Jesus. Hence it was Jesus who was the son of (male descendant of) Heli (his maternal grandfather), not Joseph. Going up the list it says that Jesus was the “son of” Matthat. It says that Jesus was only “thought to be the son of Joseph.” If we interpret the passage as saying that it was Joseph, the preceding character, who was the son of Heli, the succeeding character, then that is in direct contradiction to Matthew 1:16 which says that Joseph was the son of Jacob. However, that is not what it says. Next, the genealogy in Luke says that **Jesus** was the son of Matthat.

Remember two things. First, “Jesus” is understood as the subject of the relationship “Jesus the son of.” Second, in the genealogies of the Bible the term “son of” means “male descendant of.” The “son of” someone can mean “someone’s” grandson, great grandson, etc. As we go down the list, we understand therefore, that Jesus was “the son of David,” “the son of Jesse,” “the son of Abraham,” and “the son of God.” All these are names by which Jesus was known elsewhere in the Scripture. We may see it clearly when we see that at the end of the list, by this interpretation, we thus have that it was **Jesus** who was the **son of God**. It was **not Adam** who was the son of God. Adam was never spoken of elsewhere in the Bible as the “son of God,” but Jesus is so called 39 times. Jesus was the “son of Adam” through His mother’s side and thus did not inherit Adam’s sin which could only be inherited through a human father.

The second problem with Luke is this; Shealtiel and Zerubbabel are in both this list and in Matthew’s list yet with a different father for Shealtiel in each list. Matthew’s list has King Jehoiachin as Shealtiel’s father. Yet we know from Jeremiah that Jehoiachin was childless:

Jeremiah 22:30 “This is what the LORD says: ‘Record this man (Jehoiachin) ~~as if~~⁵ childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.’”

The answer to this seeming problem is that Jehoiachin’s legal royal inheritance was extended by a Levirate birth. The Law of the Levirate birth was set forth in Deuteronomy, but it had been in practice in the time of Jacob:

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 “When brothers (or close relatives) reside together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her, taking her in marriage, and performing the duty of a husband's brother (*or close relative*) to her, and the firstborn whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the deceased brother, so that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

⁵ *There is no “as if” in the Hebrew or in any of the other translations I could find. Though it is clear that he would have children (Jeremiah 22:28b), but not of his body.*

Evidently, early during the thirty-seven years that the deposed King Jehoiachin had languished in a Babylonian prison,⁶ the Jews in Babylon sponsored a Levirate birth through Jehoiachin's first wife. The closest relative that they could find who had descended from David was descended through Nathan. Nathan was David's third son out of Bathsheba. The descendent of Nathan was named Neri. He is listed in the Luke genealogy as the father of Shealtiel. By the Law of the Levirate Shealtiel was considered both the legal son of Jehoiachin and the natural son of Neri. Shealtiel then had a son named Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel had at least two sons that we know of. One was Rhesa, listed in Luke, through whom Mary's father Heli was descended. Zerubbabel's other son was Abiud, listed in Matthew 1:13. It was he through whom Joseph's father Jacob was descended.

Thus, the assertion, which I referred to earlier, that there is no reconciling the two genealogies is false. The original autograph is without error although sometimes translations or interpretations are faulty or uninformed.

A natural question might be: "Why, if both Rhesa and Abiud were biologically related through Zerubbabel to David did the Holy Spirit choose to take one line through the legal line of inheritance and the other through the biological line?" One reason was that the legal line of Matthew established Jesus as the legal heir of King Josiah, through Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. Jehoiakim's brother Zedekiah, the last King of Judea died without any living male heirs.⁷ Evidently, the sons from Zerubbabel to Joseph starting with Abiud were eldest sons and therefor the legal heirs. Second, the biological line from Zerubbabel to Mary's father established Jesus as the heir through the election of grace through faith. All of those in Jesus' biological line would have been believers.⁸ Think of the natural statistical odds against all those 75 generations being believers!⁹ In contrast we know that many in the legal line from Solomon through Jehoiachin were not only unbelievers but active enemies of the LORD.

Now we can progress to the next event in Jesus' life after His baptism.

The Temptation in the Wilderness

⁶ 2 Kings 25:27 "In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin from prison."

⁷ 2 Kings 25:7 "They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes."

⁸ Although some have disputed the salvation of Abraham's father Terah, Genesis 31:53 proves that he was saved. His God was the same as Abraham's God: Genesis 31:53 "May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father (Terah), judge between us."

⁹ Even if we take the extremely optimistic view that, in the natural course of events, one out of two people become believers, the odds that 75 generations people were all believers is about 37 sextillion to one.

Jesus had been baptized in the waters of the Jordan at the same ford where the children of Israel crossed dry shod at the end of the Exodus. At that time Joshua took the twelve stones out of the Jordan waiting to be replaced by “the foundation stone.” Thus, by His baptism Jesus had established in a figure one of the things He was going to accomplish in the remainder of His life. As “Israel” He would represent the true people of Israel before God. The name “Israel” means “the prince of (or advocate with) God.” He would establish His righteousness so that He could impute it to believing Israel. Thus, believing Israel could stand before God. Jesus was also the lamb (the Hebrew words for lamb and goat are interchangeable) that was going to carry the sins of the whole world. He was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert to Azazel (the devil) to be tempted. He began His journey at the very spot that the Children of Israel had been when they finally came out of the desert at the end of forty years of failure. In that desert national Israel had been tested. They had failed. Jesus, their “advocate with God,” would pass every test in the desert that the people of Israel had failed.

Now we can begin to examine the passages in Matthew, Luke, and Mark which pertain to Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness.

Matthew 4:1-2 **Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting¹⁰ forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.**

Luke 4:1 **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, ~~returned from~~ turned his back on the¹¹ Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.**

Mark 1:12a **At once the Spirit sent him out¹² into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan.¹³**

¹⁰ The Greek verb νηστεύω {nace-tyoo'-o} for fasting is in the active mood which means that that the fasting was a conscious choice of Jesus. Of course, after a while, there was nothing available (by natural means) to eat or drink. The Father did not send manna to Jesus or open springs out of rocks for Him. Jesus was the manna and the rock.

¹¹ The Greek word here is ὑποστρέφω {hü-po-stre'-fō} which is best understood here as “he turned his back on.” Since John the Baptist seems to have stayed in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan, which was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, this description implies a route back to the true Mt. Sinai going east of Moab and Edom. That had been the original route of the Israelites when they had first approached the Jordan.

¹² The Greek word here is ἐκβάλλω {ek-bä'l-lō} which has several meanings in Strong’s. The one applicable here is probably “to lead one forth or away somewhere with a force which he cannot resist.”

¹³ Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark gives no details about the temptations. The Gentiles, to whom the Gospel of Mark was addressed, would not have understood Jesus’ quotations from the Old Testament.

Jesus was sent out into the desert where he was tempted for 40 days. Some have contended that this desert was the Judean desert. It was the area southeast of Jerusalem, just west of the Dead Sea. They seem to pick this because it was close by. However, others point out that when just the term “the desert” or “the wilderness” was used it was invariably referring to the Wilderness of Mt. Sinai in which the Jews wandered for 40 years. This makes sense, because as their redeemer, Jesus was going to recreate the testing of Israel and become their righteousness for them. Where better to do that than in the place that Israel failed. Also, at Mt. Sinai, Jesus would be revisiting the scene where God revealed himself in shadow, to both Moses and Elijah after a fast of 40 days (Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9, Deuteronomy 9:18, 2 Kings 19:8-9).

The text does not necessarily say that it was forty days from the time Jesus left John until the time He returned, or that His testing began immediately after He left John. It does say that His temptation in the desert lasted forty days. It should be noted that it doesn't say that the three conversations with Satan all took place on the fortieth day. They were probably spaced out during the forty days of temptation. The text only indicates that the whole period of the temptation took forty days during which Jesus had nothing to eat or drink.

Matthew 4:3-4 **The tempter came to him and said, “If *Since* you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”**

Luke 4:3-4 **The devil said to him, “If *Since* you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’”**

There is a subtle irony in the language here. Jesus would not turn literal stones into literal bread for Himself. However, Jesus would turn a spiritual stone into spiritual bread. He would turn Himself, who was “the stone,” into the “bread of life” for us!

Every place in this section in the original text of both Matthew and Luke, where the expression “If you are the Son of God” occurs, it is a first-class condition “if” in the Greek. By this we understand that Satan wasn't denying that Jesus was the Son of God. The phrase should be translated, “Since you are the Son of God.” However, implied in the context was a challenge by Satan for Jesus to resume the Divine powers which He had laid down for the duration of His Incarnation. I have corrected the translation in all the instances.

The words with which Jesus answered Satan were Moses' words to Israel reminding them of God's provision in the desert:

Deuteronomy 8:3 “He (*the LORD*) humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

A question for each of us: How many times a day do you eat physically? How many times a day do you eat spiritually? Which is really more important? Perhaps fasting is a way of reminding us what is more important!

Matthew 4:5-6 **Then** ¹⁴ **the devil took him** ¹⁵ **to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If Since you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”**

Luke 4:9-11 **And** the devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **“If Since you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”**



Location of the Ancient Mt. Sinai vs. Modern

The “highest point of the Temple” was above the front gate of the Holy Place, just overlooking the courtyard which contained the altar of burnt offerings and the laver. The day might have been an ordinary day, or a weekly Sabbath day. However, it is not unlikely that it was the Feast Day which next succeeded the Day of Atonement when Jesus left the Jordan. That would have

¹⁴ Strong’s defines this as “then i. e. at the time when the things under consideration were taking place.” Thus, this could have happened anytime during Jesus’ temptation.

¹⁵ This informs us that the Devil has power to do things that are supernatural like transporting Jesus in an instant to Jerusalem or a high mountain.

been the Feast of Tabernacles which was just five days later. That would have been particularly tempting because it was widely regarded as the day on which the Messiah would bring in His Kingdom.

The word with which Satan challenged Jesus was from the Psalms:

Psalms 91:9-14. “If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge -- then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. ‘Because he loves me,’ says the LORD, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.’”

There is another irony in the language here. The next verse in the Psalm says “He will trample on the serpent.” Satan who is called “the Serpent” omitted quoting this part of the passage. It prophesied His own defeat.

Also, note that the Father did keep His promise to rescue Jesus. However, He kept it in His own time which was just before Jesus would have died in the desert. When the angels came to save Jesus and attend to His needs after Satan left Him, Jesus was evidently more than just thirsty or hungry, he was evidently in great physical distress, close to death.

It was also part of Satan’s Temptation here to entice Jesus with beginning His ministry in a spectacular fashion on the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles), arriving on the floor of the crowded Temple born up by angels. This also was quite in accord with how the Jews of Jesus’ day expected the Messiah to arrive.

You might notice that in Luke’s account, the order of the last two temptations was reversed. However, as we have seen, the use of the word “then” in Matthew only indicates that this temptation happened during that time. That is also what is indicated by the words “and the devil” in Luke.

Matthew 4:7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Luke 4:12 Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Jesus’ response was to quote Moses’ words to Israel reminding them of God’s instruction in the desert when they were tempted by the threat of thirst:

Deuteronomy 6:16 “Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah.”

The original incident which provoked this instruction at Massah is recorded in Exodus:

Exodus 17:1-7 “The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, ‘Give us water to drink.’ Moses replied, ‘Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?’ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, ‘Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?’ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, ‘What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ The LORD answered Moses, ‘Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.’¹⁶ So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’”

Matthew 4:8-9 **Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”**

Luke 4:5-7 **The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor,¹⁷ for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”**

Satan was tempting Jesus here with the offer that Jesus would get what Satan presumed Jesus had come for. That was the rulership of the world, which Satan had originally taken from Adam. Satan promised Jesus that He could have it if He only bypassed the Father’s plan. It is almost certain that Satan did not understand how much Jesus would actually have to suffer to fulfill the Father’s plan, but Satan had already seen Jesus, the Son of God, live as a simple carpenter’s son for 30 years. Satan knew that if he had been in Jesus’ place he would have jumped at the chance for easy glory.

It occurs to me that the site of this temptation was probably Mt. Hermon, the highest spot in Israel. Even so, showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor from that spot would have required another of the “miracles” of which Satan seems to be capable. If Jesus was on Mt. Hermon, He was being tempted at the very spot He would first demonstrate his own coming Kingdom three years later:

¹⁶ *The rock and its striking was a figure of Christ on the cross: 1 Corinthians 10:4b “for they (the Exodus generation) drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*

¹⁷ *The world had originally been given to Adam in Genesis 1:28.*

Mark 9:1-2 “And he said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.’ After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them.”

Thus, the last temptation had a kind of logical geographical symmetry with His previous temptation. The previous temptation had been in Jerusalem where He went to the Cross. The final temptation was where He spoke of the coming Kingdom. The Cross had to come before the Kingdom. There was also a kind of symmetry in that the other two who had been tested for forty days at Mt. Sinai (Moses and Elijah) ¹⁸ would also be with Jesus on Mt. Hermon, the Mount of the Transfiguration.

Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Luke 4:8 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

The answer Jesus used was from Moses’ words to Israel reminding them of God’s instruction in the desert:

Deuteronomy 6:13 “Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.”

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and ~~attended~~ ¹⁹ ministered to him.

Mark 1:13b He was with the ~~wild animals~~ *savage beasts*, and angels ~~attended~~ *ministered to him*.

Luke 4:13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

In the original Greek, Mark’s comment should be translated that Jesus was with “savage beasts.” The Greek word is θηρίον {thā-rē'-on} and is the same word used to describe “the beast of Revelation.” The word is almost always mentioned in a destructive context. To me this indicates that the Father allowed the threat of these menacing predators (probably indwelt by demons) to be part of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness.

Luke’s Gospel made it clear that Satan thereafter kept an eye on Jesus to try to find a time when He would be weakest. One of the times was when Peter tried to tell Jesus that the cross wasn’t necessary and Jesus replied, “Get behind me Satan” (Matthew 16:22-23)

¹⁸ Exodus 34:28, 1 Kings 19:7-8.

¹⁹ The word which the NIV translated “attended” is διακονέω {dē-ä-ko-ne'-ō}. It is more properly translated “ministered.” To me “attended” sounds too much like the attendance on Jesus was in a ceremonial capacity. This was in a lifesaving capacity.

As noted before, the ministering of the angels would have been for the purpose of bringing Jesus back from the brink of death.

Just to remind you of the hidden ironies in Jesus' responses to Satan's attacks. In Satan's first challenge Christ the living stone who crushed Satan, became the "Bread of Life". In the second challenge the verse after "You will not strike your foot against a stone" says "You will tread upon the serpent." In the third challenge Satan offered to give back to the Second Adam (Jesus) the authority he had tricked the first Adam into giving him.