

TOUGH CHOICES

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

And the devil led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,' and 'On their hands they will carry You up so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."

When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

WHO WILL FOLLOW?

John 2:1-3:21

And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and His disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter." And they did as He said, and took it to him.

And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then the wine of a lesser quality; but you have kept the good wine until now." This miracle at Cana in Galilee was the beginning of Jesus' signs. He revealed His glory and His disciples believed in Him.

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His followers; and stayed there a few days.

The Spirit of God was present at Creation and has always been present to do the will of the Father. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all distinct persons, but one in essence.

The devil rebelled against God and successfully tempted Adam and Eve to do the same. He was present to try to kill Christ when He was born, and he is here now to tempt, distract and destroy Christ's mission of giving Himself for mankind.

Satan tempts humans with appeals to our eyes, our destructive passions, and the arrogant pride of life, just as He did with Jesus Christ. As with Adam and Eve, Satan's goal is to pull people away from believing and doing what God's Word commands.

This is the first of over thirty recorded miracles that Christ would perform (He probably engaged in thousands over His three or four year public ministry). Each miracle was accomplished to deliver that particular person, display God's power, and to teach about the healing of the soul.

Passover (Exodus 12) commemorated when God's Angel "passed over" the Jews on the night He killed all the firstborn in Egypt. It was a perpetual celebration of remembrance of deliverance for the Jewish nation.

People would come from all over the world to worship the Living God, and the Jewish religious leaders had allowed the temple to become a place of profiteering. Money-changers and sacrifice-sellers had demeaned the spiritual sacrifices by their parasitic greed.

Just as the prophet Elisha had performed signs, Jesus proved He was from the Father by the signs which He accomplished.

Apparently it isn't enough to be religious. To come to God, a person needs to experience a spiritual rebirth. This rebirth appears to be supernatural, and blows like the wind into a person's heart from the throne of God - through belief in Christ.

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And in the temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, seated with the money changers.

He made a cutting, whip of cords, and drove them all out of the temple along with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise."

His disciples remembered it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume me." The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show us, seeing that You do these things?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said to Him, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. After He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Now when He was in Jerusalem during the Passover feast, many believed in His name, witnessing the signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men. He did not need anyone to explain man to Him for He Himself knew what was in man.

The Blowing of the Wind

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; who came to Him by night and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You have come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

"The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?"

"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, except He who came down from heaven - even the Son of Man. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life."

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal

Read Numbers 21 for the account of the fiery serpents.

In the book of Numbers, the sons of Israel were dying because of a plague of deadly serpents. Moses fashioned a bronze serpent and placed it on a pole and carried it through the camp of the Israelites. Whoever looked at the serpent was spared death.

life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, because his deeds would be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be revealed as having been accomplished in God.”

