

I LENT - 17th February 2013

**JESUS WAS LED BY THE SPIRIT IN THE DESERTBEING TEMPTED BY THE DEVIL - Biblical Commentary
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Luke 4,1-13

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle 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 bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

With the first Sunday of Lent, the church presents us the temptations according to Luke, at chapter four, the first thirteen verses.

The word "temptation" is correct, however it is likely to mislead the interpretation that the evangelist wants to give. In fact, we will see soon that it is more that temptation –temptation is more indicated towards evil, towards sin or something negative – the devil presents himself as a precious collaborator of the Messiah, His helper.

However, more than "temptations", we should speak of "seductions", that the devil does to Jesus. The first and the last temptations begin with the expression *If you are the son of God*. The devil does not doubt the divinity of Jesus, but asks Him to use to His own advantage His capabilities . So, it would be better translated and interpreted with *Since you are the son of God*.

The first temptation, after Jesus for forty days had not eaten in the desert, the devil says *"If you are the Son of God," that is "Since you are the son of God, command this stone to become bread."* Meaning to use His capabilities for his own advantage.

And Jesus replies quoting from the Book of Deuteronomy *'Man shall not live by bread alone.'* The last temptation also begins with the expression, *"If you are the Son of God,"* or rather *"Since you are the son of God,"*, and this time Satan takes Jesus to Jerusalem and places Him on the highest pinnacle of the temple, where it was believed that the Messiah would first appear, and here the devil speaks like a doctor of law.

He in fact puts together a collage of psalms, including Psalm 91, and he invites Jesus to challenge the Lord. And Jesus replies: *"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."* This also taken from the book of Deuteronomy.

So, Jesus refuses to give any spectacular sign. But the temptation, or seduction, more important, the only one that is not preceded by the expression *"If you are the Son of God,"* and that regards every man and is unfortunately that which men - especially of the church – fall down on, to be placed at the center. Let's see it then.

"And the devil took him up ..." "up high" indicates the divine condition *"... and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him..."* These affirmations of Luke are important. , *"To you I will give all this authority..."* so the authority comes from the devil, it is not God that gives the power. *"..and their glory,.."* that is the riches.

So the evangelist Luke is radical, the power and the glory, meaning the riches, never come from God but always from the devil. So, power is always satanic, it owns he who owns it. *"...for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will."* Here is the confirmation that the power comes from the devil and it is he that gives it on one precise condition, *" If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."*

So, the seduction is not preceded by the promise that Jesus is the son of God, because it is a temptation valid for every man and it is the temptation of power, that Jesus absolutely refuses and again this time quotes from the Book of Deuteronomy *"It is written You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."*

So the evangelist is radical. Power is diabolic regardless of who has it. But then what is the characteristic of the believer inside of the community? One must distinguish between authority and power in the Gospels. Authority is a service based on ones competence, and this is evangelic. Who has authority does not impose, but proposes ,does not direct the lives of others, but serves. Above all shortens the distance between those who practice it and those that use it.