

Introduction

This Christmas I had the joy of watching three of my grandchildren open up Christmas presents. They were so excited that they were literally jumping up and down. It was done in an orderly manner and presents were given out to open, one at a time. At the opening of each present, the room was filled with new joy and excitement. It was quite a morning.

For me, nearly every morning is like Christmas. As I read and study the Word of God, it is like opening up Christmas presents. As I unwrap the meaning of words and discover what is inside, I get excited and am jumping up and down on the inside. Our passage this week is fairly short. We are covering Mark 1:12-13, and since it is short, I have been able to spend some significant time studying and meditating on some of the key words in the passage. One morning I looked at the word impelled. The Greek word is *ekballo* and it is used ninety-six times in the New Testament. I looked up all ninety-six verses and meditated on the significance to our passage.

On another morning, I looked at the word wilderness. The Greek word is *eremos*, and it is used fifty times. I looked at all the verses in the Bible where that word is used. I looked at all the various activities and things that were done in the wilderness. In our text this morning, Jesus was impelled or driven into the wilderness. We find in Mark 1:35 that one of the things that Jesus did every day was to get up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and he would go to a secluded place and pray. That word secluded is *eremos*, meaning a lonesome, solitary, desolate place, or wilderness.

(Mark 1:35) “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”

On another morning, I looked up the term wild beasts. Jesus went into the wilderness where He was with the wild beasts. The Greek word is *therion*, and it is used forty-eight times in the New Testament. I looked at all forty-eight verses and meditated on them. I ask a lot of questions when I meditate and study. I want to know the meaning, the significance, and the applications for my life and our lives. Once again, as I unwrapped this package, I was full of excitement and jumping up and down on the inside. As I shared some of the things that I was learning with Karen, she was like me watching the kids open presents on Christmas. She saw how excited I was and she was also pretty excited.

This morning, I am excited about sharing Mark 1:12-13 with you. I pray that this will be a rich time in God’s word this morning. I pray that you will get excited about the passage. Even though our message is not about reading, meditating, or studying God’s word, I pray that you will be encouraged and motivated to dig into the treasures of God’s word this year. There are presents to be unwrapped by everyone of you every day of the year. You don’t have to wait for Christmas; you can unwrap presents every day of the year. Choose a reading plan and make a commitment to read every day. Set aside time to study words, phrases, or passages that stand out to you. I pray that Jeremiah 15:16 will be true for each of you this year. *“Thy words were found and I ate them, and they became a joy for me and a delight in my heart. I have been called by Thy name, O Lord of hosts.”*

We will be looking at three things this morning. First, Jesus was led into the wilderness. Second, Jesus was tempted by Satan. Third, Jesus was ministered to by angels. Let’s read our passage.

(Mark 1:12-13) “Immediately the Spirit impelled Him *to go* out into the wilderness. {13} And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.”

The Temptations of Christ

1. Driven Into The Wilderness
2. Tempted By Satan
3. Ministered to by angels

1. Jesus Is Driven Into The Wilderness

The first thing that we see is that the Spirit impelled Jesus to go out into the wilderness. The KJV says that “the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.” The ESV says that “the Spirit immediately drove Him into the wilderness.” In Romans 8:14, we read “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” Jesus is THE Son of God. Why would the Spirit drive or impel or make Jesus go into the wilderness?

(Mark 1:12 KJV) “And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”

(Mark 1:12 ESV) “The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.”

(Rom 8:14) “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

I looked up the Greek word and saw that it was *ekballo*, which is a compound word: *Ek* + *ballo*. (Strong’s G1544) *Ek* denotes the point of origin where action or motion begins and *ballo* means to throw). The compound word means to send, put out, thrust, cast, or drive. It is used ninety-six times and it is translated in thirty-eight cases as cast, casting, or casts. As I looked at all the verses I saw that all the demons were cast out or *ekballo*. Wow, Jesus was cast out into the wilderness like a demon being cast out. That did not sound like the way I think that the Holy Spirit leads. I looked at the parallel verses in Luke 4 and Matthew 4. Both of those accounts say that Jesus was led by the Spirit. In Luke 4:1, Jesus “was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness. In Matthew 4:1, Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. In both cases the Greek word “*ago*” is used, which means to lead, bring, or carry. Why did Mark use *ekballo* instead of *ago*? So I continued looking at the other verses where *ekballo* was used.

(Luke 4:1) “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led (*ago*, Strong’s G71, to lead, bring, carry) around by the Spirit in the wilderness.”

(Matt 4:1) “Then Jesus was led up (*anago*, Strong’s G321, *ana* (G71)– up + *ago* (G303) – to lead or bring) by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

In Matthew 12:28, Jesus said, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” All at once I began to sense something. At Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit had come upon Him. He was now under the influence and command of the Spirit of God. Like a demon, He was under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

(Matt 12:28) “But if I cast out (*ekballo*, G1544) demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

The next verse was Matthew 21:12-13 “and Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’, but you are making it a robbers’ den.’” Jesus took command and exercised His authority and threw them out of the temple.

(Matt 21:12-13) “And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. {13} And He *said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN.”

In Mark 5:39-41, A little girl had died. Jesus went in and told them that she was asleep and they laughed at Him. But, he put them out. He took charge of the situation and sent them out of the room. Then, He took the girl’s hand and said, “Talitha kum!” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up.” There was no question who was in charge of what was going on. Jesus took charge and sent them out. (A similar account happens with Tabitha in Acts 9:39-41 and ekballo is used in that passage as well.)

(Mark 5:39-41) “And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." {40} They *began* laughing at Him. But putting them all out (ekballo), He *took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and *entered *the room* where the child was. {41} Taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!".)”

Then, I looked at John 10:3-4 which is about the good shepherd. The sheep hear the shepherd’s voice and he calls them by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them and they follow him because they know his voice. Again, the Shepherd is in charge of the sheep. They know that the shepherd is in charge and they do what He says. A shepherd does not violently cast out or harshly put them out. He merely calls them and they come because they trust the shepherd. That trust has been established and they know him and his voice. The use of ekballo simply signifies that the shepherd is in charge and calling the shots. There is no harshness or violence implied.

(John 10:3-4) “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. {4} When he puts forth (ekballo) all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

I began to have an understanding of why Mark said that the Spirit impelled or drove Him out. Ekballo signifies the authority of the Holy Spirit over Jesus. Jesus was under the authority and leading of the Holy Spirit. He knew the voice of the Holy Spirit. He trusted the Holy Spirit. He submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit led (ago) Jesus into the wilderness, it was the Holy Spirit who was now in charge. That is why Mark used ekballo.

Do we allow the Holy Spirit to be in charge? Do we yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit? Or, do we determine what we will do or not do when the Holy Spirit prompts us? Does God lead us or does He have to use authority to get us to do what He wants us to do. I have always said that I want the Lord to whisper to me. I want to respond to the gentle voice. I don’t ever want God to have to raise His voice at me. I want to have a heart of obedience and submission that is sensitive to His voice and leading, and quick to obey.

The next question I had was about the wilderness. Why did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness? The Greek word for wilderness is *eremos* (Strong's G2048), and it means desolate, solitary, or lonesome. It is used fifty times in the New Testament. So, I looked at all the verses where *eremos* was used. In addition to our passage where Jesus was tempted, a lot of significant things happened. Earlier in our chapter we saw in Mark 1:4 that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness and was preaching a baptism of repentance. No one can repent for you. Repentance is something that you do on your own. True repentance comes out of the heart, not because someone makes you repent. So, Jesus was preaching repentance in a solitary place.

In Mark 1:35, Jesus went out into the wilderness to pray in the early morning while it was still dark. That was the pattern in His life. There were no distractions. It was quiet and He could spend alone time with the Father. I have found that the early mornings are a wonderful time to spend with the Father. I would not mind having Karen in the room with me, but she wants that *eremos* time, so she goes into the living room to have her quiet time. She is alone with the Father. That is what Jesus did.

In Mark 6:31, Jesus and His disciples went to the wilderness to rest. They had just returned from a ministry trip and were exhausted. They had been with people and they were drained from pouring into others. Ministry can drain you. Being in a busy place or a loud place can make it difficult to get the rest you need. Sometimes you need to go to a place that is not crowded, a solitary or lonesome place and get some R&R. Most women need to get away from their home to get rest. While at home, they see things that need to be done. They see children that need to be attended to. So, husbands, you need to get your wife away from the house and take her on a date. Take her on a vacation so that the daily burdens and pressures can be taken off of her and she can get some rest. I told Tom Swenson a while back that vacation time at home is good, but I don't really get much down time. For me, getting away on a cruise without email, phone, or text messages is a good way to get some rest. Otherwise, I am always on call and the daily burdens and pressures are still there. Many people find that camping is a great way. Some like fishing because it is just them and the lake or stream. All the cares of the world are behind them. Jesus told His disciples to go to a secluded place to get some rest.

In Matt 14:13, Jesus heard about John's death and went into the wilderness. Sometimes, we want to grieve, mourn, cry, or just have some time to process things. Jesus was that way when John the Baptist was beheaded. This was his cousin. This was the Messenger who had baptized Him. Jesus had tremendous respect for John and He was obviously affected the news, and needed some time by Himself.

2. Jesus Is Tempted by Satan

But why did the Holy Spirit drive Jesus to go into the wilderness? Verse thirteen tells us the answer. Jesus was driven into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Why did He need to be tempted by Satan? In the Lord's Prayer, we are taught to pray that we would not be led into temptation, but to be delivered from evil. Why was Jesus led into a place where He would face every possible temptation? I believe that it was for the same reason that He came to earth. He did it for our sakes.

(Mark 1:13) "And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him."

We find the answer in Hebrews 2:18. “For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” You and I are going to face temptations in life. Jesus has been through those same temptations and He can help us. He can come to our aid when we face temptations.

(Heb 2:18) “For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we are taught that no temptation has overtaken us that is not common to man. Jesus has faced all those temptations and nothing that we are tempted in is strange to Him. He understands it and can come to our aid. Paul wrote that God is faithful and He will not let us be tempted beyond our ability. That is encouraging. God is faithful. He has made a promise to you and I that He won't let us be tempted beyond our ability to stand against it. When we face a temptation, we should know three things right off the bat. First, Jesus has already overcome this temptation. Second, God is watching over us and He is not going to let us down. He will be faithful to help us and come to our aid. Third, we can overcome this temptation. God said that He will not allow us to go into a temptation that we cannot stand up to.

(1 Cor 10:13) “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

But, that is not all. God promises that when we are tempted, He will provide a way of escape. When we are tempted, we need to be looking for God's way of escape. Sometimes the best thing to do is run. Paul taught us to flee from immorality. When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he ran from the temptation. Sometimes we might just need to shut the TV off. We might need to ask a brother to hold us accountable about something. Look for God's way of escape because He has promised to provide it for us. He can come to our aid in our time of need.

That is not the only answer we see in Hebrews. In Hebrews 4:15-16 we read that our High Priest, Jesus, sympathizes with our weaknesses. He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. We are encouraged to draw near to Him in our time of need because He will give grace and mercy in our time of need. Don't just look for the way of escape. Look for His grace and mercy and help in our time of need.

(Heb 4:15-16) “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. {16} Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Jesus was impelled to go out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Next we find that he was with the wild beasts. There were several things that caught my attention about this. First, Jesus was tempted by Satan. The name Satan means adversary. Satan is against you and I. He is not for you. God is for you, but we are in a battle with an enemy who is against you. In the other accounts, we are given some other names.

(Mark 1:13) “And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.”

In Matthew's account we read that Jesus was tempted by the devil. The Greek word is diabolos, which means slanderous or falsely accusing. Satan is the one that tempts you and me. Satan is also the one that slanders and falsely accuses us. Satan is the one that tries to bring condemnation on us. We get the English word, diabolical from this same Greek word. Satan is diabolical in every sense of the word. Matthew goes on and in verse three he calls Satan the tempter. Satan is the one that tempted Jesus. Satan is the one that tempts you and I.

(Matt 4:1-3) "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. {2} And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. {3} And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

In James 1, God tells us that we are not to say that we are tempted by God. God cannot be tempted by evil and He Himself does not tempt anyone. There are two sources of temptation. We see that the devil is the tempter and He tempted Jesus. But in James we also learn that we are tempted by our own lusts. In John 2:15 we read that there is the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. When Jesus was tempted, He was tempted with these same three things. He was tempted with all the kingdoms on the earth and their glory. That is the lust of the eyes. He became hungry after fasting for forty days and was tempted with bread, which is the lust of the flesh. The devil will use these lusts in our lives to tempt us. Remember in times of temptation that God does not tempt us. Instead, our High Priest is ready to come to our aid and give us grace, mercy, and to provide a way of escape. We serve a faithful God who is for us. It is Satan who is our adversary, and tries to tempt us to get us to sin.

(James 1:13-16) "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. {14} But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. {15} Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. {16} Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

In addition to the names of Satan, I was drawn to study wild beasts. I asked, why does Mark mention that Jesus was with wild beasts. What does that have to do with these temptations? Of course there are wild beasts in the wilderness, but why mention them. I looked up the word for wild beasts and it is therion (Strong's G2342) Therion is used forty-eight times in the New Testament and thirty-eight of those are in Revelations (in 30 verses). I studied all forty-eight verses trying to find out the significance of their mention. Here is my interpretation, and I say that it is my interpretation because I could not find any commentaries or information that supported what I believe is the significance.

I believe that the wild beasts refer to the beasts that we find in Revelation. I want to spend a few minutes in Revelation 13 and then make a few comments.

(Rev 13:1-18) "And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. {2} And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. {3} *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; {4} they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast;

and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" {5} There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. {6} And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven. {7} It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. {8} All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. {9} If anyone has an ear, let him hear. {10} If anyone *is destined* for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. {11} Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. {12} He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. {13} He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. {14} And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who **had the wound of the sword and has come to life*. {15} And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. {16} And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, {17} and *he provides* that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, *either* the name of the beast or the number of his name. {18} Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

First, in verse one a beast came up out of the sea. That is the same Greek word, therion. In fact, in all these verses where you see the word beast, it is therion. In verse eleven there is another beast that comes up out of the earth. So, there were more than one beast. I do not pretend to be a scholar about the book of Revelation, but here is what many interpret this to be. The dragon is Satan. The beasts are demons who have been given power. Notice in verse two that the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. And in verse seven the dragon gave the beast the authority "to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." These are powerful demonic forces.

In Revelation 20:10, the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are all thrown into the lake of fire. Many believe that one beast is the false prophet and the other beast is the anti-Christ. The anti-Christ is slain and comes back to life to deceive people.

(Rev 20:10) "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

In Revelation 13:11-12, the false prophet makes everyone worship the anti-Christ. In verse 15, whoever does not worship the beast is killed. In verse 17, people receive the image of the beast so that they can buy and sell. In Revelation 14:9-11, the saints do not receive the mark of the beast and the people that receive the mark of the beast face the wrath of God. In Revelation 15:2,

those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name stand on the sea of glass and hold harps of God. (They are worshiping.)

I believe that when Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan and was with wild beasts, He was in an all-out spiritual battle with Satan and his demonic forces. In Ephesians 6:12 we read that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. We see in Daniel 10:12-13 that an angel was sent to Daniel in response to his prayers. The angel was delayed because he was held up by the prince of the kingdom of Persia. There are well-organized spiritual forces of darkness. They have territories and spheres that they operate in. These are the forces of darkness that Jesus faced in the wilderness. These are the wild beasts that He was in a battle against.

(Eph 6:10-12) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. { 11 } Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. { 12 } For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.”

(Dan 10:12-13) “Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. { 13 } But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.”

In the days to come Christians are going to face horrific temptations from Satan and his demonic forces, including these two beasts. Many Christians are going to be put to death and martyred because they refuse to worship the beast. Many Christians are going to face temptations to receive the mark of the beast so that they can carry on their businesses. These are real temptations. Jesus faced all these spiritual forces of wickedness and prevailed. Jesus overcame all these temptations. He resisted and He is now able to come to our aid when we get into battles with these powerful forces of darkness. Jesus did it and we can overcome also. True believers are not going to take the mark of the beast. True believers are going to suffer in the tribulation to come. We must remember that any temptation that we face has already been faced by our Savior and He is ready to come to our aid and rescue. I believe that is the significance of the wild beasts in our passage today.

3. Jesus Is Ministered To By Angels

Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days being tempted. Mark does not tell us but Matthew tells us that He fasted these forty days and nights. Then he became hungry. I can tell you that I fasted for forty days and nights and I got hungry a lot sooner than after the forty days was up. There are some real hunger pains. I went from being 180 pounds down to 128 pounds. I was both cold and hungry during that fast. I don't have much time to talk about that fast today, but I was hungry before the forty days. The maximum time that we can go without food is about 40 days. I think that Jesus reached the maximum hunger point after forty days and then he was tempted. Forty represents completion. It was at the completion of His fast that He was tempted by food.

(Mark 1:13) “And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.”

(Matt 4:1-4) “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. {2} And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. {3} And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." {4} But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'”

Mark records that He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted. The forty, being the number of completion, signifies that the devil had tempted Jesus in all things and that the time of temptations in the wilderness were complete. In Matthew, we find that at the end of those forty days the devil left Jesus and then angels came and began to minister to Him. In Luke we find that when the devil had finished every temptation, he left Jesus until an opportune time. This onslaught of temptations, this forty-day season of temptations, was finished. Jesus had overcome all of the temptations that are common to man.

(Matt 4:11) “Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.”

(Luke 4:13) “When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.”

Notice that Luke said that the devil left Him until an opportune time. The devil was not done tempting Jesus and He is not done tempting you and I. The devil gave up on that battleground, but the war continued. The devil looks for opportune times to come against us. Peter warns us that our adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. The devil looks for opportune times. He looks for times when we are weak or vulnerable. A roaring lion looks for animals that have got separated from the rest of the flock or herd. There are millions of believers today that are separated from the flock; they are not part of a church flock. They are extremely vulnerable to the attacks of the devil. He is a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

(1 Peter 5:8-9) “Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. {9} But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

Peter goes on to tell us to resist him, firm in our faith. The temptations and attacks of the enemy are common to men. These same experiences are being accomplished successfully by other believers in the world. We are to resist the devil, standing firm, and we are to be encouraged that we also can overcome these attacks.

Just because the devil left Jesus until an opportune time does not mean that he was never going to tempt Jesus again. The devil just left that battle. He continued to come against Jesus and tempt Him. In Luke 22:28, Jesus told His disciples that they had continued with Him in His temptations. The NASB says trials, but it the Greek word is the one that is used for temptations, which is how the KJV translates it. He gathered His disciples after the forty days in the

wilderness, so this is referring to the temptations that He encountered during His earthly ministry after they had joined up with Him.

(Luke 22:28 KJV) “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.”

After the devil left Jesus, Matthew records that the angels came and ministered to Jesus. The word angel comes from the Greek word, *angelos* (Strong's G32), which means to bring tidings or a messenger. Their primary function is to bring messages. Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and told him he was going to have a son. Then, he appeared to Mary, and gave her the message that she was going to be impregnated by the Holy Spirit. An angel appeared to Joseph and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. An angel came and announced the good news to the Shepherds that a Savior had been born. An angel appeared to Joseph and told him to go to Egypt. Another angel came after Herod had died and told Joseph to return to Israel. An angel came to Daniel to give a response from God to his prayers and questions. These are just some examples of one of the primary ways that angels minister or serve us. The Greek word for minister here is *diakonea* (Strong's G1247), which means to attend, wait, or serve.

One of the main ways they serve is giving messages. But, there are many other ways that angels serve or minister to us. There are warring angels that are fighting on our behalf. There are protective angels. Just as Satan has a well-organized force of demons, God has an even more-organized force of angels. When Jesus was being arrested, Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, the slave of the high priest. Jesus healed his ear, putting it back on and restoring it. That was a supernatural miracle and they still arrested Jesus. That is a baffling thing to me. I believe that slave came to Christ; we just don't have a record of it. Jesus told Peter to put down his sword. Then, He said, “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” According to some, a legion was about 6,000 troops, so Jesus had over 70,000 angels at His disposal. There are angels over countries. There are angels over churches. These angels are under proper authority and are in rank. Just as they were at Jesus' disposal, I believe there are angels that are serving us.

(Matt 26:53) “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

After my forty-day fast, I called Karen my angel. She had researched what nutrients I most needed. She prepared juices from fruits and vegetables for me to begin getting the right nourishment. I have to tell you that turnip juice does not taste good, even if mixed with carrot and apple juice. It was not the greatest, but I allowed Karen to minister to me. She does me good all of my days. There were angels that came and ministered to Jesus. They may have brought a message of encouragement. I think they brought prepared food to restore Him physically.

Conclusion and Applications

There are so many applications that can be taken from this short passage about Jesus being impelled to go into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Let's start with the thrust of the passage. It is about Jesus overcoming temptations. All of us are going to face temptations in life. Jesus, our High Priest, was tempted in all things and yet without sin. He is able to come to our rescue and give us grace, mercy, and a way of escape in temptations. He is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. He keeps His watchful eye on us and is ready to help us in our temptations. Application number one is to keep your eyes on the Lord. In

temptations, look to the Lord. Look to the Lord for grace and mercy. Look to the Lord for the way of escape. Look to the Lord for wisdom and strength to endure and overcome. God is faithful and this temptation has not escaped His attention. He stands ready to help, so look to the Lord when the temptations come your way. You can overcome them, all of them, just as Jesus did.

The second application is about spiritual battle. Jesus was impelled to go into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, and Jesus was there with wild beasts. This was a spiritual battlefield, where Jesus was facing Satan and his demonic forces. We are all in a spiritual battle, and these battles are going to get more intense in the days to come. According to the word of God there are going to be believers put to death because they refuse to worship the beast. There are going to be those who suffer because they refuse to take the mark of the beast. We must be ready for these battles. We must put on our armor and stand firm against the schemes of the enemy. I want to end with a verse in James 4:7. It says, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” In our spiritual battles, it is important to be submitted to God. Jesus was impelled by the Holy Spirit. We saw that the significance of that is Jesus was submitted to the Holy Spirit. He was not just led by the Holy Spirit. He had submitted to the authority of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was submitted to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. Have you submitted to God? Have you come to the place in your life where you bowed your knee and your heart and called Jesus Lord. We are saved by believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died and rose from the dead, and by confessing Jesus as Lord. Have you confessed Jesus as Lord? If not, I exhort you to submit to God this morning. Confess Him as Lord this morning. Just pray something like this. “Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for my sins and You rose from the dead. Forgive me for my sins and come into my life. I submit my life to You and I confess You as Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray.”

(James 4:7) “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Others may have received Christ, but you are not living a life that is being driven and led by the Holy Spirit. You struggle in submission. Part of submitting to God is submitting to those that God has placed over you. For some, this may be submitting and obeying your parents, even when you think you know more than them. For some, this may mean submitting to your husband. For some, this may mean joining a church and submitting to the leaders in that church. For some, it may be a new commitment to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit in your life. A key component in spiritual warfare is to submit to God. Jesus was impelled by the Spirit. He was fully submitted. He is our example and He will help us overcome.

If you would like to receive Christ, or for someone to pray with you, or would like to join the church, I invite you to come forward this morning and we will pray with you.

Introduction (Mark 1:12-13, 1:35, Jer 15:16)

1. **Jesus Is Driven Into The Wilderness** (Rom 8:14, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1, Matt 4:1, 12:28, 21:12-13, Mark 5:39-41, John 10:3-4, Mark 1:4, 1:35, 6:31, 14:13)

2. **Jesus Is Tempted by Satan** (Mark 1:13, Heb 2:18, 1 Cor 10:13, Heb 4:15-16, Matt 4:1-3, James 1:13-16, Rev 13:1-18, Rev 20:10, Eph 6:10-12, Dan 10:12-13)

3. **Jesus Is Ministered To By Angels** (Mark 1:13, Matt 4:1-4, 4:11, Luke 4:13, 1 Pet 5:8-9, Matt 26:53)

Conclusion and Applications (James 4:7, Rom 10:9-10, Heb 13:17)