



Jesus in the wilderness: victory over temptation

Immediately after His baptism, where the Holy Spirit descended as a dove and the Father spoke, Jesus was led by the same Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1). After forty days and nights of fasting, the tempter came. The next ten verses reveal Satan's strategy and Jesus' responses.

Far from a mere psychological struggle or inner conflict, this was a real confrontation between the Son of God and a personal adversary whose aim is and always has been to derail God's redemptive plan. The temptations targeted Jesus' identity as Son of God, challenging His mission and His dependence on the Father.

Hebrews 2:17-18 explains the significance: Jesus was like us in every way so He could become a merciful high priest, making atonement for sins. "Because He Himself was tempted in that

which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." Jesus' obedience learned in suffering (Hebrews 5:8-9) made Him the source of salvation for all who believe.

Satan's first attack began, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Matthew 4:3). After forty days of fasting, the suggestion was practical: satisfy legitimate hunger with divine power. Yet it invited Jesus to act independently of the Father, relying on self rather than trusting God's provision. Jesus refused, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Israel had learned this lesson in the wilderness when God humbled them with hunger, then fed them manna each day. Jesus later declared, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger" (John 6:35). The lesson: wait and depend on the Lord.

Next, the devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple: "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down" (Matthew 4:6), quoting Psalm 91:11-12, suggesting angels would protect Him. This would have forced God to provide a dramatic public sign, compelling belief



MY
PERSPECTIVE
Gary Damron

through spectacle rather than faith, compassion, and personal revelation. Again Jesus rejected the shortcut, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16: "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." Israel had tested God at Massah shortly after their exodus Egypt. God is not someone who can be coerced into performing on command. Jesus' ministry draws followers through mercy and truth, not sensationalism. The lesson: trust the Lord instead of testing.

The third temptation occurred on a

high mountain, where Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms and their glory. "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8-9). The offer promised instant authority without the cross; worldly power, riches, and rule at the cost of worshipping the enemy.

Jesus commanded, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only'" (Matthew 4:10, quoting Deuteronomy 6:13). Satan's kingdom comes with corruption: God's kingdom comes through humble obedience, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). Jesus rejected worldly glory for the path of sacrificial love that would secure true authority. The lesson: worship and serve God alone.

In each of the three temptations, Jesus drew from Deuteronomy - scriptures that Israel had received after wilderness failures - to affirm obedience, dependence, and exclusive worship. Satan attacked identity ("If You are the Son of God..."), but Jesus stood firm in submission to the Father's will.

Jesus' wilderness tested Him as a new Israel. Where Israel grumbled, failed, and tested God, Jesus obeyed perfectly.

His victory was not for Himself alone,

but for us. Because He overcame real temptation, He sympathizes with our weaknesses, and aids us when we're tempted. Modern culture often downplays sin, trivializing or ignoring it. Yet sin disrupts God's plan for individuals and for the world. Jesus' triumph shows the way forward: prioritize the Father's will, rely on His Word, and resist compromise.

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into confrontation, and we as followers should expect the same. Testing strengthens faith and dependence on God (Deuteronomy 8:2, 5). Jesus took the offensive against evil, defeating Satan's works through obedience that climaxed on the cross. There, sacrificial love secured final victory over sin and death.

In our times of trial, may His presence be our strength. We need not settle for temporary food, fleeting thrills, or corrupt power. Jesus offers inner peace, eternal life, and the Bread that truly satisfies.

When Jesus put the Father's will first, He secured deliverance for all who trust Him. Victory over temptation is possible because the One who faced it perfectly now aids us in our resistance.

Stand on His Word.

Depend on Him.

Worship Him alone.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Every man, wherever he goes, is encompassed by a cloud of comforting convictions, which move with him like flies on a summer day."

BERTRAND RUSSELL (1872 - 1970)

Counting cows

There's a routine to spring calving season based on numbers. Once tiny hooves start hitting the cold ground, a rhythm takes over until the last mama cow has delivered her baby. Each day is different, but they're all based on counting.

I can still picture being sandwiched in the middle of the bench seat between my grandparents as we made the rounds through pastures to check on the progress. My grandfather kept one hand on the steering wheel with a pair of binoculars ready in the other.

We would slowly roll through the field, stopping abruptly for my grandfather to take a closer look at a cow. He'd raise the binoculars and quickly read off the number on the ear tag as my grandmother dutifully recorded the information in a spiralbound notebook.

When a calf was spotted, we'd ease close enough that my grandfather could quickly get out, lasso it and tag it all while keeping an eye on the mama cow, especially if she was a first-time mother. They could get a little angry during the ordeal.

We checked the herd five or six times each day, starting with the morning feeding and ending well past dark if weather or other circumstances demanded. The vast majority of field checks happened without incident. All the cows were readily spotted along with the same number of calves from the previous count.

The adventures started when the numbers

INSIGHT

Greg Doering
Kansas Farm Bureau

didn't match up. While most mothers were more than happy to show off their calf, occasionally there'd be one who had witnessed the roundup procedure and took it on herself to keep her progeny hidden. Thankfully, cows aren't masters at hide-and-seek.

While a mama might not show off her calf, she didn't stray far from it so a hidden calf also meant the mother was away from the herd as well. In the main calving pasture, this usually meant the pair was hunkered down near the edge of a thin stand of trees. Spotting the mom didn't present much of a challenge, but it was incredibly easy to mistake a fallen limb for a black baldy if its white face was tucked away.

We didn't have to assist with many births, but it was always a tense time when pulling a calf was necessary, especially if there wasn't time to move the cow to a temporary pen. Even more rare was finding a lonesome calf rejected by its mother. I only remember a handful of calves that were brought to the barn for bottle feeding, one of which didn't make it.

Other times calves were lost to coyotes, weather or birth defects, and a few cows succumbed to injuries sustained while giving birth. The losses were never easy to take, but they were also strong reminders of why we counted. Every cow. Every calf. Every time.



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From zero to 100, bills coming fast

The old idiom "calm before the storm" could well have been applied to last week's proceedings, as the anticipated halfway point or "turnaround turbulence" very much characterized Week 6 of the 2026 Legislative Session. The Senate only met for three days, but came close to setting some kind of record by voting on fully 50 bills on just one of those alone.

To keep it in perspective, we had debated or "worked" half of them the previous day; still, being called upon to quickly process that much information on a wide range of subjects is a challenge for even the most astute and learned among us, whoever they are.

Thankfully, we have highly competent professional staff, informed interest groups, knowledgeable hearing witnesses, and concerned constituents to assist us along the way. One thing you can always be sure of is that your senator is never acting completely alone on anything.

The week actually started out relatively quietly, with our voting on five Banking Board and Finance Authority confirmations and a routine consent calendar item, labeled that because it is considered totally non-controversial.

Quite the opposite then presented itself with a call to override the Governor's veto of the so-called "bathroom bill," H Sub SB 244. The house of origin always votes first, so the Senate took up the measure and voted for it to become law notwithstanding the Chief Executive's rejection, 31-9 (27 required).

The House followed soon thereafter with its own two-thirds or better margin of 87-37, with 84 being the minimum, so the matter is now state law.

I'm always amazed at how differently things are perceived depending on attitudes and beliefs, with the opponents calling SB 244 "anti-trans" and the proponents referring to it as "protecting women's privacy." Oh well, no different from "pro-life" versus "pro-choice," I suppose.

It is a little imponderable to try to do a digest of the 50 bills we passed in



RYCKMAN RECAP

Ron Ryckman
38th District Senator

the Senate, so I will just defer to your individual interests and have you use your computers to go to www.kslegislature.org and pull up the Senate Journal for Day 27, Wednesday, Feb. 17, for coverage of at least the subject matter and explanation of votes for each.

You can then get a little deeper into any particular one by highlighting "Bills and Laws" and entering the preferred number.

I do want to say just a word about one of them, though, SB 360, because of the high volume of email and phone-call inquiries about the measure, curiously pretty evenly divided for and against. Those opposed called it a "pill tax" and "price control" whereas those in favor of a "fair competition and market-based reimbursement."

Disparate viewpoints and misinformation are nothing new, but I and a majority of others ultimately came down on the side of helping our rural pharmacies stay open by passing the measure unamended, 32-8, thus sending it to the House for further consideration.

Understandably, bills are not put on the calendar for action under "general orders" unless there is a reasonable expectation they have the necessary support to be adopted.

Indeed, after going through the

hearing process and committee vetting, then being reported out favorably for approval — and even discussed in caucus for identification of any concerns, it is rare for one to "go down" on final action. That happened this week, however, on a seemingly routine proposal providing for local government control over wages, compensation, and benefits on construction projects. After an amendment was added without objection as being basically "technical" in nature, it was determined — to the contrary — to make a major change in the thrust of the measure — to the point of its being unacceptable.

These mistakes don't happen often, but serve as a reminder of why it is sometimes good to have a little time between discussion and voting.

Debate had already concluded on SB 436, so the only option was to reject it on final passage, which we did 12-26. The original version will now almost certainly be incorporated into a later related-subject-matter companion.

What there can be no debate about is the incredible takeaways both I and my visiting seventh and eighth grade students and their parents from Salem Valley Christian School in Copeland had from their visit to the Capitol this week. Besides being recognized and honored in the VIP Gallery on the Senate Floor and witnessing multiple roll-call votes, we had more than an hour of personal time together during a private lunch in a room off the Rotunda. They just couldn't have been more respectful, appreciative, and engaging — and for that I feel so blessed. A comparable experience was enjoyed at my Hodgeman County Farm Bureau Town Hall in Jetmore this morning, something for which I was so ready after a stressful drive through Ashland and Englewood to view the wildfire damage yesterday.

Being able to bring all the destruction to the attention of our State Fire Marshal for anticipated relief is just one more reason I am so grateful to be the "voice" of Southwest Kansas; thank you again for that great privilege.



GETTING IN TOUCH

Liberal City Commission: City Hall; 324 N. Kansas Ave.; 626-2202.

Seward County Commission: County Administration Building 515 N. Washington 626-3300.

Kansas Senator Ron Ryckman: E-mail: ron.ryckman@senate.ks.gov.

Kansas Representative Shannon Francis: Topeka office at 167-W, phone number is 785-296-7655 and email is shannon.francis@house.ks.gov.

U.S. Representative Tracey Mann: 522 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2715

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran: 4 Russell Courtyard (Temp), District of Columbia 20510-1604 Phone: (202) 224-6521. Fax: (202) 228-6966; E-mail:

<http://www.moran.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-jerry>

U.S. Senator Roger Marshall: Russell Senate Office Building, Suite B33, Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202)224-4774

Tips on contacting elected officials:

■ Identify who you are and where you live — make it clear you are a constituent. Include phone and address so your official can contact you.

■ Keep to one topic per letter or call. If appropriate, refer to the specific ordinance, bill or date pertaining to the subject.

■ Be clear about what you hope your elected official will do.

■ Remain polite, even when disagreeing.