





Into the Wilderness

Matthew 4:1-11

Mark 1:12-13

Luke 4:1-13

Life of Jesus

Matthew and Luke give the most detail; they reverse the order of the last two temptations but give the same account.

Jesus was baptized, and Luke says he was full of the Holy Ghost. Afterwards

He was immediately led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Discuss:

Jesus is in the wilderness, out in the desert. It might be really hot. It might get cold at night.

There were wild animals (Mark 1:14), and he was probably sleeping on the hard ground.

He fasted forty days and forty nights; he was hungry.

Jesus was fully God, but He was also fully man (Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16). He had all the human characteristics that we do. He got tired; He needed sleep. He got hungry; He needed food. Watch as Jesus stays focused.

Discuss:

Talk about being hungry.

What would it be like to not eat for this long?

Have you ever fasted? How long?

Is it hard to focus when we are hungry?

There are three types of temptation listed in the Bible, and every temptation can be put into one of these categories.

For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not from the Father but from the world. 1 John 2:16

Notice what the devil says,

"IF you are the Son of God..."

He wants to make Jesus **prove** who he is. He first tempts him with the desires of the flesh. Jesus is hungry, and Satan tells him, *IF you are the Son of God*, command this stone into bread.

The devil knows how the kingdom works: by authority and words. Jesus has the authority to command the stone with his words, but He doesn't do it, because that would be a response to prove the challenge IF you are the Son of God. He already KNEW He was the Son of God.

Jesus responds the same way every time:

It is written.

He answers every temptation with the word of truth.

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth John 17:17.

Jesus responds with, It is written, and quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 "...man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord."



Into the Wilderness

The devil tries again.

Satan takes Jesus up to a high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment, perhaps in a vision. He saw everything at a glance. Talk about these kingdoms; what they may have looked like; what that would mean. Large cities, powerful kings, rulers of the earth.

Satan did possess this power over the earth, giving him the ability to make this offer to Jesus. When Adam and Eve were tempted and sinned in the garden, they turned over their dominion (Psalm 115:16) on this earth to Satan making him the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) also called the prince, or ruler, of this world (John 12:31, 14:30).

Jesus came to the earth to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

and through his death and resurrection He won back dominion over this earth (Ephesians 1:19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Satan was offering a shortcut; Jesus could have power and glory without suffering and sacrifice. Satan tells Jesus that IF He will worship him, he would give Him all the power and glory of the world.

Satan is a liar (John 8:44). It is doubtful that he would have ever given Jesus the power he promised. Nonetheless, Jesus knew that if He would have accepted Satan's offer, He would not have been the sinless sacrifice and the world would not be redeemed. This was clearly not the will of the Father.

Ask the students - how did Jesus respond?

It Is Written!

He again responds with, **It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.**

(Deuteronomy 6:13; 4:19; 8:19; 10:20, 11:16; 30:17; 1 Kings 9:6; 2 Chronicles 7:19; Jeremiah 13:10; 25:6)

Satan then brings Jesus to the top of the temple; we are not told how they got there, perhaps supernaturally. But they clearly ARE there, as Satan challenges Jesus to throw himself down from this temple IF he is the Son of God. Satan knows the Bible; he quotes Psalm 91:11, but twists the wording. Satan took out 'protect you in all your ways' and added 'at any time' If Jesus had jumped off the roof of the temple, that would have been tempting God, and the Lord will not be tempted (Deuteronomy 6:16; Acts 5:9).

Discuss:

What does it mean to tempt God?

What are some ways that we could tempt God?

If you jumped off a building, etc.. this would be tempting God.

Ask the students - how did Jesus respond?

It Is Written!

This was an IF you are the Son of God temptation, and again Jesus responds with,

It is written, "you shall not tempt the Lord your God."

After these three temptations, we are told that Satan leaves Jesus *for a season*.

Jesus in the Story



This is what Jesus must face as the coming king. He has just been announced by God at his baptism, and now he is going into the wilderness to do battle with evil. He is coming into his kingdom; coming to do battle and conquer as he prepares for his reign. But does not have a physical kingdom to conquer. He is mirroring the temptations of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They failed; he is victorious over evil.

We might look at these temptations and think they are different from ours. But we read that Jesus was tempted just as we are.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet he did not sin.

Hebrews 4:14-15

These temptations were an attack on Jesus' identity. Satan's temptations all began with *"IF you are the Son of God."* Jesus had just been baptized. The heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove, and the voice of the Father from heaven said, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus was the Son of God and the Son of Man, fully God and fully human. He had to meditate on this and focus on the truths of what God said about Him. He had to know in His heart that this was true.

Because Jesus knew who He was, He knew His identity, and He was able to stand strong during temptation.

We need to know our identity so we can also stand strong when we are tempted.

If we know who we really are, it is much easier to use our authority to speak the Word of God against the devil. As believers in Jesus, who does God say we are?

Righteous - received as a gift (Romans 5:17-18, 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:24; Philippians 3:9).

Children of God - heirs with Jesus, children of the King! (John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; 1 John 3:1).

Discuss:

If you completely trust the Lord for everything, you will not be tempted to do wrong to get the things you need.



Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

1. My Beloved Son

1. What opened when Jesus was baptized?
2. What did God send to Jesus, and how did it appear?
3. Where did the voice come from?
4. What did the voice say?

Matthew 3:16-17

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting upon him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

2. Into the Wilderness

1. What three things did Satan use to tempt Jesus?
2. 1 John 2:16 lists different types of sin and temptations in the world. What three basic things are the beginning of all sin and temptation?

1 Samuel 12:24

Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

3. A Wedding Invitation

Read John 4:45-46

1. Where did Jesus go?
2. What happened the last time Jesus was here?
3. Why were these people looking for Jesus?
4. How did they know about him?

Isaiah 43:19

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

4. A Den of Thieves

Read Matthew 21:12-17

1. How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple?
2. What were the people doing in the temple?
3. What did Jesus say the temple is supposed to be?
4. What did Jesus do in the temple instead?

1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:5

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.