

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus is Tempted

Matthew 4:1-11

Opening

- Gathering: What types of temptations do people have the most difficulty resisting?
- Today's Focus: God prepared and tested Jesus at the beginning of His ministry by allowing Satan to tempt Him with the most powerful of human temptations. Jesus showed how we can resist temptations by looking to God's Word for strength.
- Key Verses: *He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might ... make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.* Hebrews 2:17-18
- We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.* Hebrews 4:15

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Jesus Starts His Ministry (*Luke 3:21-23*)

How old was Jesus when He began His ministry?

Luke 3:23a = About 30 years old

What is significant about this age? = Jesus is the Greatest High Priest (Hebrews 8)

Numbers 4:46-49 = Levites began serving as priests at age 30

What did Jesus do to kick off His ministry? = Last week's lesson

Luke 3:21 = Was baptized - Note that He was praying even then

Did Jesus need to be cleansed through baptism for a fresh start in ministry?

Matthew 3:13-15 = No, He did so to obey God's commands

What was the most important thing that happened at Jesus' baptism? = Trinity

Luke 3:22 = Holy Spirit descended on Him and the Father proclaimed Him as His Beloved Son

What was one reason that the Spirit appeared physically?

John 1:32-34 = Revealed Jesus to John as the Messiah - See next week's lesson

Besides being empowered for ministry, what else happened as the Spirit descended on Jesus?

Luke 4:18, 21 = He was anointed as the Messiah - *The Anointed One*

Jesus - The New Israel (*Mark 1:10-13*) = Look at Mark's short version first

What was the first and most important thing the Spirit had for Jesus to do?

Mark 1:12 = *At once* sent Him out into the desert

How long was He in the desert and what happened to Him there?

Mark 1:13 = 40 days, tempted by Satan, with animals, attended by angels

How did Matthew first show Jesus as the new Israel?

Matthew 2:14-15 = *Out of Egypt I called my son* - Recorded by Hosea about Israel

How did Jesus being led into the desert by the Spirit compare with Israel?

Exodus 13:17-18 = God led Israel into the desert prepared for war

How was Jesus likewise armed for battle?

Mark 1:10-11 = He was empowered by the Holy Spirit at His baptism

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Jesus - The New Israel – In the Wilderness (*Mark 1:10-13*)

How did Jesus' 40 days of testing in the desert point to Israel?

Joshua 5:6 = Israelites wandered in desert 40 years (generation)

How did the old Israel respond to temptations it experienced in the desert?

Exodus 32:1-4 = Succumbed to temptation quickly, rejected God

How did God protect Israel from wild animals in the desert as He did later for Jesus?

Numbers 21:7-9 = Healed those who had been bitten by snakes

How was the original Israel also attended by angels?

Exodus 23:20 = God sent an angel to guard and guide them

Jesus Tempted (*Matthew 4:1*) = Look at longer versions in Matthew and Luke

Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the desert?

Matthew 4:1 = *To be tempted by the devil*

Did God tempt Jesus? = Satan hits Jesus with the most powerful temptations he can

Job 1:9-12 = No, but He gave Satan permission to tempt Jesus

Does God tempt His people to test them?

James 1:13 = No, God does not test with evil

Can temptations lead to growing in maturity and becoming more complete?

James 1:14-15 = No, they lead to sin which then leads to death

How do we know when we are being tested by God or tempted by Satan?

James 1:16-17 = *Don't be deceived ... every good & perfect gift is from above*

Why Does God Test? (*Deuteronomy 8:2*)

Why was this testing of Jesus important, just as it had been important for the first Israel?

Deuteronomy 8:2 = *to humble and to test you in order to know what was in your heart*

Why does God test His people? = Our faith is refined, purified, strengthened

1 Peter 1:6-7 = Your faith is refined & proved genuine to God's glory

How are we to respond to the difficulties of God's tests?

James 1:2-4 = Consider it pure joy, develop perseverance, become mature & complete

How does perseverance from difficulties make us more *mature, not lacking anything*?

Romans 5:3-5 = Rejoice in your sufferings, our hope is filled by God's love

Why should we rejoice when God tests us? = He tests us because He loves His children

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11 = Endure hardship as discipline, harvest of righteousness & peace

What is the reward for those who persevere?

James 1:12 = *the crown of life that God has promised*

Devotional Fasting (*Matthew 4:2*)

At what point during Jesus' 40 days in the desert did the first temptation come?

Luke 4:1-2 = At the end, after He was weakened & drained from 40 days without food

Had he not eaten because He couldn't find any food in the desert?

Matthew 4:2 = No, He was fasting

Why did Jesus fast?

Matthew 6:17-18 = Out of disciplined devotion to God

Do we have a record of any other fast lasting this long? = Leader of the old Israel

Exodus 34:28 = Moses fasted 40 days & nights when he received the 10 Commandments

Jesus at His weakest can defeat Satan at his strongest

We can too with the power of God's Word and the Holy Spirit

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The First Temptation (*Matthew 4:3*) = Natural desires, hunger

How did Satan take advantage of Jesus' weakness to tempt Him?

Luke 4:3a = *If* - began by trying to get Jesus to question His calling

How did Satan take advantage of Jesus' hunger to severely tempt Him?

Matthew 4:3 = Pointed out He could easily satisfy His hunger by a word

How could just a word from Jesus turn stones into bread?

John 1:1-3 = Jesus was the Word - the Word through whom *all things were made*

How was this temptation similar to the first temptation that man succumbed to?

Genesis 3:4-6 = Satan combined food with power into a single powerful temptation

How did man's first temptation show Satan's main attack points? = List on board

Genesis 3:6 = Good for food, pleasing to the eye, desirable for gaining wisdom

How does Satan attack us today in the same way? = List on board next to Genesis list

1 John 2:16 (KJV) = Lust of the flesh, Lust of the eyes, Pride of life

Luke's version follows this order while Matthew's version is seen as chronological

Jesus Replies to the First Temptation (*Matthew 4:4*) = Lust of the Flesh - desires of the body

Why would it be sinful for Jesus to prove to Satan that He was the Son of God?

1 John 2:16 = Satan already knew, it would be boasting - that comes from the world

How did Jesus respond to Satan's difficult temptation?

Matthew 4:4 = Quoted Scripture that spiritual food is more important than material food

Was Jesus quoting this verse out of context to make His own point?

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 = No, it was in the same context as His, but for the first Israel

Why did Jesus quote God's Word to defend himself against Satan's attack?

Ephesians 6:10-17 = God's Word is the Sword of the Spirit, our offensive weapon

The Second Temptation (*Matthew 4:5-7*) = Pride of Life - desires to impress others

Seeing that Jesus' hunger was not a strong enough temptation, what did Satan then focus on?

Matthew 4:5-6a = *If you are the Son of God...* - SE corner had 100' drop to Kidron valley

How did Satan try to turn Jesus' reliance on God's Word against Him? = Satan knows the Bible

Matthew 4:6 = Quoted Scripture commonly accepted as describing the Messiah

Did Satan quote this verse correctly and completely? = Left out *to guard you in all your ways*

Psalms 91:11-12 = Left out section where verse referred to the Messiah's normal life

Did Jesus recognize the slight adjustment Satan had made? = *It is also written...*

Matthew 4:7 = Yes, He saw that Satan had twisted it to point to specific incidents

Did Jesus misquote an obscure part of Scripture?

Deuteronomy 6:4, 16 = No, He directly quoted from the Shema, recited often by Jews

Testing at Massah (*Exodus 17:1-7*)

What had happened at Massah?

Exodus 17:1-2 = They quarreled with Moses when there was no water

How were they putting God to the test just by asking for water? = Questioned God's control

Exodus 17:3 = They indicated this wouldn't happen if an all-powerful God was in control

How did God respond to this threat to Moses?

Exodus 17:4-6 = Made water come from a rock

How was this incident further pointed out as an example of man testing God?

Exodus 17:7 = Called *Massah (testing)* because they tested God if He was there or not

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The Third Temptation (*Matthew 4:8-10*) = Lust of the Eyes - desires to have things, covet

Unable to get Jesus to test his deity, how did Satan then appeal to His human desires?

Matthew 4:8-9 = Promised to give Him the world in exchange for a simple act of worship

How could Satan show Jesus all the kingdoms of the world from a high mountain?

Luke 4:5 = *Showed Him in an instant* - gave Him a vision

Was Satan exaggerating that he had power over the world that he could offer to Jesus?

John 12:31 = No, Jesus even called him the prince of this world

Was power over the nations something Satan could really give?

Psalm 2:5-8 = It was God's to give and He had promised to give it to His Son

Did Jesus understand who alone had control over the world? = All 3 responses are from Deuteronomy

Matthew 4:10 = Yes, quoted again from the Shema that we are to worship God only

Satan Leaves (*Matthew 4:11*)

Who did Jesus point out in His last reply was really in control?

Matthew 4:10a = He was, He commanded Satan to leave

Did Jesus have the power to do this?

Luke 10:17-19 = He even gave power over the enemy to His disciples

How did Satan respond to Jesus' command?

Matthew 4:11 = He obeyed and left

Did Satan leave Jesus for good and no longer bother with trying to tempt Him?

Luke 4:13 = *Left Him until an opportune time*

When was the next most opportune time for Satan to get directly involved with tempting Jesus?

Mark 8:31-33 = Tempted Jesus to back out of impending suffering & death, used Peter

What does it mean for us that Jesus had to deal with difficult temptations?

Hebrews 2:18 = Because He suffered when tempted, He can help us when we are tempted

Were these the only times Jesus was tempted?

Hebrews 4:15 = No, He was tempted in every way, just as we are - follow His example

Why was it important that Jesus was without sin?

Hebrews 7:26-27 = He was blameless so that His sacrifice would cover all sacrifices

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When has my faith been tested as I have traveled through the wilderness in my life?
(*Matthew 4:1; Deut. 8:2-5; Romans 5:3-5; Hebrews 12:5-11; James 1:2-4, 13-17; 1 Peter 1:6-7*)
2. How have I responded to tests of my faith?
(*Luke 4:1-13; Genesis 22:1-18; Exodus 16:4; 20:20; Deuteronomy 13:1-3; Judges 2:21-22; Job 1; James 1:12*)
3. When have I recently fallen into sin after being tempted by lust of the flesh?
(*Luke 4:1-4; 9:23-26; Genesis 3:4-6; Deuteronomy 8:3; Romans 7; 8:5; Galatians 5:16-26*)
4. When have I recently fallen into sin after being tempted by the pride of life?
(*Luke 4:9-12; Genesis 11:1-9; Matthew 6:1-18; 23:5-12; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 4:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 5:5-6*)
5. When have I recently fallen into sin after being tempted by lust of the eyes?
(*Luke 4:5-8; Zech. 4:6; Matthew 6:19-24; 19:16-26; 20:25-28; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 2 Timothy 3:1-5*)