

JESUS' TEMPTATIONS

Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-14

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus and Satan

Key-location: Desert wilderness

Key-repetitions:

- The Holy Spirit came down on Jesus at his baptism (Mat 3:16); the Spirit led Jesus to the desert (Mat 4:1; Lk 4:1); Jesus left the temptation place in the power of the Spirit (Lk 4:14).
- Satan began two of the three temptations with the words, "If you are God's Son" (Mat 4:3, 6).
- Jesus answered each of the three temptations with words from the Scriptures (Mat 4:4, 7, 10).

Key-attitudes:

- Conflict between Jesus and the devil.
- Satan's antagonism when he twice challenged Jesus, "If you are God's Son..."
- Jesus' confidence in the Scripture.

Initial-situation:

John the Baptist was preaching that the Kingdom of God was near. He called on people to repent. John baptized those who repented. Jesus came to John to be baptized; John reluctantly baptized Jesus. Jesus came up out of the water. Heaven opened, and Jesus saw God's Spirit descending and landing on him like a dove. A voice from heaven declared, "This is my Son, whom I love; I am very pleased with him."

Initial-problem:

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert where he was alone with wild animals, and where the devil tempted him.

Final-situation:

The devil had tempted Jesus in every way, then he retreated temporarily, waiting for another opportunity. Angels came and helped Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River (Lk 4:1). The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert where he was alone with wild animals and where the devil tempted him for forty days (Mk 1:12-13).

Jesus ate nothing for forty days and forty nights; then he was very hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you're God's Son, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered (*quoting Deuteronomy 8:3*), "It is written, 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

The devil took Jesus to the Holy City of Jerusalem and put him on the highest point of the temple. The devil said to Jesus, "If you are God's Son, jump." (*The devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12.*) "For it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus countered (*with a citation from Deuteronomy 6:16*), "It is also written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

For another test, the devil took Jesus to the peak of a very high mountain, showed him the splendor of all the kingdoms of the world and said, "I'm in charge of them all and can give them to anyone I wish. All this I'll give you, if you'll bow down and worship me."

Jesus answered, "Away from me, Satan!" (*Jesus rebuked the devil with a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:13.*) "For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

After the devil had tempted Jesus in every way, he retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity. Angels came and helped Jesus (Mat 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13).

The power of the Spirit was with Jesus when he returned to Galilee (Lk 4:14).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did God the Father say after Jesus was baptized?
2. How did the Holy Spirit participate in both Jesus' baptism and his temptations?
3. How did Satan tempt Jesus?
4. What were the three stages Jesus faced in his temptation?
5. What temptations do we face today?
6. How did Jesus resist temptation?
7. What can we learn from Jesus' confrontation with the devil that would help us resist temptations?
8. What have you found most helpful in resisting temptation?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Temptation often comes after a high point in a person's spiritual life.** Jesus was tempted after his baptism when he became full of the Holy Spirit (Mat 4:1).

Prophet Elijah experienced a great victory, but soon thereafter was tempted with despair (1 Kings 18-19).

2. **Satan focuses his temptations on human vulnerabilities.** Satan focused his temptations on Jesus' human vulnerabilities: prove that God was his father; satisfy Jesus' real physical needs of hunger; do things man's way, not God's way (Mat 4:1-11).
3. **Satan uses the Scriptures in a distorted way in order to deceive people.** He slightly changed God's words to deceive Eve in the garden (Gen 2:16; 3:1-5), and he distorted the Scripture when trying to deceive Jesus in the desert (Mat 4:6).
4. **The three stages of the temptation suffered by Jesus are faced by all people:**
 - In the desert, Jesus suffered the temptation of having bread without God; of using one's own force and efforts to satisfy human needs. This was the temptation of materialism; to be dominated by things that satisfy one's appetites: food, wealth, material goods and pleasure (Mat 4:3-4).
 - On the high point of the temple, Jesus suffered the temptation of having prestige without God; of living according to the standards of the world. It was the temptation to impress people: to use his capacities and talents to bring glory to himself. It was a temptation to show off, to do self-promotion, and to win prestige for himself (Mat 4:5-7).
 - On the mountain, Jesus suffered the temptation of having power without God; of serving Satan. It was the temptation of self-importance: to have power to impose his own will above the will of others (Mat 4:8-10).
5. **Having been tempted as a man, Jesus can help those who are tempted** (Heb 2:18). He can have compassion for them because of their weaknesses (Heb 4:15). He was a man; therefore, he was hungry. He didn't conquer the temptations by using divine power, but by using resources available to any person.
6. **Temptation can be won with two resources: the Holy Spirit and by using God's word in the correct way.** Jesus used the two resources available to everyone: the Holy Spirit and the word of God.
 - At Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus (Mat 3:16). The Spirit led Jesus to the desert (Lk 4:1). Jesus left the temptation place in the power of the Spirit (Lk 4:14).
 - In each one of the three stages of the temptation battle, Jesus used the word of God as a weapon against Satan. He answered each temptation with words from the Scriptures (Mat 4:4, 7, 10).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Chant:

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

HEBREW 2:18	
GROUP 1	GROUP 2
Jesus himself <u>suffered</u> .	Jesus himself was <u>tempted</u> .
<u>Because</u> Jesus suffered when tempted,	Jesus is <u>able</u> to help those who are being tempted.
Because Jesus <u>was tempted</u> ,	Jesus is <u>able</u> to help those who are being tempted.
Everybody	
"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18 NIV).	