



## STORY

The Temptation of Jesus - Matthew 4:1-11

## TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father who loves us all, enable me to overcome the temptations the devil throws at me. Forgive me for those times when I failed to use Your Word and fell into sin. Thank You for the times when You have prevented me from falling into temptation. I know that the students in my care will, throughout their life, also face many powerful and dangerous temptations. Help me to impress upon them how with Your Word and the victory Christ has won, they, by Your grace, have the resources to overcome the temptations they face. Forgive them when they fall and lead them to appreciate it when You give them the victories in Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.

## VOCABULARY

*Fasted* - not eating anything and perhaps not drinking anything. In this case, going without food for 40 days and nights.

*Tempter* - another name for the Devil, or Satan. Here it describes what the Devil was doing to Jesus.

*Pinnacle* - cf Rupprecht - a wing or high point on the temple, speculated to be 600-700 ft high.

*opportune time* - another favorable time to tempt Jesus such as in Gethsemane.

## OUTER AIM

Jesus did not sin when the Devil tempted Him.

## INNER AIM

Jesus overcame the Devil for us.

## BACKGROUND

(*Rupprecht Bible History References Vol.2, pp. 78-82 and cf. Spokesman, August 1997, pp. 6-8*)

The Devil is that fallen angel who was thrown out of heaven and seeks his revenge by introducing and expanding sin into the world. Read Genesis 3 and Revelation 12:7-12, esp v 11.

The devil also tempted Jesus, as we see here and in Hebrews 4:14-15. If the Devil could have successfully led Jesus to sin, then Jesus could not have been our Savior and no one else could deliver us from sin, death, and the power of the Devil. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory over the Devil.

Harmony note: Matthew and Luke record the same temptations, though in a different order. The wording in Matthew suggests the order, and nothing in Luke contradicts that order, so it is the one generally used.

Matthew 4:1

- ▶ Immediately (Mark 1:12) after Jesus' baptism (Luke 4:1), Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into a wilderness (location unknown) to be tempted by the devil.
- ▶ No one was there to come to His aid.
- ▶ He would face the temptations alone.
- ▶ This too was part of God's plan of salvation as a real and valid testing of Jesus' human nature and His determination to save us by His self-sacrifice.

v. 2

- ▶ Jesus became genuinely hungry because He was truly human.
- ▶ To be our true substitute and Savior, in no way could Jesus use His Divine nature to withstand these temptations, but relied upon the resources available to Him as a human being.
- ▶ He was to be tempted in the same way we are, yet without sin.
- ▶ Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:2 add that those 40 days included continual temptation by the Devil.
- ▶ God chose to tell us of only three of the temptations used as prime examples of all the other temptations.

v. 3

- ▶ The Devil used multiple approaches here.
- ▶ Knowing Jesus' weakness as a result of fasting, he encouraged Jesus to use His divine power for His own bodily needs instead of acting as our true human substitute under the laws of nature.
- ▶ The Devil used Jesus' hunger and human limitations to suggest that Jesus serve Himself instead of being so self-sacrificing.

v. 4

- ▶ Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 which, especially in its context, shows that even when physically hungry, we should obey God and continue to trust that God will sustain us according to His Word.
- ▶ The Word of God is the best tool available to a human fighting the Devil.
- ▶ The goal of this temptation, as in the others, was: to get Jesus to think of His needs, His "rights", and what He "deserves", (rather than ours). After all, the Devil reasoned, why should God lower Himself to go through with this "self-sacrifice"?

v. 5

- ▶ God permitted Jesus to be taken by the Devil to the Holy City, Jerusalem, onto a high point of the temple.

v. 6

- ▶ Again we see how tricky the Devil was.
- ▶ He also knew and thus misused scripture to tempt Jesus. But the Devil left out the important words "to keep you in all your ways," which remind us that the promises of the passage apply when we walk in the paths that God has appointed for us.
- ▶ Again the Devil challenged Jesus' position as the Son of God.
- ▶ Some commentators say that the Devil was trying to get Jesus to seek the popularity of the people with a miraculous demonstration of self-preservation. If Jesus could survive the jump from 600 ft, the crowds below would give Him celebrity status without Jesus having to fulfill His mission as our Savior, an easy out.
- ▶ This was the issue again. The Devil tried to tempt Jesus: "Why not get the honor and acclaim you deserve by a miracle (rather than going through all that self-sacrifice?)"

v. 7

- ▶ Jesus' reply, again from the Scriptures, turned back the Devil's temptation again.
- ▶ Notice Jesus used "it is written," instead of speaking on His authority as God.
- ▶ From Deuteronomy 6:6 Jesus warned that we are not to tempt God by our own foolishness and expect Him to deliver us.

v. 8

- ▶ Many have speculated on which mountain this occurred without having any scripture to confirm their guesses. No mountain by itself provides a view of all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. So that implies the Devil has the power to create visions for deceitful purposes. Jesus actually saw them through whatever means the devil had to reveal his version of them.

v. 9

- ▶ This temptation connected to the many prophecies that Jesus would rule over all the earth.
- ▶ The Devil was again offering an easy out. Instead of Jesus having to live a perfect life, to suffer and to die, the devil suggested Jesus could have such power by an easier way.
- ▶ Of course the Devil doesn't own anything on earth, for the earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it.
- ▶ His rulership as the Prince of Darkness exists only as people's hearts are ruled by him.

v. 10

- ▶ Jesus' reply, again from Scripture, included also the command for Satan to leave.
- ▶ Jesus not only overcame Satan's temptation but reaffirmed His own commitment to serve His heavenly Father, even to the death of the cross in order to be our self-sacrificing Savior.

v. 11

- ▶ The Devil left Jesus alone when Jesus ordered him away, for Jesus had won all of these battles, even as He would remain the Ultimate Victor keeping a perfect record even with His death.
- ▶ Notice Luke mentions that at other favorable times through Jesus' life, the Devil tempted Jesus (compare Matthew 16:23, Maundy Thursday).
- ▶ After these temptations, God sent His angels to serve Jesus with praise and such needs as they could meet.

## **STUDENT PRAYER**

Dear Heavenly Father, even as we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," so deliver us from temptation and evil. Strengthen our faith and increase our knowledge of Your Word so that we, by Your Grace, may overcome the Devil through Jesus' victory for us. Help us to see and use the escape from temptation that You have promised to provide us. Forgive us for the times when we have fallen into temptation. May we be thankful when You give us each victory, so that when our battles are ended, You will have brought us through this life to share in the Victory that Jesus won for us. We pray, believing in the name of Jesus our Victorious Savior, Amen.

## **PRESENTATION**

Briefly review previous story as time allows. Make links to the new story when possible.

Tell the story: Teachers are encouraged to tell the story in their own words while remaining faithful to the scriptural account. When a story is recorded in more than one place in Scripture, teachers may want to harmonize the account (including extra details found in each account.) When harmonizing, let the students know that the story is found in more than one place in the Bible. Then they can see the additional details are also found in the Bible.

Discuss the story. While reviewing the major events of the story, discuss the possible applications to the students' lives. Ask questions that make them think about the story and show that they understand the story.

## APPLICATIONS

1. What are temptations that children particularly face? (Examples can be drawn from family life, friendships, and general review of the commandments). What are some of the weapons that God has given us to use when we are faced with those temptations? Consider passages like Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Corinthians 10:13: (Be both general and think of specific passages that could be used.)
2. Why does the Devil work so hard to tempt us to sin? What would happen if we just gave in to temptations and stopped fighting to do what's right? If we fall into sin, whose fault is it? Did the Devil make you do it? If we fall, where can we go for forgiveness? Who provides us the victory over each temptation and ultimately over sin, death, and the Devil? When will we no longer have to worry about being tempted to sin?

## PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson. Discuss as time permits: Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Corinthians 10:13

### Lower

Matthew 26:41 - "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

### Middle any of the above and...

1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Hebrews 4:15 - (Jesus) was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

### Upper any of the above and...

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

## HYMN CHOICES

"I am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus" (TLH 428 all, esp 1, 5-6)

"Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray" (TLH 446 all, esp 1, 5-6)

"A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (TLH 262 all)