

Satan Tried to Tempt Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

PPT Title

Satan Tried to Tempt Jesus

Main Point: Jesus faced every temptation that we do, yet He never sinned.

Key Verse: *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* - James 4:7 NIV

Props: The Bible, a sword, a stone, a loaf of bread

Note to Teacher: It is important to understand that Jesus was NOT tempted to sin - as in *wanting* to sin but just holding back the urge. James 1:13 tells us, "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone" (NIV). We have heard the phrase "the temptation of Christ" for so long, that we liken it to our own "feeling tempted" (an inward desire to commit sin). Christ does not have a sin nature as we do. Christ's temptation was an outward exposure to Satan's ploys. The significance of these temptations being offered to Christ, and His refusal to partake, is that Jesus remained sinless and therefore remained the perfect sacrifice, able to take on the sin of mankind on the cross.

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Teacher: Begin with a personal story of a time when someone tried to tempt you to sin. Bearing in mind the above Teacher Note, do not share a time when you "felt the urge" to sin, but when someone or something actively tried to persuade you into doing something sinful, as Satan did to Jesus. (Ex: **Not** the temptation to eat cake when you were on a diet; rather when you were 10 and your friend begged you to do his homework.)

Say: To "tempt" is to try to get someone to do wrong. So, to "be tempted" means someone is trying to get you to do something wrong. **Ask:** Has anyone in this room ever been tempted? When you were tempted, was it hard to do the right thing?

Say: Today we're going to read from God's Word that Satan tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, but Jesus resisted temptation by using God's Word.

This is what we are going to learn about Satan: Satan is very clever. He tempts when you're hungry, angry, lonely, tired. Satan also tempts when you've just had a wonderful, spiritual event in your life. Satan tried to tempt Jesus right after Jesus was baptized by His cousin, John.

This is what we're going to learn about Jesus: Jesus used Scripture to counter Satan's attacks.

The Word of God is living and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges.
- Hebrews 4:12a

Teacher: Show your sword and your Bible. **Say:** Just as a sword can defeat a military enemy, even more so, God's Word can defeat our enemy, the devil.

After Jesus was baptized, the Bible says that the Spirit "immediately" led Jesus into the wilderness. The word "wilderness" is often translated as "desert." The book of Mark states that Jesus was "with the wild animals" (Mark 1:13). We can assume that He was



away from other people. Jesus was alone, in the desert, and He had just been baptized. But the book of Luke tells us even more. Jesus ate nothing for 40 days.

Ask: How would you feel if you didn't eat for 40 days? *Hungry*

Let's talk about fasting for just a minute. Fasting is when you choose to say no to food so that you can give all of your attention to prayer. People fast for various reasons. "It is likely that Jesus was fasting to seek God and refrain from all distractions" (p. 47 *Jesus, the One and Only* by Beth Moore). Many times people will fast because they want all of their time and energy to go into prayer. Preparing food, eating it, and cleaning up takes a lot of time. When you fast, you can spend all that time in prayer. By doing this, you are communicating to God and yourself that He is more important to you than daily food.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION (Matthew 4:1-4)



After 40 days and 40 nights of going without eating, Jesus was hungry. The tempter came to Him. He said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."
- Matthew 4:2-3

The "tempter" was another name for the devil, or Satan. **Satan** tried to place doubt in the mind of Jesus with the words "**If** you are the Son of God."

Teacher: Show a stone and a loaf of bread.

Say: The book of Luke tells us that Satan tried to tempt Jesus throughout His forty days in the wilderness (Luke 4:2). Satan knew that Jesus had gone without food for forty days. Obviously, Satan knew that Jesus was very hungry! He also knew that Jesus was powerful.

Of course, Jesus could make bread. We will learn that twice Jesus made bread for several thousand people! (Mark 6:35-44, Mark 8:1-21) Making bread was no big deal for Jesus. BUT - that word "if" indicates that Satan was questioning whether or not Jesus was truly God.

PPT Verse

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread. He also lives on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Deuteronomy 8:3) - Matthew 4:4

Teacher: Show your Bible and the sword again.

Say: God's Word is like a sword. It cuts through the *doubts* of the devil.

When Jesus said, "It is written", He was referring to Scripture. Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 where Moses reminded the Israelites that God humbled them in the wilderness when He provided manna from heaven. By quoting this Scripture, Jesus made it clear that there is something much more important than physical needs. It is the need to know God. It's interesting to note how this temptation compares to Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden.

Ask: What did Satan tempt Eve to do? *Eat fruit*. And what did Satan tempt Jesus to do? *Make bread*. What is similar? *Both temptations involve food*.

Application: We must be careful to control our fleshly appetites. Not just our appetite for food, but also our appetite for things that are not good for us like too much TV, bad pictures, etc.

The more important similarity is that in both cases, Satan tried to plant the seed of doubt. To Eve he said, "Did God **REALLY** say not to eat the fruit?" To Jesus he said, "**IF** You are the Son of God..."

Ask: Do you hear how Satan is trying to make them doubt?

THE SECOND TEMPTATION (Matthew 4:5-7)



Say: *Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city. He had Jesus stand on the highest point of the temple. "If You are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down. It is written, " 'The Lord will command his angels to take good care of you. They will lift you up in their hands. Then you won't trip over a stone.' "(Psalm 91:11,12) - Matthew 4:5-6*

History tells us that a part of Herod's temple was about 450 feet high. It is likely that Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem to stand on that part of the temple. Satan challenged Jesus to throw Himself down. He reasoned that **IF** Jesus was God's Son, then God would surely protect Him from such fall. Satan tried to get Jesus to do something that would force God to help Him. That's like saying, "God, I know you can protect me, so I am going to walk out into a busy highway and You must keep me safe". We are not to do this, because we are not in authority over God. He is in authority over us. We do not force God to serve us. Certainly God is able to rescue His children from incredible danger, however, to act foolishly and then expect God to deliver you is to put God to the test.

Note to Teacher: See Psalm 78:17-22, for God's anger when the Israelites tested Him in the desert.

Satan quotes Scripture -

Did you know that Satan is keenly aware of what is written in the Bible? He quoted this verse to Jesus:

*The Lord will command His angels to take good care of you.
They will lift you up in their hands.
Then you won't trip over a stone. - Psalm 91:11-12*

It is true that God can and does protect His children, but remember, we are to use good judgment. We are not to experiment with God. Satan was challenging Jesus to "push the limits" with God.

Jesus quotes Scripture -

Jesus addressed the real issue by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16.

PPT Verse

Jesus answered him, "It is also written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" - Matthew 4:7

The word "test" here does not mean the kind of test you take at school. It means to "make God prove Himself". God is holy. He is the King of the universe. He does not have to prove anything to anybody! Do not attempt to "test" God.

Teacher: Show your Bible and the sword again.

Say: God's Word is like a sword. It cuts through the *deceit* of the devil.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION (Matthew 4:8-11)



Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "If You bow down and worship me," he said, "I will give You all of this."

Jesus said to him, "Get away from Me, Satan! It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only One you should serve.'" - Matthew 4:8-10

PPT Verse

Satan offered Jesus the power to rule the earth. But, the world was not even Satan's to offer (Psalm 22:28; Isaiah 37:16). This was the very temptation that had ensnared Satan which caused him to be thrown out of heaven. It was **Satan's** overwhelming greed for power that caused *him* to rebel against God. Satan is the one who desired 3

to become more than he was. Just the opposite, Jesus already had all power and glory, but willingly gave it up to come and give His life for mankind. The Bible says:

In His very nature He (Jesus) was God. But He did not think that being equal with God was something He should hold on to. Instead, He made Himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant. He was made in human form. He appeared as a man. He came down to the lowest level. He obeyed God completely, even though it led to His death. In fact, He died on a cross. - Philippians 2:5-8

Satan was offering Jesus temporary control of the world in exchange for His eternal rule. Perhaps Satan thought he could play on the goodness of Jesus. Maybe he thought Jesus would seek worldly control in order to stop the sin and suffering that abounds on the earth. Can you imagine how Jesus feels when He sees the misery, war, crime, poverty, abuse, and torture in this world? Perhaps Satan was hoping that Jesus would be eager to bring it all back under His control. In God's timing, this world will indeed be completely under God's authority, but not yet. Jesus did not come into the world to stop all of the problems on the earth. Jesus came to take away the sin of the world (1 John 3:5).

If Jesus had bowed down to Satan, He would have sinned because the Bible says we are ONLY supposed to worship God. Jesus saw the big picture. Jesus kept His focus on the **eternal** - it was far better for Jesus to remain sinless so He could become the substitution for all men, so those who believe could gain **eternal life**. Again, Jesus quoted Scripture.

Teacher: Show your Bible and the sword again.

Say: God's Word is like a sword. It cuts through the *evil plans* of the devil. James 4:7 says to RESIST the devil, and he will flee from you!

Then the devil left Jesus. Angels came and took care of Him. - Matthew 4:11



Angels are God's messengers. They came to Jesus to minister to Him. What a difference! On one hand, Satan was tempting Jesus. God cast Satan away, and angels came instead.

Application: Satan will do his best to tempt, trick, and trap every follower of Jesus (1 Peter 5:8). He is very clever. He knows all of our weaknesses, and he will always try to catch us off guard. Unlike Jesus, we are all born with a sin nature (Romans 5:12; 7:18). This means, without God's help, rebelling against God is natural to us. Therefore, we MUST rely totally on the power of God to resist the devil's snares. We tap into God's power by following Jesus' example. The awesome news is that we all have access to the same devil-defeating tools that Jesus used. Do not be fooled! Good intentions will not defeat the evil one! Only the divine tools God has given us - **God's Word, prayer, and praise** - will do the work of defeating such a crafty, deceitful enemy.

We have a high priest [Jesus] who can feel it when we are weak and hurting. We have a high priest who has been tempted in every way, just as we are. But he did not sin. - Hebrews 4:15

PPT Verse

Key Verse: Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. - James 4:7 NIV

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Jesus faced every temptation that we do, yet He never sinned.