

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: The Temptation of Jesus (pt. 1)

Learning Goal: Students should understand how the temptation of Jesus is part of God's sovereign plan, illustrating Jesus' humanity and providing hope and victory for all who are tempted.

Question: Do you think Jesus could sin? If not, can he really be tempted?

Prayer.

Discuss question on board. (5 minutes)

Dramatic Reenactment of Matthew 4:1-11

Once again, we get one of those stories that is counter-productive to the spread of the Gospel about the Messiah, for it shows Jesus at his most vulnerable and most human.

“Immediately. . .”

- This follows closely on the heels of Jesus' baptism
- Common spiritual experience that Satan will attack very soon after we have experienced a significant spiritual milestone or spiritual “high”
- Jesus has been confirmed as God's Son and that God has a special plan for him - the temptation will challenge the manner in which Jesus will live out that calling. What kind of Messiah will he really be?

“Led by the Spirit”

- Why would the Spirit lead Jesus into temptation?
- Isn't this the opposite of what Jesus taught us to pray for - “Lead us NOT into temptation...”
- Maybe we should understand these temptations as Jesus going on the offensive rather than the defensive - Spirit led him to confront Satan head on
- Connection to Mark 3:27 (plundering the strong man's house) - Jesus is entering into his house and will give him one of his first defeats here.

Location: Wilderness

- Throughout scripture, the wilderness is the home of the Devil
- This was outside the boundaries of society, structure, order
- The wilderness was chaos (anti-creation)

40 Days/Nights

- Significant period of time: Noah and the ark, Moses on mountain, Elijah in cave, Israelites in the wilderness; Goliath challenging Israelites
- Lent Connection - 40 days
- Jesus was fasting during those 40 days/nights (What is fasting?)

3 Temptations

All 3 temptations are a challenge to Jesus' identity as the Son of God. “If you really are the Son . . .”

Sets up false logic - If you are the son - turn stones to bread
If you are not - don't turn them

1. Turn stones into bread
 - Is food bad? No. - the temptation is to use his power

- It is the nature of sin to take something that is good and given by God and twisting it into something it isn't supposed to be or to give it the wrong priority
 - Question of whether Jesus is going to trust God to provide for his needs (a few chapters later: "Give us today our daily bread...")
 - Of course, Jesus answers the Tempter, much like Gandalf to Bilbo Baggins: "Do not take me for some conjurer of cheap tricks. . ." (Gandalf, *Fellowship of the Ring*)
2. Cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple
 - Location: Temple
 - Notice that Satan quotes scripture too (Psalm 91:11-12). Satan knows God's word and will try to twist it to confuse and lead us astray
 3. Bow down to Satan and he would get power over all the kingdoms of the world
 - Location: vision of high mountain (couldn't be real since there are no places on earth where you could see all this at once)
 - Satan offers a political solution to give Jesus what he wanted
 - The temptation is to get what Jesus was going to get anyway without having to drink from the "Cup" or endure the cross

Our greatest need

If our greatest need
Had been information,
God would have sent us
an EDUCATOR

If our greatest need
Had been technology,
God would have sent us
a SCIENTIST

If our greatest need
Had been money,
God would have sent us
an ECONOMIST

If our greatest need
Had been pleasure,
God would have sent us
an ENTERTAINER

But our greatest need
Was forgiveness,
So God sent us
a SAVIOR

-Roy Lessin

Jesus' Response(s)

- Jesus quotes scripture to combat the attacks of Satan (Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16; 6:13)
- Heard someone say that in Ephesians 6 (Armor of God), the only offensive weapon mentioned in the description of spiritual armor is the sword, which is the Word of God. Jesus uses his sword here.
- This is the importance of the memory verses that we do in class (not arbitrary). See Psalm 119:11

Meaning/Connections

- There are strong connections between Jesus' experience in the wilderness and the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites following the Exodus.

Israel . . .

passes through Red Sea

in dessert for 40 yrs.

complain and receive miraculous bread (manna)

receive water from the rock

(He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' - Exodus 17:7)

bowed down to the golden calf

Jesus . . .

Passes through waters of baptism

in wilderness for 40 days

resists temptation, nourished on God

Refused to test the Lord

Refused to bow down to the Devil

Add to that - all of Jesus' responses (quotes) are from Israel's time in the wilderness.

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Wilderness
- Temptation
- What were the 3 temptations of Jesus?

The Temptation of Jesus

(Matthew 4:1-11 ESV)

Narrator: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him,

Devil: “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

Narrator: But he answered,

Jesus: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Narrator: Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him,

Devil: “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

Narrator: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Narrator: Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him,

Devil: “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”

Narrator: Then Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”

Narrator: Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.