

MATTHEW

Lesson 2

Matthew Chapters 3-4

We continue our study of Matthew with a look at a very familiar story to many of you. I am referring to the story of John the Baptist, wandering in the wilderness preaching repentance from sin, and Christ being baptized but then led into the wilderness to be tested by Satan. My prayer is that God will give you new insight regarding the significance of these verses, and that you will grow in your walk with Him as a result.

In conjunction with your study of this lesson, you may want to access some online or book reference materials to learn a little bit about Herod and John the Baptist. We will discover as we study Matthew that many people and characters pass through the chapters of his Gospel—and none are recorded there by accident. I pray that you will learn as much about them and their actions as you can; since we know that God has a purpose in all that He does and in every word contained within the Bible.

We pick up our study now in Matthew Chapter 3. The baby Jesus has grown up to be a man and He approaches John the Baptist as the first step in the beginning of his earthly ministry.

Read Matthew Chapters 3 and 4 and consider the following:

1. As John the Baptist is preaching, certain religious leaders approach him. Compare what he says in Matthew 3:7-10 with what Paul writes in Acts 26:20. What is scripture telling us is a sign of true repentance?
2. Read what John the Baptist says will happen in Matthew 3:11. Was he correct? (see Acts 2:1-4)
3. Read Matthew 3:16-17, which describes events occurring in the overall tapestry of Christ's baptism. Can you identify the Holy Trinity within these verses? Please elaborate how in your answer?
4. Read Chapter Matthew 4:1-11. How does Christ being led by God into the wilderness compare with God leading his chosen people out of Egypt and into the wilderness? (There are many similarities. Can you identify some? Why were they both led into the wilderness?)
6. Over how many days was Christ tempted in the wilderness by Satan? (and no; 40 days is the wrong answer; look again.)
7. How long did Christ fast in the wilderness? Why do you suppose he fasted for so long?

8. What is the value of fasting?
10. Match the following verses to Christ's responses to each of Satan's 3 tests. Simply list a number, e.g., 1, 2, or 3, beside the verses that apply to each of the temptations.
- a. Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20
 - b. Deuteronomy 8:3
 - c. Deuteronomy 6:16
11. How do Satan's various temptations of Christ compare with Satan's temptations of Eve?
- a. Compare Genesis 3:1 with Matthew 4:3. What do they have in common?
 - b. Compare Genesis 3:4 with Matthew 4:6. What do they have in common?
 - c. Compare Genesis 3:5 with Matthew 4:8-9. What do they have in common?
12. Given your answers to the two questions above, what have we learned about Satan when he tempts us, and how we should handle it?

From before the beginning of Christ's ministry Satan was out to destroy Him as well as God's overall plan for mankind. From the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden through the entire Old Testament, we see Satan trying every trick that he can to thwart God's plan.

Matthew conveys to us that when Christ was walking the earth to begin his earthly ministry, Satan became very aggressive and confronted Christ in the wilderness; once again trying to alter God's plan. Once again, we see that Christ was victorious over Satan, and He is still faithful today as our Lord and Savior.

As you reflect on this lesson, I encourage you to faithfully consider Christ's reactions to Satan, His use of scripture, His daily prayer, and yes, His fasting as well. These are all examples which Christ provides us. They serve as a model for our how we should respond to Satan temptation.

May we grow spiritually from our study of this great gospel message. Christ is real, He's alive, and he is coming again. Let us, like John, actively proclaim his second coming and praise him for saving us.

In Christ,

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