

In the Wilderness

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In this meeting in Lent we look back to the accounts recorded in scripture of Christ in the wilderness and the temptations He suffered.

JESUS IN THE WILDERNESS

[Matthew 4:1-11](#)

¹ Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

² And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

³ And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

⁴ But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

⁵ Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

⁶ And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

⁷ Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

⁸ Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

⁹ And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹⁰ Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

¹¹ Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

See also [Mark 1:12-13](#), [Luke 4:1-13](#)

Note: The order of temptations 2 and 3 are reversed in the Gospel of Luke.

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DISCUSSION THOUGHTS:

The Gospel readings describe the events immediately following our Lord's baptism and before the commencement of His ministry.

1. Why did Christ go into the Wilderness? [Matt 4:1](#) , [Luke 4:1-2a](#).

- For us today what is the season of Lent and what do we hope to achieve?

2. Why was Jesus tested and how?

The tests were an attempt to disqualify Jesus as the Messiah and therefore as Redeemer and Saviour.

- 1st Test: Satan tempted Jesus to demonstrate His divine nature "If Thou be the Son of God", confirmed following His baptism [Matt 3:17](#) to meet His immediate physical needs.

(the temptation of Adam [Gen 3](#) , feeding the multitude [Luke 9:12-17](#))

- 2nd Test: Satan (*mis-*)quoted scripture [Psalm 91:11-12](#) to tempt Jesus to jump in order to *force* God (test God) into protecting Him.

(Signs, temptation in a holy place, use of scripture)

- 3rd Test: Satan tempted Jesus with idolatry. Was this an easier route to save the world? Jesus would not have to go through the severe beating and blood loss, the crown of thorns on His head, being nailed to the cross as a common criminal, being ridiculed and abused by the Roman soldiers, or the derision and mockery of the crowd. He would not have to die!

- If Jesus had succumbed to each temptation how would this have disqualified Him?

3. How did Jesus respond?

In each case Jesus quotes from Scripture (Deuteronomy) "It is written".

- [Deut. 8:3](#), In quoting from Deut 8, reference is made to Israel's wilderness experience. Jesus waited on this Father to meet His needs. [Matt 4:11](#) cf [Matt 6:25-33](#).

- [Deut. 6:16](#) Recalling when the Israelites questioned Moses, doubting (testing, proving) whether the Lord was with them or not. cf [Ex 17:2-7](#)

- [Deut. 6:13](#) *Septuagint*: Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve; and thou shalt cleave to him, and by his name thou shalt swear. cf [Matt 16:26](#)

4. What temptations do we face today in body, mind and spirit?

5. What can we learn from our Lords temptations to help us?

- To study, feed on and digest the Word of God recorded for us in Scripture [2 Tim 3:16](#) , but see [2 Tim 2:15](#) [2 Pet 1:20-21](#) , and on Christ [John 6:53-58](#).

- To trust, have faith [Heb 11:1](#) (confident expectation, not unfounded optimism) in God [Heb 11:6](#) and His promises [Rom 4:20-21](#) [Rom 8:28](#).

- To acknowledge, accept and cleave to our Lord for the salvation of the world [John 3:17](#), the Church [Matt 16:18](#) and ourselves [Matt 7:13-14](#) , [Acts 2:21](#) , [Acts 4:12](#). Worship is properly due only to God [Ex 34:14](#).

6. Paul summarises our struggle and God's resources available to us. [Eph 6:12-17](#)

Note: [Heb 2:18](#) [Heb 4:15](#) [1 Cor 10:13](#)