

The Gospel of Matthew

Booklet 02 - Three Lessons

Lesson 4 - Matthew 3:1-17

Lesson 5 - Matthew 4: 1-11

Lesson 6 - Matthew 4:12-25



John baptizing Jesus

International ESL/Bible Lessons
Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 4 - Matthew 3: 1-17 John the Baptist

¹ In those days / John the Baptist came, / preaching in the wilderness of Judea / ² and saying, / “Repent, / for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” / ³ This is he / who was spoken of / through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one / calling in the wilderness, / ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, / make straight paths for him.”

⁴ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, / and he had a leather belt around his waist. / His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ / People went out to him / from Jerusalem / and all Judea / and the whole region of the Jordan. / ⁶ Confessing their sins, / they were baptized by him / in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees / and Sadducees / coming to where he was baptizing, / he said to them: / “You brood of vipers! / Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? / ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. / ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, / ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ / I tell you / that out of these stones / God can raise up children for Abraham. / ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, / and every tree that does not produce good fruit / will be cut down / and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance. / But after me / comes one / who is more powerful than I, / whose sandals / I am not worthy to carry. / He will baptize you / with the Holy Spirit and fire. / ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, / and he will clear his threshing floor, / gathering his wheat into the barn / and burning up the chaff / with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan / to be baptized by John. / ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, / saying, / “I need to be baptized by you, / and do you come to me?”

¹⁵ Jesus replied, / “Let it be so now; / it is proper for us to do this / to fulfill all righteousness.” / Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, / he went up out of the water. / At that moment / heaven was opened, / and he saw the Spirit of God / descending like a dove / and alighting on him. / ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, / “This is my Son, / whom I love; / with him / I am well pleased.

Vocabulary

1. Repent: Be sorry and actually change the path of action to the better.

2. Brood of vipers: Large family or group of poisonous snakes
3. Sandals: light shoe with straps
4. Consented: Agreed to something

Questions

1. What were John's clothes made of? What does that tell you about him?
2. What does it mean to produce fruit?
3. Why would John be angry with the religious leaders?
4. How did John feel about baptizing Jesus?
5. Why is the dove a symbol used in Christianity?

Notes

1. Thirty years have passed between the ending of Chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3. Here we have thirty silent years.
 - Jesus grew up in Nazareth.
 - It is believed Joseph, his earthly father, died when Jesus was a boy. Therefore, Jesus, the oldest, became the *man* of the family.
 - Jesus, like all Jewish men, had a manual labor trade. He was a carpenter, like Joseph. With that skill and business, we believe Jesus supported his family.
 - We believe Jesus accepted the work and role and labored until his family could take care of themselves. We know there were younger brothers and sisters.

- Jesus knew about working hard, about stress and about responsibility.
2. *Jesus was faithfully performing the lesser task before the greater task was given to him to do. The great fact is that, if Jesus had failed in the smaller duties, the mighty task of being the Savior of the world could never have been given to him to do. He was faithful in little that he might become master of much. It is a thing never to be forgotten that in the everyday duties of life, we make or mar a destiny.*Barclay
 3. Camel's hair: A really good material for wearing in the desert in the heat or in the cold.It is used today as an expensive material. It denotes the austerity of John's life.
 4. For 400 years, there had been no prophet in Judea. Now, John the Baptist begins a ministry.Matthew tells us John is the new *Elijah* who was prophesied to come before the Messiah.Elijah was the great prophet of the Old Testament.Remember Matthew connects John and Jesus with the prophecies of the Old Testament.
 5. Roads in ancient times were rough tracks through the land. Only the king had the power to build and clean up the roads. When the king traveled, teams of people worked hard to get the roads ready to travel.

6. John saw the Pharisees and Sadducees as hypocrites. They should not think that just because they were Jews or sons of Abraham, they were good and approved by God. They told people how to act, but acted very poorly themselves. To bear fruit is an idiom that means to produce good things. If a tree bears no fruit in an orchard, then it is cut down and replaced. If people bear no fruit, they have no children or do nothing worthwhile.
7. To carry sandals is the duty of a slave, not of an equal or of one of high status, like John the Baptist.
8. *"What then is the gift and work of this Spirit of God? When we try to answer that question, we must remember to answer it in Hebrew terms. John was a Jew, and it was to Jews that he was speaking. He is thinking and speaking, not in terms of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but in terms of the Jewish doctrine of the Spirit.*
9. The word for *spirit* is *ruach*, and *ruach*, like *pneuma* in Greek, means not only spirit; it also means *breath*. *Breath* is life; and therefore the promise of the Spirit is *the promise of life*. The Spirit of God breathes God's life into a man. When the Spirit of God enters us, the tired, lack-luster, weary defeated-ness of life is gone, and a surge of new life enters us. (Barclay, p 49)
10. The public baptism is a ritual symbol of the change that has taken place in a person's life when they accept Jesus and become a Christian. It does not change the person. That has happened.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 5 - Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit / into the wilderness / to be tempted by the devil. / ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, / he was hungry. / ³ The tempter came to him / and said, / “If you are the Son of God, / tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, / “It is written: / ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, / but on every word / that comes from the mouth of God.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city / and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. / ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” / he said, / “throw yourself down. / For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you, / and they will lift you up in their hands, / so that you will not strike your foot / against a stone.”

⁷ Jesus answered him, / “It is also written: / ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

⁸ Again, / the devil took him to a very high mountain / and showed him / all the kingdoms of the world / and their splendor. / ⁹ “All this I will give you,” / he said, / “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, / “Away from me, / Satan! / For it is written: / ‘Worship the Lord your God, / and serve him only.’”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, / and angels came and attended him.

Vocabulary

1. Fasting: Going without food. Go on a hunger strike.
2. Tempter: Same as Satan, the devil.

Temptation: Lure; Enticement. Desire. Invitation.

Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb
Tempting	Tempter Temptation	To tempt	Temptingly

Questions

1. Can you tell ways in which you are tested and how you have grown through the testing?
2. Do you think the struggle Jesus had with Satan was a physical or an inward experience? Which can be most difficult?
3. Why can compromising your beliefs lead you far from what you know is right? Is it a slippery slope?

Notes

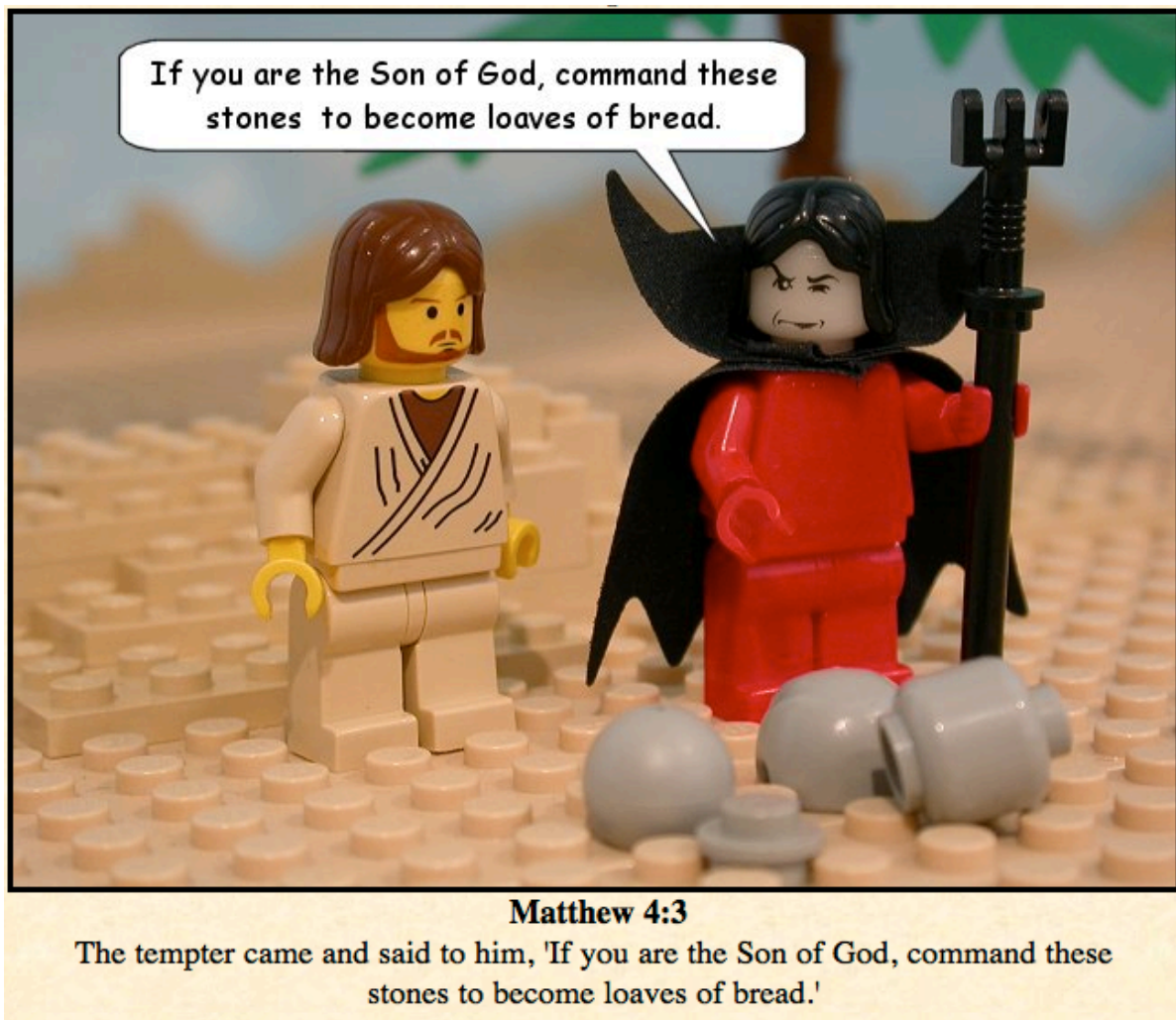
1. Jesus is about 30 years old. He has a vision of what God will have him do. Now he goes into the wilderness to be alone with God and to think *how* he should accomplish his task.

2. Tempt for English speakers has one meaning, and it is negative. For us, it is to seduce someone into doing evil or to make a bad decision. The word in Greek is *peirazein* and it means to test more than it means to tempt. Abraham was tested when he came to sacrifice Isaac. God tested him. We test people all the time. So, this is the test/temptation of Jesus.
3. Testing makes a person stronger and more able to accomplish a task when the time comes. It is not meant to weaken us, but to make us able to withstand evil and sin. *So then, we must think of this whole incident, not so much as the tempting, as the testing of Jesus.*
4. Matthew, Mark and Luke all stress the word *immediately*, showing that the testing/temptation of Jesus came quickly after the public baptism. Over and over again in life, we have high moments, and soon after come the low, discouraging days. “We will do well to be specially on our guard after every time life has brought us to the heights, for it is just then that we are in gravest danger of the depths.” (Barclay, p. 64)
5. Many International students and immigrants come to the USA. They have goals and purposes in coming, and they often experience a high in their attitudes. Then, Bam! They are here and the reality of the difficulty of everyday life, and the

understanding of obstacles hits them. Depression and discouragement set in. The testing time is upon each one.

6. Was this an outward experience or an inward one? Did Jesus really see Satan? Barclay feels it was a struggle that went on in the mind and heart and soul. "The proof is that there is no possible mountain from which all the kingdoms of the earth could be seen. This is an inner struggle." These struggles are very real with every human being.
7. Also, this was not a first and only time Jesus met Temptation/Testing. He also met it with Peter (Matthew 16:23) when Jesus said, *Get behind me, Satan!* It happened in Gethsemane when the tempter tried to get him to walk away from the Cross. (Luke 22: 42-44.)
8. We are often tempted through the gifts that each one of us has. If you have the power of words, you can be tempted to use them to control others. If you are charming or full of emotional intelligence (EI), then you can be tempted to use that to justify your own conduct which might not be so good.
9. Three ways Jesus was tempted:
 - 1) Bread: Fulfilling physical needs and desires. If people are hungry, give them bread and they will follow you. We frequently see this in poor nations at war. Militants will control the food supply. Bribery is not lasting.

- 2) Power through sensationalization: Problem with spectacular feats to gain attention is that they must be repeated and be better each time. This is not the way to use the power of God.
- 3) Compromise: Satan gave him the right to compromise the beliefs and loyalty to God. Jesus did not choose to do that.



The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 6 - Matthew 4: 12- 25 Jesus Begins to Preach

¹² When Jesus heard / that John had been put in prison, / he withdrew to Galilee. / ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, / he went and lived in Capernaum, / which was by the lake / in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— / ¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: /

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun / and land of Naphtali, / the Way of the Sea, / beyond the Jordan, / Galilee of the Gentiles/ — ¹⁶ the people living in darkness / have seen a great light; / on those living in the land / of the shadow of death / a light has dawned.” (Isaiah 9:1-2)

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, / “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven / has come near.”

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking / beside the Sea of Galilee, / he saw two brothers, / Simon called Peter / and his brother Andrew. / They were casting a net into the lake, / for they were fishermen. / ¹⁹ “Come, / follow me,” / Jesus said, / “and I will send you out / to fish for people.” / ²⁰ At once they left their nets / and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, / he saw two other brothers, / James / son of Zebedee / and his brother John. / They were in a boat / with their father Zebedee, / preparing their nets. / Jesus called them, / ²² and immediately / they left the boat and their father / and followed him.

Jesus Heals the Sick

²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, / teaching in their synagogues, / proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, / and healing / every disease and sickness / among the people. / ²⁴ News about him spread all over Syria, / and people brought to him / all / who were ill / with various diseases, / those suffering severe pain, / the demon-possessed, / those having seizures, / and the paralyzed; / and he healed them. / ²⁵ Large crowds from Galilee, / the Decapolis, Jerusalem, / Judea / and the region across the Jordan / followed him.

Vocabulary

1. Withdrew: Removed. Jesus left the area.
2. Repent: Ask forgiveness. Turn toward God.
3. Severe pain: Very very bad hurt or injury.

What is your pain level on a scale of 1-10, 10 being severe?

4. Paralyzed: Unable to move. Bring a system to a standstill.

Questions:

1. Jesus left Nazareth to begin his ministry. What city became his “home base?”
2. In verse 15, we see another of Matthew’s 16 prophecies. Who is the “light”?
3. What was John the Baptist Preaching? What was Jesus preaching?

4. Why do you think James and John went with Jesus? Would you have answered like that?
5. How did people hear about Jesus?

Notes

1. John the Baptist spoke his mind. Therefore, it is no surprise that his condemnation of Herod caused his arrest. He had publicly denounced King Herod for marrying his brother's wife. That was done after he had put away the wife he had. This courage of John brought imprisonment and death.
2. With this information, Jesus began his ministry. He left his boyhood home of Nazareth and moved to Capernaum. This marked a clean cut from his childhood and his adult years with his family, and began the era of his ministry. We think this lasted only 3 years before Jesus was himself put to death.
3. Galilee was a unique place. Galilee was the most northern part of Palestine. The region of Galilee was surrounded by Gentiles. It was not large, but very densely populated. The historian Josephus writes that Galilee had two hundred and four villages. The area was fifty miles from north to south and twenty-five miles from east to west.
4. The great roads of the world passed through Galilee. *The Way of the Sea* led from Damascus, Syria through Galilee right down to Egypt and on to Africa. *The Road to the East* led through Galilee

out to the frontiers. Ideas came to Galilee, for it was in no way isolated.

5. As was the habit of Matthew, he found a prophecy in Isaiah 9:1,2. He takes it from its context and applies it to Jesus. It foretold of the light that Jesus was to bring.
6. The message of Jesus was similar to that of John the Baptist.
Repent!
7. Jesus began by calling disciples to join him. He preached to the people, but he taught the disciples. The first disciples were fishermen who work on the Sea of Galilee. The fish of that area were well received and were even exported to Rome.
8. Jesus called common people to be his disciples. They were not uneducated, for all Jewish boys had to know how to read and write for they had to do that by the age of 12.
9. Jesus began traveling around Galilee, and he began teaching in the synagogues. A synagogue was different from a Temple. There was only one Temple, in Jerusalem, and its purpose was to be the place of offering sacrifices to God. The synagogue was the teaching and preaching part. Every area had a synagogue if it had at least 9 or 10 men in the area.
10. Jesus not only preached, but he healed the sick. People came to Jesus from Syria, the Decapolis, beyond Jordan and many other areas. Remember many of these areas were primarily Gentile.