

# Echoes of Scripture

Lent 1a – Matthew 4:1-11

## Summary of Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus is led out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

## Suggested Course of Study

- Read through Matthew 4:1-11.
- Refresh your memory of the story of Adam and Eve (see Genesis 3).
- Refresh your memory of the story of Job (see Job 1-2).
- Refresh your memory of the story of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt and before they entered the Promised Land (see Exodus 16-17; Numbers 20).
- Refresh your memory of the story of Elijah fleeing from Jezebel (1 Kings 19).
- Reread the story of the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11 and consider how each of the above stories relate to the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness.
- Explore how the following passages of scripture relate to the temptation of Jesus: Hebrews 4:15, Philippians 2:5-11, and 1 Corinthians 10:1-13. Consider the significance of Jesus' faithful obedience.

## Immediate Context

Matthew 1-2 Birth Narratives and Wise Men

Matthew 3:1-12 The Proclamation of John

Matthew 3:13-17 The Baptism of Jesus

**Matthew 4:1-11 The Temptation of Jesus**

Matthew 4:12-17 Ministry Begins in Galilee

Matthew 4:18-22 Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Matthew 4:23-25 Jesus Ministers to the Crowd

Matthew 5-7 Sermon on the Mount

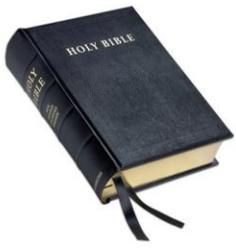
## Text of the New Revised Standard Version

### Matthew 4:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, "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, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.<sup>i</sup>

## Key Words

**WILDERNESS** – We think about the Exodus story and the Israelites wandering in the wilderness (see Exodus 16:1-3; 19:1-6; Numbers 14; 33; Deuteronomy 8:2-4). We think of Elijah fleeing from Jezebel into the



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wilderness 1 Kings 19. We think about John the Baptist appearing in the wilderness preaching repentance and baptizing in the Jordan (see Matthew 3:1-2).

**TEMPTED** – πειρασθῆναι *peirasthēnai* from πειράζω *peirazō* meaning “to test or tempt”. Jesus is tempted to seek food, safety/security, and wealth/power. This word reappears later in Matthew when the religious leaders “test/tempt” Jesus (Matthew 16:1, a sign from heaven; 19:3, questioned about divorce; 22:15-22, paying taxes; 22:23-33, resurrection; 34-40, the greatest commandment).

We also hear echoes of Abraham being tested with the life of Isaac (see Genesis 22:1-19), the Israelites being tested/tempted in the wilderness (see Exodus 15:22-27; 16:4; 17:7; 20:20; Numbers 14:22; Deuteronomy 6:16; 8:2-16; 13:1-5; 33:8). Israel fails their tests in the wilderness (see Exodus 16, hunger; Exodus 17, putting God to the test; and Exodus 32, worshipping the golden calf). We also hear echoes from the story of Job (see Job 1). Jesus talks about temptation in Matthew 18:6-9. Jesus feeds the masses (see Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39). Jesus refuses to save himself during his arrest and on the cross (see Matthew 26:47-68; 27:11-14; 27:27-54). Jesus claims and gives authority (see Matthew 28:18-20).

**FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS** – There are multiple allusions to forty days and forty nights in the Old Testament. We think first of Noah in the Ark (see Genesis 7:4, 12; 8:6; 9:8-17). We think of Moses fasting at Mount Sinai (see Exodus 24:18; 34:27-28; Deuteronomy 9:9-25; 10:10). We think of Elijah fasting in the desert (see 1 Kings 19:8). We also think of the number of years that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness (see Exodus 16:35; Numbers 14:33-34; 32:13; Deuteronomy 2:7; 8:2-4).

**“IF”** – At the baptism of Jesus, a voice from heaven says “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). The first two temptations in the wilderness begin with the word “if” which is meant to instill doubt in Jesus about his identity; questioning if God was really telling the truth. This has echoes of the Adam and Eve story in Genesis 3 where the serpent tries to instill doubt about whether God was telling the truth (see Genesis 3:4ff).

**SON OF GOD** – The phrase or title “Son of God” can mean many things in the Bible. It is used to refer to the Davidic Kings (see 2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 28:6; Psalm 2:7); Angelic Beings (see Genesis 6:2; Psalm 82:7); and Israel (see Exodus 4:22-23; Hosea 11:1; Deuteronomy 8:2-5). It was also a title used to refer to the Caesars, the rulers of Rome. Echoes of the words said at Jesus’ baptism in Matthew 3:17 and Jesus’ transfiguration in Matthew 17:5 where Moses and Elijah appear next to him.

**WAITED ON HIM** – διηκόνουν from διακονος which is where we get the words diaconate and deacons. There are echoes of the story of God providing manna in the wilderness (see Exodus 16; Numbers 11) and Elijah being fed by an angel in the desert (see 1 Kings 19:4-9)

**JESUS QUOTES SCRIPTURE** – Jesus quotes scripture in relation to each of the temptations. Each of the quotes referenced are from the time Israel wandered in the wilderness (which lets us know what is on Jesus’ mind; how we are supposed to see these temptations). Deuteronomy 8:3 describes how God provided for all of Israel’s needs during their forty years in the wilderness. Deuteronomy 6:16 is where Moses reminds the people how they tested God at Massah when after God gave them manna, they complained of thirst (see Exodus 17:1-7). Deuteronomy 6:13 “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”

The devil also quotes scripture in the second temptation (see Psalm 91:11-12).

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