

Jesus Prepares for the Ministry—Baptism and Temptation

Passages: Mt 3; 4:1–11; Mk 1:1–13; Lk 3:21–22; 4:1–14; Jn 1:26–34

Memory Verse

“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” (Luke 4:4)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
Understand the baptism of Jesus and how Jesus responded to the temptations of Satan by using God’s word.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is mighty.2. God is righteous.3. God is without sin, but He shares in our humanity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive baptism to wash away our sins.2. Be anointed by the Holy spirit.3. Be filled with God’s word to resist temptation.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Baptism of Jesus
- B. The Temptation of Jesus
 1. The Three Temptations
 2. Understanding Satan’s Schemes

Life Application

1. Repentance
2. The Works of the Holy Spirit
3. Victory over Temptation

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Store God’s word in our heart and trust in Him.

A. The Baptism of Jesus

In our lesson today, we will focus on two events: the baptism of Jesus and the temptation of Jesus.

Throughout his ministry, John the Baptist preached, convicted people of their sins, and performed baptisms. He taught that simply being a Jew was not enough to receive salvation. Let us read Matthew 3:5–6. “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.” It is clear that people came to be baptized by first confessing their sins. John’s baptism allowed people to confess their sins, repent, and reconcile with God. He was preparing everyone for the coming Messiah. It was then that Jesus, a sinless Man, came to John to be baptized.

The most detailed description of Jesus’ baptism is recorded in Matthew chapter 3. This recording provides a clear answer as to why Jesus insisted on receiving baptism. Let us read Matthew 3:13–17. What are some of the key words and phrases in this passage? (*Answers: to be baptized, fulfill all righteousness, came up, heavens were opened, Spirit of God, dove, beloved Son, well pleased*)

When Jesus came to John, He wanted John to baptize Him. But “John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’” (Mt 3:14). With these words, John indicated that Jesus did not need to repent or confess any sins. John clearly understood that this was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

“But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus, it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness’” (Mt 3:15). John had previously told Jesus that he was not fit to baptize Him, but rather was in need of repentance himself. Yet, Jesus still asked John to do so accordingly in order to fulfill all righteousness. There are three things we can learn from Jesus’s baptism.

1. Jesus dedicated His entire life to fulfilling God’s righteousness. “Righteousness” refers to meeting God’s requirements. God’s requirement was that those who come to serve Him must be washed and cleansed before service (Ex 29:4). The baptism of Jesus through John the Baptist was a fulfillment of the requirement of God’s law (*BSG: Matthew, 4:7.3:10*).¹
2. The baptism of Jesus served as an example for all believers, to show that we must be baptized to become the children of God and to receive the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:26–27; 4:6–7; Rom 8:16). Even though Jesus was sinless, He took the form of a sinner by being baptized (Rom 8:3). Likewise, we can be God’s children through faith in Christ (1 Jn 5:1) and by imitating the Lord Jesus, who submitted to God’s requirement that we be baptized for the remission of sins and to receive the promised Holy Spirit (*BSG: Matthew, 4:7.3:10*).
3. The baptism of Jesus served as a testimony that Jesus was mightier than John: Jesus would baptize with “the Holy Spirit and fire” (Mt 3:11). Here, we see a beautiful contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. John the Baptist acknowledged that he could only exhort them to repent and assure them of forgiveness upon repentance. He understood that he could not do more than baptism with water. Jesus, however, could baptize with the Holy Spirit—a baptism that can purify and cleanse the heart. As water washes off external dirt, fire burns away internal

¹ TJC Department of Literary Ministry, *Bible Study Guide: Matthew* (Malaysia: True Jesus Church, 2012), https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_guide/matthew/, 4:7.3:10.

impurities. The work of the Holy Spirit is so powerful and life changing, as proven by His descent on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2). He creates a fire within that changes our lives forever!

Upon being baptized by John, the “heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him” (Mt 3:16). The opening of the heavens is a reminder that as sinners, we need to reconcile with God. The dove is one of many symbols that the Bible uses to represent the Holy Spirit. Each symbol shows the character and work of the Holy Spirit (*BSG: Matthew*, 4: 7.4:11b).

- Water (Jn 7:37–39): The Holy Spirit will flow out of our hearts like living water.
- Fire (Acts 2:3): The Spirit cleanses our hearts and empowers us.
- Oil (Acts 10:38): As oil was used to anoint prophets, priests, and kings, we are likewise appointed as God’s priests and kings when we receive the Holy Spirit. Oil also represents the healing presence of the Holy Spirit.
- A dove (Mt 3:16): The Holy Spirit’s appearance as a dove teaches us that our Lord Jesus has brought peace to us through His death on the cross.

Despite being sinless, Jesus Christ insisted on baptism in order to fulfill all righteousness. Knowing this, we need to show our obedience to God by treasuring and following this important doctrine, which is declared to be “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38) and to fulfill righteousness. This is what the life of Jesus is about; He is our perfect model.

B. The Temptation of Jesus

1. The Three Temptations

Let us read Luke 4:1–13. There are a few questions we must first ask about this passage:

- a. Under what circumstances was Jesus tempted?
He was filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 1).
- b. What significance does this hold for us?
We must be watchful at all times, even when we feel close to God. Temptation may come suddenly after reaching a spiritual high.
- c. Why did Jesus have to endure such temptations?
It was God’s will that Jesus should go through the suffering of temptation so that He could sympathize with our weaknesses and become our merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb 2:14–18).

Let us examine the following chart to study how the Bible records Jesus’ responses to Satan’s temptations (*BSG: Matthew*, 5: 7.1)². [Note: Please include the charts as you teach the following section.]

Temptation	Satan’s Temptation	Jesus’ Response According to Scripture
1	“If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”	“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” (Deut 8:3)
2	“All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered	“Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God,

² BSG: Matthew, https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_guide/matthew/, 4:7.1.

	to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”	and Him only you shall serve.” (Deut 6:13)
3	“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”	“It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” (Deut 6:16)

Satan carefully worded each of his statements in an attempt to lure Jesus into falling. As children of God, we need to be aware of the traps that Satan lays down for us. Let us examine each trap and observe how Jesus carefully responded to each of them.

Temptation	Satan’s Trap	Jesus’ Response
1	By asking Jesus to turn stones into bread, Satan hoped to lure Jesus into obeying his commands and misusing His divine power for personal interests.	Jesus pointed out that obedience to God’s command for spiritual sustenance is more important than sustaining the body with food.
2	By asking Jesus to worship him, Satan hoped that Jesus would defy God’s commands and surrender His authority to Satan in exchange for the world.	Jesus rebuffed Satan’s attractive offer with God’s command that we are to worship and serve God alone.
3	By asking Jesus to throw Himself off the temple, Satan hoped that Jesus would prove His divinity by calling upon God’s protection.	Jesus rebuked Satan, saying, “You shall not tempt the LORD your God,” to show that it was wrong to deliberately test the truthfulness of God’s promise.

2. Understanding Satan’s Schemes

As children of God, we must not be ignorant. Satan has control over the riches, fame, and power of this world. If we pursue vainglory, it will also come with a price. What is the price? We may gain the world, but we will lose our soul when we compromise with and bow down to Satan by sacrificing our time, energy, and loyalty to God for earthly glory (Mt 16:26).

Satan misused Scripture against Jesus in order to make his case strong. Such application of God’s word for self-justification or gratification can lead us into sin. Being well versed in Scripture, Satan is able to fool those who are not watchful or those who have incorrect motives for following God’s word. He is a deceiver and a liar (Rev 12:9; Jn 8:44), and even disguises himself as an angel of light in order to take advantage of our ignorance or spiritual incaution (2 Cor 11:14–15). He leads people into false doctrines and sin in the same way the serpent deceived Eve (2 Cor 11:3).

On the other hand, Jesus’ quoting of God’s word was based entirely on the truth in God’s words and a sincere obedience to God’s authority. Therefore, as children of God, we should not misuse

God's word to justify our actions for selfish gain. Instead, we should diligently study and apply God's word with the intent to know God and obey His will.

Luke 4:13 warns us: "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time." Satan will return. Satan has not given up, despite his defeat. Likewise, we cannot afford to lose our vigilance even for a moment. There are times when we can claim victory over temptation, but we cannot rest at these times. Rather, we need to be prepared for further challenges by equipping ourselves with God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:10–18; 1 Pet 5:8–9).

Check for Understanding

- 1. Why did John refuse to baptize Jesus Christ at first?** John the Baptist had urged people to confess their sins and receive baptism, but Jesus Christ was the unblemished Lamb of God. John did not feel worthy to baptize Him, and instead felt that Jesus Christ should be the one baptizing him.
- 2. Why did Jesus insist on being baptized?** He knew that by receiving baptism, He was going to "fulfill all righteousness" by meeting God's requirements of washing before serving, in accordance with God's law. He also received baptism to show the contrast between water baptism and baptism of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, He received baptism to set an example for all believers to receive baptism in the same manner.
- 3. Why was it important for Jesus to experience temptation?** After experiencing temptation as we would, Jesus could now sympathize with our weaknesses and become our merciful and faithful High Priest.
- 4. How was Jesus able to battle against each of Satan's temptations?** He used the word of God in the correct manner to counter and rebuke Satan.
- 5. What is the price we must pay if we fall to Satan's temptations and pursue vainglory?** We may gain the world, but we will lose our soul.

Life Application

1. Repentance

The Greek word for "repentance" literally means "change of mind." Repentance consists of sincere sorrow over sin (2 Cor 7:10–11), confession (Ps 32:5), and change of action (Acts 26:20). Repentance is an expression of faith in God and obedience to His commands. According to the Lord Jesus, the kingdom of God will be taken from the unrepentant and given to those who will produce its fruit. It is those who obey and conform to God's righteousness that will be worthy of God's kingdom. Therefore, repentance is a necessary step in entering the kingdom of heaven (*BSG: Matthew, 4:7.2:8*).

2. The Works of the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit refers to the giving and receiving of the promised Holy Spirit, starting with the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 11:15–16). The Holy Spirit is also the spirit of judgment and spirit of burning that cleanses God's people (Isa 4:3–4). He is like fire, testing men's hearts (Mal 3:2), and He will "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (Jn 16:8–11).

3. Victory over Temptation

Satan lures us with three common temptations: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. These temptations all target major human weaknesses. They are:

- a. Self-centeredness;
- b. The desire to prove oneself or to satisfy one's lust; and

- c. Submission to Satan’s commands in exchange for physical or material gains.

We can only recognize and combat these temptations by filling our hearts and minds with the word of God and by praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 6:14–17, the only offensive weapon mentioned is the word of God. Studying and knowing the Bible well will allow us to wield the sword of the Spirit, leading us to victory.

With each of His temptations, Jesus taught us the ways we can destroy Satan’s schemes in our lives. These three ways are:

- a. Store God’s word in our hearts and know God’s will (Ps 119:11)
- b. Have a sincere heart that loves and worships God the highest King, and obey His commandments (Jn 14:15, 21, 30)
- c. Be faithful to God and do not love the world or the things that are in the world (1 Jn 2:15–17)

Memory Verse

“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.’” (Luke 4:4)

Context

This phrase originally appears in Deuteronomy 8:3, and Jesus paraphrases it in Luke 4:4.

Meanings

1. God feeds us with manna, the word of God, which also happens to be food from heaven. Manna is the only food that can meet our needs when all else looks hopeless, just as when God supplied manna for the Israelites in the wilderness.
2. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12).
3. Satan told Jesus to use His power to turn stone into bread, but Jesus found strength in the word of God. The word of God was His source of strength during His life, and it should be our source of strength in our lives today. It supplies us with all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3).
4. The Scripture equips us with every good work. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16–17).

Conclusion

After we have been baptized and have received the Holy Spirit, we must constantly treasure God’s word in our hearts. Commandments, statutes, ordinances, testimonies, and precepts—these are all words that the Scripture uses to refer to the written word of God. In order to keep from sinning and instead live a life that glorifies God, we must not only store His word, but also value His word. In this way, we can use His word against all kinds of temptations and conquer sin.

How is your faith this week? Is it strong or weak? Proverbs 22:18–19 states: “For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you; let them all be fixed upon your lips, so that your trust may be in the LORD; I have instructed you today, even you.” God says that He has given us His word so that it will be within us and that we may trust in Him. If we can store God’s word in our hearts, trust in Him, and not rely on our own insights, God will direct our paths (Prov 3:5–6).

Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does it mean to “live...by every word of God”?
God’s word meets our needs when all else looks hopeless. It is a weapon to wield against Satan, a source of strength during our lives, and it equips us with every good work.
2. What was the purpose of John’s baptism? Why was he unwilling to baptize Jesus at first?
John baptized with water for the repentance of sins. He knew Jesus was the Lamb of God, sinless and offering a much greater baptism than John’s—the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire.
3. Why did God want Jesus to experience temptation in the desert?
So that through His suffering, Jesus would be able to sympathize with our weaknesses and become our merciful and faithful High Priest.
4. Pick one temptation and explain how Satan hoped to lure or trap Jesus. How did Jesus respond?
 - *Stone to bread: Satan hoped to lure Jesus into obeying his commands and misuse God’s power. Jesus pointed out that obedience to God’s command for spiritual sustenance is more important than physical food.*
 - *Worship Satan: Satan wanted to Jesus to defy God’s command and surrender His authority in exchange for the world. Jesus rebuffed Satan’s attractive offer with God’s command that we are to serve Him alone.*
 - *Throw Himself off the temple: Satan wanted Jesus to prove His divinity by calling on God’s protection and deliberately testing God’s promise. Jesus rebuked Satan, saying, “You shall not tempt the LORD your God,” knowing that it was wrong to test the truthfulness of God’s promises.*
5. What are the three major human weaknesses that Satan uses to tempt us? How do we defend ourselves?
Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.
OR
Self-centeredness, the desire to prove oneself or satisfy one’s lust, and submission to Satan’s commands in exchange for physical or material gains.

We defend ourselves by first recognizing these temptations, then filling our hearts and minds with the word of God and praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
6. Name a temptation you have faced or face at home and write which human weakness Satan is using based on the above question. How can you fight this temptation?
Personal answers.