



Lesson 2

Chapter 4: The Temptation of Jesus, and the Choosing of the Twelve Disciples

Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness (4:1-11)

The Spirit of God was given to Jesus at his baptism and immediately he went into the desert (the wilderness). He was there for forty days and forty nights; during this time he was among the wild beasts and watched over by the angels. In the desert he was tempted to use the power that God had given him in three different ways.

The Temptations of Jesus

- Verse 4: to change stones into bread when he was hungry. Jesus remembered Deuteronomy 8:3 and resisted (would not give in to) this temptation because he knew it was not right to do miracles to help himself.
- Verses 5-7: to throw himself from the top of the temple in Jerusalem and allow the angels to protect him from injury. Jesus knew from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:16) that he should not put God to the test.
- Verses 8-10: to make himself king. The devil took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said that they would belong to Jesus if he worshipped him. We know that the whole world cannot be seen from any mountain.

Each temptation Jesus faced was an opportunity for him to serve his own desires. Jesus' example is an important one for us. To overcome each temptation Jesus turned to his Bible and reminded himself that, "*It is written...*". We too can find support and help in overcoming temptation by reading what is written in the Bible. All of our temptations are described as one of three problems that we face in our lives. Notice that these all come from within us.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1John 2:16)

Was Jesus tempted by an Evil Supernatural Being?

It reads as if someone was present when we read in Matthew 4:9:

"And he (the devil) said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.'"

The world belongs to the Lord God and has never been in the possession of a wicked being. No one other than God could give Jesus the kingdoms of the world. Jesus himself, as God's Son, was promised them but first he had to conquer temptation in his life.

Like the other temptations this one happened in the mind of Jesus. If Jesus gave in to it he would be worshipping himself by taking the world from God's control and making himself the king. He knew this was wrong, and the words of Deuteronomy 6:13 replaced the thought that had been unhelpful, and that would have led to sin – if he had let it develop in his mind.

Jesus was not tempted by any person or power. There was no need for any other person to question Jesus – the temptation was in his own mind. The devil is the Bible's way of describing human thoughts which are against God's will. Jesus knew that his Father had not given him the power of the Holy Spirit to satisfy his own needs and desires, or to give him instant publicity, or to rule as king of the world at that time. The Holy Spirit had been given to him to be used in God's service.

The word 'devil' is used throughout this passage apart from verse 10, where 'satan' is used. The word 'satan' means 'adversary' or 'opposer'. Jesus recognised that his thoughts were opposing the will of God. Our own thoughts often do not help us to serve God. We have to realise they are unhelpful and not let them act as a satan to us by stopping us from following God's way.





We often have wrong desires in our minds and we continue to think about them and then do wrong. Jesus could have done wrong, but he did not. He never sinned. When temptation came into his mind he remembered God's Word as recorded in the Old Testament. In this way he challenged tempting thoughts and did not let them develop in his mind. He removed the temptation from his thinking before it had time to grow into a sinful thought or action. He did this with every temptation throughout his life.

It is part of our nature to want to please ourselves and so unhelpful desires come into our minds. This is not sin. However if we allow these desires to grow and turn into unhelpful action or speech, then we sin. We have to make every effort to overcome our desires that will lead to sin. If we have a love of God's Word and a determination to do what is right this will help us.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE DEVIL

The word 'devil' in this chapter is translated from the Greek word 'diabolos'. It occurs 38 times in the New Testament and 35 times it is translated 'devil'. It means 'false accuser' or 'slanderer'. For example, Jesus describes the disciple Judas Iscariot as a 'devil'.

"Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil. He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him." (John 6:70-71)

Jesus, the Light of the World (4:12-17)

When John the Baptist was put into prison by Herod (read Luke 3:19-20), Jesus went from Nazareth to Capernaum on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. The prophet Isaiah prophesied over 700 hundred years earlier that Jesus would bring light to the land of Zebulun and Naphthali. The people were in spiritual darkness and Jesus was sent to call them with the words, "*Repent for the kingdom of God is as hand*".

The Twelve Disciples are Chosen (4: 18-25)

It was by the lake of Galilee that Jesus called his first disciples from among the local fishermen. We know from John chapter 1 that Andrew and Peter had already met Jesus, and now the call came for them to join him full-time in his great work. They acted immediately, leaving behind their old lives (Mark 1:16-18). This is a lesson for us not to delay or find other things to do when we should be serving the Lord.

Jesus chose twelve disciples who were later called Apostles. Their names are given us in Matthew 10:2-4. They came from a variety of different backgrounds; Matthew was a tax gather, Peter, James, John and Andrew were fisherman.

Jesus loved them even though sometimes they did not understand his teaching or the reason for the miracles he did.

The years they spent with Jesus prepared them for the time when he would leave them and ascend to his Father in heaven. They would then be leaders in the church, responsible for calling people to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and teaching them about his death, resurrection and salvation in his name. The time they spent with him during his ministry prepared them for this role.

Jesus did not choose men like the scribes and Pharisees who thought they knew all the answers, but he chose people who were humble and wanted to learn (Matthew 11:25). Also read 1 Corinthians 1:26-27.

The Apostle Paul tells us that most disciples are like this, ordinary men and women whose lives are changed by their contact with the Bible and its message of salvation through Jesus.

"For consider your calling, brothers; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong." (1 Corinthians 1:26-27)





Chapter 5: The Teaching of Jesus

The Sermon on the Mount

Chapters 5-7 of Matthew's Gospel are often called 'The Sermon on the Mount'. Many people heard about Jesus and came from the regions of Galilee, Judea and Syria and beyond the River Jordan. They had heard that he was a miraculous healer and they came to him wanting to be healed of their diseases.

Jesus went up a mountain to get away from the crowds so that he could talk to his followers. In the Gospels they are called 'disciples' (Matt. 5:1) which means 'learner' or 'pupil'. As he spoke to them Jesus taught them how true disciples should behave in their lives so that they would be accepted by the Lord God.

At the beginning of his sermon, Jesus gave nine blessings (sometimes called 'Beatitudes'). These are blessings that will come to all those disciples who learn from both his words and his example.

Matthew 5:3-12

- Verse 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
- Verse 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted
- Verse 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- Verse 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
- Verse 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Verse 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Verse 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- Verse 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Verse 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Christian Behaviour and its Rewards (5:2-16)

The poor in spirit (verse 3) are those who do not rely on their own abilities but realise they need God's help.

The meek are humble people – they do not think themselves important, they see the events of their lives as overruled by God. God's blessing for the poor in spirit is the "Kingdom of Heaven" but verse 5 says the meek will inherit the earth. However, this does not mean that the meek and the poor in spirit have different rewards.

In verse 10 we read that Jesus taught his disciples to pray for God's kingdom to come on earth. Jesus also calls this kingdom, "the Kingdom of Heaven" because, when Jesus returns, the earth will be ruled by God's will as perfectly as He controls the heavens now. Therefore, the "Kingdom of God" is sometimes called the "Kingdom of Heaven".

None of us, however righteous, will go to heaven – the Lord Jesus will return to this earth to be with his faithful disciples and to fill the earth with God's glory.

Whilst Jesus is God's only begotten Son, baptized believers can enjoy the immense privilege of being called sons of God, but they must seek to live in peace and harmony with others. This will involve showing mercy to others as well as being loyal in their service to God, not trying to please themselves more than Him. They need to be "pure in heart".

In verses 13-16 Jesus says his followers are like the salt of the earth. Salt is used to cleanse, preserve or purify. Paul tells us that our speech should be seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6). The Word of God in the life of the believer should be like the cleansing action of salt. If disciples lose their enthusiasm to show by their lives that they are Jesus' followers then they are like salt that has lost its cleansing properties. The Word of God has lost its impact in their lives.





Verses 14-16 show us that those who humbly try to serve God to the best of their abilities will be very different from people of the world. They will be as lights in an evil world full of darkness. Their godly behaviour will encourage others.

Jesus and the Law that God gave to Moses (5:17- 48)

From verses 17-19, Jesus shows us that he did not come to destroy the Law given by God to Moses. His life of obedience and work was to fulfil the Law and to show its full meaning. Jesus never broke any of God's Law; he was obedient in every way. The Law God gave Moses pointed forward to the perfect life of Jesus and to his sacrifice on the cross.

In contrast, Jesus criticised the Pharisees because they were proud and were more concerned with the outward details of the Law. Sadly they missed the more important underlying principles like mercy. It is the spirit of God's Law that really matters. For example "*You shall not murder*" (Exodus 20:13) is one of the 10 commandments God gave Moses as part of His Law. Not only should we not commit murder, we should also control our anger that could lead to violence and murder. Also verses 21-24 tell us that God will not accept our worship unless we make peace with the one with whom we are angry. 1 John 3:15 says:

"Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

Concerning the commandment not to commit adultery, Jesus gives us a warning that just having adulterous thoughts is wrong.

Verses 31-32 provide Jesus' teaching on divorce. There are no grounds for divorce apart from unfaithfulness. In many countries of the world today, divorce is easy and allowed for many reasons. This is quite different from the teaching of Jesus. Followers of Christ should show love and forgiveness, qualities which will help to overcome many of the problems in marriage.

We are told not to swear (use an oath). When we say we will do something we should try our best to do what we have said. Our 'yes' should mean 'yes' and 'no' mean 'no'. We should not swear by a higher authority to emphasise our decisions.

Perhaps one of the most difficult challenges for a Christian is to accept people treating us wrongly, and to show love to those who hate and despise us. In verse 43 Jesus says,

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.'"

However, the Law that God gave Moses said nothing about hating enemies. Sadly people believed that it was acceptable to hate their enemies as long as they loved their neighbours.

Jesus preached that we should love our enemies. When he was treated unjustly he did not fight back with angry words to defend himself. Instead he committed himself to the Lord God whilst praying for forgiveness for those who brutally treated him and crucified him. In this the Lord Jesus was showing true meekness.

If we want to follow the Lord Jesus then we will try to live peaceably with all, even to the extent of loving those who want to hurt or harm us. This is not easy, but it is what we should try to do.

Hell (5:22, 29, 30)

What did Jesus mean when he talked about being thrown into hell?

"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell." (Matthew 5:29).

This does not mean a place of punishment somewhere under the earth where the souls of bad people burn forever after they die.



The word for 'hell' used here is the word 'Gehenna'. It is another name for a place just outside the city of Jerusalem called 'The Valley of Hinnom'. This is where rubbish was burned in Bible times and sometimes the bodies of executed criminals were thrown there to be destroyed by fire.

Jesus was using picture language to say that if a person does not control his desires he will be completely destroyed, just as things thrown into Gehenna were destroyed by fire. This complete destruction of the wicked will happen when Jesus returns to the earth. They will be rejected by the Lord and will have no place in God's future kingdom on earth. They will die and remain in the grave forever, completely destroyed by everlasting death (see Lesson 23 of the 40 Lesson course).

Aim High! (5:48)

The chapter concludes with *"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"*. Only God is truly perfect. We fail to be perfect because of our human nature. The word translated 'perfect' also means 'wholehearted', so this verse shows that we should aim to be single-minded in the battle to overcome sin in our lives.

The Apostle Paul, when writing to believers in Rome about how they should behave, based this message on the teaching of the Lord Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.
Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.
Never be conceited.
Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.
If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written,
"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:14-21)

Chapter 6: Christian Behaviour

How to Pray (6:1-14)

In the time of Jesus many of the Jews practised their religion in a very public way so that others would think they were good people. God does not want hypocrites. The Greek word for 'hypocrite' means 'actor'. An actor in a play pretends to be someone he is not. In the time of Jesus many of the religious leaders put on an outward show of being righteous and doing good to impress others, this was not pleasing to God.

We must remember that God looks on our hearts and knows our thoughts and motives. Jesus told his disciples not to behave like the Jews. The Lord God knows all we do and say – and the thinking behind it! He is able to hear our prayers even when they are said in secret, and will add His blessing.

The disciples asked Jesus; 'How should we pray?' Jesus' answer is given in the prayer in verses 9-13, often called the Lord's Prayer, it is simple and clear.

The followers of Jesus should:

- first recognise God's greatness;
- pray for Jesus to return to set up God's kingdom on the earth. When this happens, God's purpose will be done on earth as it is now done in Heaven.
- then ask God for daily food, seek forgiveness of our sins and protection from temptation and evil.



Although it can be helpful to say this prayer ourselves using the same words, it is good to use the prayer as a pattern by following the same order of thoughts in our own prayers. It is important to remember God's great power and praise Him in our prayers. We should not provide God with a list of things we want Him to do for us! We must forgive others who may upset us, if we want God to forgive us our sins.

It is helpful to pause when saying "*and forgive us our debts (or sins)*" and recall the wrong things that we have done that day and the wrong thoughts that have come into our minds. Believers will then want to plead with God for His forgiveness and for help that they do not do the same thing again. Note that this is a daily prayer and so believers will regularly include these thoughts.

Which Master do we serve? (6:19-24)

Some people think that life will be easy if they have money, and they try (sometimes dishonestly) to get as much as they can. We should not trust in money but in God. He should be our Master. Jesus reassures us of God's care and concern for those who trust Him. Even when life is difficult the message is, "Do not worry: God looks after those who trust in Him". God requires us to be completely devoted to Him, above all other loyalties.

Why Christians Should Not Worry (6:25-34)

- Being anxious achieves nothing useful (6:25-29).
- God knows what we need in life and what is best for our spiritual development (6:30-33). If God cares for the birds he can care for us but we must be prepared to work for our food and clothing.
- Worrying can result from a lack of faith. When we worry we show others that we think we have to solve our own problems without consulting God and trusting Him. Worrying does not help solve our problems. The lilies grow without labour or toil yet they display the great beauty of the God's creative hand. The toils of this life will not bring us closer to God. We should witness to the beauty of God's plan for mankind by living a quiet, peaceable Christian life and feed on the Word of God.
- God wants believers to come to Him in prayer:
"Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:5-7)
- To secure God's blessings we need to seek His kingdom above all else, and to be righteous like Him:
"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:33)
- The Lord Jesus gave us a practical lesson in how to cope with stress. When he was facing crucifixion, with all its pain and shame, he thought about others (Luke 23:27-31; John 19:26.27) and he sought to do the will of His Father.

Name	
Address	
Reference Number	
Tutor	

Answers to most questions can be found in the lessons or Bible passages given. Please write your answers on this question paper and return them in the envelope provided:

Questions on Chapter 4

- 1 What is the Holy Spirit?

- 2a Where was Jesus when the temptations took place?

- 2b Where was the temple?

- 2c Did Jesus actually go to the temple?

- 2d Is there a high mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen?

- 2e Is the devil or satan a supernatural being? (Lessons 29 and 30 of the 40 Lesson course may help you.)

- 3 Read James 1:13-15. What happens when a person is tempted?

Questions on Chapter 5

Look at verses 3-12:

- 1 What sort of people will receive mercy from God?

- 2 Who will be called "sons of God"?
- 3 What do you think is meant by "*pure in heart*"?
- 4 Will the wicked burn for ever in hell fire?
- 5 What should you do if someone insults you?
- 6 What is the teaching of Jesus on divorce?

Questions on Chapter 6

- 1 What is the reward of the hypocrites (verses 1-4)
- 2 What is the reward of the righteous?
- 3 How often do you think believers should pray?
- 4 In your own words say what we should pray about.
- 5 Where will God's Kingdom be?
- 6 If believers want God to forgive them then what must they do?
- 7 What is the message of verses 19-21?