

# Sunday, March 1, 2020

## First Sunday in Lent

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### Matthew 4:1-11

#### Jesus is Tested in the Wilderness

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> “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.’<sup>c</sup>”

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

<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> “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

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

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

#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>a</sup> Mt 4:1 Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.

<sup>b</sup> Mt 4:4 Deut. 8:3

<sup>c</sup> Mt 4:6 Psalm 91:11,12

<sup>d</sup> Mt 4:7 Deut. 6:16

<sup>e</sup> M 4:10 Deut. 6:13



#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why would the Spirit lead Jesus to be tempted? How does this fit with Jesus teaching the disciples to pray “lead me not into temptation?”
2. Describe Jesus’ physical and mental state when his temptation occurred. Why is this important?
3. Why might Jesus fast 40 days and 40 nights? How can he fast for so long? What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ example here?
4. Who is the tempter?
5. What do you think is Satan’s chief goal in coming to tempt Jesus? What is the underlying theme of all of the temptations?
6. What does this passage teach us about understanding Scripture?
7. What is the difference between the ways Jesus uses the Scripture and the way Satan uses it?
8. In light of this passage what should we do when we are tempted?
9. Who was the first person in scripture who faced similar temptations?
10. 10. 1 John 2:16 (NIV) says, “*For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world.*” How does this match up with the temptations Jesus faced in today’s passage?
11. Do you think Jesus continued from this time and place “temptation free?”

# Sunday, March 8, 2020

## Second Sunday in Lent

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### John 3: 1-17

#### Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit<sup>b</sup> gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You<sup>c</sup> must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup> “You are Israel’s teacher,” Jesus said, “and do you not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup> I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man.<sup>e</sup> <sup>14</sup> Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,<sup>f</sup> <sup>15</sup> that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”<sup>g</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- John 3: 3 The Greek for again also means from above; also in verse 7.
  - John 3: 6 Or but spirit
  - John 3: 7 The Greek is plural.
  - John 3: 8 The Greek for Spirit is the same as that for wind .
  - John 3:13 Some manuscripts Man, who is in heaven
  - John 3:14 The Greek for lifted up also means exalted .
  - John 3:15 Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 21.
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#### QUESTIONS:

- Discuss Nicodemus the man. Discuss Nicodemus in this conversation.
- In verse 2, why does Nicodemus begin the conversation this way?
- Why does Jesus not reply to Nicodemus’ opening line the way we would expect?
- What analogies does Jesus use in this conversation?
- Why does Nicodemus sound obtuse in verse 4?
- What contrasts are made about physical things vs. spiritual matters? What are the earthly things that Jesus has spoken about to Nicodemus?
- Why is the plural “we” used in verse 11?

