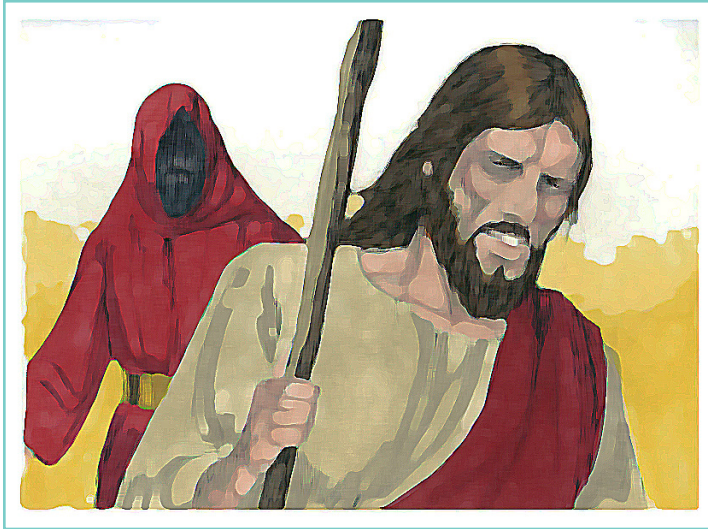


Lesson 1: Resistance



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The Gospel of Matthew is the first book of the New Testament.

The New Testament: Beginnings

In Scripture, we hear little of Jesus' childhood. His public ministry began around the age of 30, when he was baptized by John in the River Jordan. After this, he was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Biblical Background

In Jesus' baptism, the voice of the Father from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Not long after, when the devil came and tried to tempt Jesus, he took aim at that very promise. The devil said, "If you are the Son of God ..."

The devil has been calling God's Word into question since the very beginning. In Genesis 3, the serpent asked Eve, "Did God really say ...?" Clearly, the devil knows God's Word; he just does not trust and believe in it. He does not want us to believe it either.

Introduction

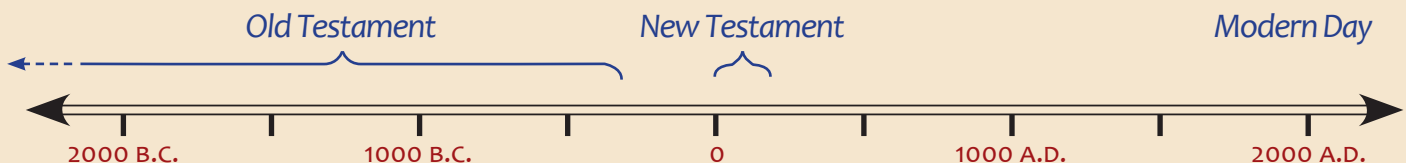
After Jesus was baptized, the Spirit led him out into the wilderness where he fasted, going without food for 40 days and 40 nights. There the devil came to tempt him to prove he was the Son of God. But Jesus resisted the devil's power.

Read: Matthew 4:1-11

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

The Old Testament is three times the size of the New Testament. More than 1,500 years of history are covered by the Old Testament; the New Testament covers less than 100 years. On the timeline below, use the letter "J" to mark when Jesus lived on earth. Then put your own initials on the line at the time you live. About how many years are between these two spots on the timeline? _____



Discuss: Matthew 4:1-11

1. Just prior to today's story, Jesus' identity was established from on high by the word of the Father at his baptism. Read Matthew 3:16-17. What does the Father say about Jesus?
2. According to Scripture, it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus out into the desert to be tempted. Why would the Spirit do that? Has God ever led you through difficult circumstances? In times like that, why is it important to remember God is with us?
3. What is the first thing the devil called into question (v. 3a)? Why did Jesus not feel the need to *prove* his identity? What gave him confidence and strength?
4. On what basis do *we* believe in Jesus, even if we can't "prove" this truth to others?
5. What were the three temptations that the devil set before Jesus?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
6. What did Jesus use to respond to the devil? How can we use this same resource in times of testing?
7. In what ways does the devil attack us in our lives as followers of Jesus? What are some of the doubts and fears that the devil throws at us? How can we rely on God's strength rather than our own?
8. Read Hebrews 2:14 - 3:2a. The Bible says that Jesus experienced the same kinds of struggles and temptation that all people do. Why is this a reassuring thing to know? How does that "help those who are being tempted"?

Where in the World?

The map at right is a close-up view of the land where Jesus lived, what we often call the Holy Land. On this map you can find a smaller sea in the north, called the Sea of Galilee. A larger sea in the south is called the Dead Sea. The river that connects the two seas is the Jordan River, which flows from north to south.

- a. Label the city marked with the star ★ as "Jerusalem."
- b. Label the spot on the River marked with a water drop 💧 as "Baptism" — where Jesus was baptized by John.

According to the Bible, the place where John had been baptizing was out in the wilderness. This is the same desert region where today's story takes place.

