

Recap of last week's study:

Garden to Wilderness to Garden

Jer 4: 23-26; Hos 2: 14-20; Isa 51:3

The prophets use wilderness and garden imagery to describe Israel's journey.

- They warn that rejecting God leads to desolation, but God ultimately promises restoration and a return to the abundance of Eden.

Jesus' Wilderness Tests (or Traps)

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus' wilderness testing experience mirrors Israel's, but unlike his ancestors, Jesus resists evil and stays true to his Father's will.

- Jesus shows what unbreakable partnership with God looks like in real human life, even through intense hunger and suffering.

Introduction

After passing through the waters of baptism in the Jordan River, Jesus follows the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days and nights.

- This mirrors the story of ancient Israel, who once passed through the Red Sea's waters before following God into the wilderness for 40 years.
- Surrounded by rocks and dust, Jesus is "tested" (or "tempted,") by Satan.
- When God tested the Israelites during their time in the wilderness, he was working for their good, helping them develop strong, life-giving trust in him.
- But Satan works to harm Jesus with three traps disguised as tests, each aimed at luring Jesus to doubt and turn away from the Father.

Matt 4:1-4 NASB

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” ⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written: ‘Man SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’”

Consider – The Body (our identity)

First, he tempts Jesus to miraculously transform rocks into bread.

- By this point, Jesus hasn't eaten for 40 days, so he's ravenously hungry.
- But following Satan's instruction would mean trusting himself for food, rather than the Father, repeating the same distrust behind Israel's grumbling in the wilderness (Ex. 16:1-3).
- Jesus refuses the temptation by relying on the Father alone.

Matt 4:5-7 NASB

⁵ Then the devil *took Him along into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and he *said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written:

‘He WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS ORDERS CONCERNING YOU’; and

‘ON THEIR HANDS THEY WILL LIFT YOU UP, SO THAT YOU DO NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written: ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”

Consider – The Mind

Then, the Satan manipulates the meaning of a biblical psalm (Ps. 91:11-12) to persuade Jesus to jump off a high place and see if the Father will save him.

- But doing so would repeat the Israelites' prior mistake of testing God in the wilderness (Ex. 17:2; Num. 14:20-23).
- Jesus resists again, refusing to “test” His Father's faithfulness (Vs. 7).

Matt 4:8-11 NASB

⁸ Again, the devil *took Him along to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus *said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: ‘You SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” ¹¹ Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and began to serve Him.

Consider – The Soul

Finally, the Satan offers Jesus a shortcut to kingship in exchange for his allegiance.

- But Jesus rejects the offer because he serves only God the Father—in contrast to his ancestors, who worshiped a golden calf idol in the wilderness (Ex. 32:1-6).

The perfect example

In each test, Jesus listens to God's voice speaking through the Scriptures, countering Satan by quoting words from Moses about faithfulness to God alone (Deut. 6:13, 16; 8:3).

- So, Jesus passes the tests, avoiding Satan's traps and showing himself to be a true Israelite—one who listens to God and follows his instruction.

The role of scripture in Resisting Temptation

- One of the most powerful aspects of Jesus' response to temptation is His use of Scripture.
- Each time Satan presented a tempting offer, Jesus responded with words from the Bible.
- He didn't rely on clever arguments or personal willpower; instead, He turned to God's Word as His foundation.
- This always encourages me to see Scripture not just as something to read, but as a true source of strength in the face of life's challenges.

What Jesus' Wilderness Experience Teaches Us About Temptation

- Jesus' time in the wilderness is packed with lessons that we can apply in our own lives.
- While His experience was unique, the challenges He faced resonate with the temptations we encounter every day. (body, mind, and soul)
- Through His example, Jesus teaches us that temptation isn't something to be ashamed of—it's a part of our human experience.
- What matters is how we respond to it.

Reflect

- In what ways does Jesus' testing in the wilderness resemble or differ from the Israelites' earlier experience in the wilderness?
- Has God ever used an experience to draw you closer to Him?

Relevant Scripture

- Gen 4:6-7

Next week preview:

Jesus Providing Bread in the Wilderness

Mark 6:30-44; John 6:48-51

Jesus' miraculous sign of feeding a massive Israelite crowd in the wilderness recalls God's provision of manna after the exodus, revealing that Jesus is the one who supplies abundantly for all human needs.

Source:

[The Wilderness in the Bible | Jesus' Wilderness Tests \(or Traps\)](#)