

Quarter 1 Lesson 3
Sixth Grade
Jesus' Baptism and Temptations
Stories Included: A. Baptism of Jesus
B. Temptations of Jesus

Memory Verse: Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"
Mt. 4:10 (ESV)

Background

You will remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a town about six miles south of Jerusalem, toward the end of Herod the Great's reign as king. Early in Jesus' life, Mary and Joseph returned from their stay in Egypt to live in their hometown of Nazareth, a town in Galilee.

Jesus was, of course, His mother's firstborn child. He had four brothers (James, Joses, Judas, and Simon) and two or more sisters. (Mark 6:3) We learned in our last lesson that Joseph is not mentioned in the scriptures after the visit of Jesus to the temple when He was twelve. Joseph, who was a carpenter by trade, apparently died sometime after this event and before Jesus began His public ministry--a span of eighteen years.

Historically, this story takes place during the time when the **Roman Empire** was the ruling government over large areas of the then-known world. **Pilate** was governor of Judea; **Herod** (son of Herod the Great) was tetrarch of Galilee; Philip (Herod's brother) was tetrarch of a neighboring region; and **Annas** and **Caiaphas** were high priests--important names to remember for our future studies.

John, commonly known as "John the Baptist," was the person selected by God to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. Through God, John introduced the people to the ordinance of baptism and taught them that they needed to repent of the sin in their lives.

As these next events unfold, Jesus is around thirty years old.

A. The Baptism of Jesus
Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:19-28



John lived in the wilderness of Judea.



His clothes were made of camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.



The word of God came to John, and he began to preach in all the region around the Jordan River. He told the people to repent of the sin in their lives and to be baptized because the kingdom of heaven was coming soon.



People from all the country around Judea and Jerusalem came to listen to John as he told them how they should live. Many confessed their sins and were baptized in the Jordan.



News spread of John's preaching and the large crowds who went to listen to him. The Jews sent priests and Levites to find out his identity. "Who are you?" they asked. "The Christ? Elijah? The Prophet?"



No," John replied. *"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."* (Jn. 1:23)
(Here we see another prophecy fulfilled.)



John explained that the one for whom he had come to prepare the way was already in their midst but was, at that time, unknown to them. He said that One would be coming after him *"the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."* (Jn. 1:27) It was a servant's duty to tie and untie his master's shoes. John is saying that he was not even worthy to perform that lowly task. John is here proclaiming the superiority of Jesus.



"13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'" (Matt. 3)



"15 But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness...'" (Matt. 3)

(John thought it should be just the opposite. He thought that Jesus should baptize him. However, Jesus explained that He had to be baptized by John to fulfill God's will.)



...Then he consented." (Matt. 3)



"16 And when *Jesus was baptized*, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the **heavens were opened to Him, and he saw the **Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him**; (Matt. 3)**

(Luke 3:21 adds that Jesus **was praying** when the heavens opened and that the Holy Spirit descended on Him **in bodily form**, like a dove.)



"17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, '*This is my beloved Son, with whom I as well pleased.*'" (Matt. 3)

(Can you imagine hearing the voice of God?)

As stated earlier, eighteen years had passed since Jesus had visited in the temple when He was twelve years old. At the time of His baptism, He was around thirty. He had probably lived what would be considered a normal life until He was ready to begin His ministry--until He was ready to fulfill His purpose in coming to earth.

As we continue, we will see that Jesus faced some very trying days just before He entered into public teaching.

Quarter 1 Lesson 3
B. The Temptations of Jesus
Matthew 4:1-11



"1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."

(Jesus being tempted by the devil was for a divine purpose. The scriptures later tell us that He is "...one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15a)



"2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry."

(Can you imagine just how hungry He must have been? Sometimes we think we will "starve" if we don't get a snack between meals!)



*"3 And the tempter came and said to Him, **"If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."***
(Did the devil really not know who Jesus was? Of course, he did! He was trying to catch Jesus at a weak moment--just like he does to us.)



*"4 But He answered, **"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"***



*"5 Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to Him, "**If** You are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You,' and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"*

(Jesus could have reasoned that if He jumped without injury, it would prove how much He trusted God. But He didn't jump, because Jesus had nothing to prove to the devil!)



*"7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, '**You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.**'"*



*"8 Again, the devil took Him 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 I will give You, **if** you will fall down and worship me.'"*
(What nerve! The devil wanted Jesus not only to join him but to worship him!)



*"10 Then Jesus said to him, **"Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'"***



"11 Then the **devil left** Him, and behold, **angels came and were ministering to Him.**"

(This was not the last time the devil tempted Jesus. Luke 4:13 tells us that *"...when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."* This means Satan didn't give up. He tried again and again, but Jesus never listened to him.)

Being tempted is not a sin. As we have learned, even Jesus was tempted. Sin comes when we yield to the temptation--when we listen to the devil instead of listening to God. If you will notice, the devil most often tempts us in areas where we are weak, because that is where he stands a better chance of "getting us." He uses tricks by "telling" us, "Just this one time" or "No one will find out."-- and one of his favorites, "Everybody else is doing it." The list goes on and on. Occasionally, he will also tempt us in areas where we are strong as he tries to break down our defenses little by little. He never gives up, nor should we give up in our fight against him! Ephesians 6:11 says, *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."* We need to keep our "armor" well-maintained and free of any holes or dents! How is your "armor" today? Are you saying "No!" to the devil and "Yes, Lord!" to God?

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