


## ***SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS***

### **The Messiah     Matthew 3:1—4:17**

*“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”* Matthew 3:17b

#### **Day 1: Read Matthew 3:1-12.**

1. What is John the Baptist’s message in a nutshell? (v. 2)
2. What does “repent” mean? (Ez. 18:23; Acts 3:19) What does John mean when he says, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (v. 8)? (Mt. 12:33-37; Acts 26:20; Eph. 5:8-11)
3. John’s preaching is full of fire and brimstone language. How is the warning in his fiery message actually evidence of God’s grace? (Ez. 33:11) \* (Jonah 1:1, 2; 3:4, 5, 10; 4:10, 11)
4. In which areas of your life have you seen good fruit recently? Where would you like to see more? Pray, thanking God for growth you have seen and asking him for more growth where you need it.

#### **Day 2: Read Matthew 3:13-17.**

5. The list of events recorded in all of the Gospels is short—not even Jesus’ birth is found in all four. Yet Jesus’ baptism is narrated or alluded to in every one. Why do you think this event is so important? (1 Sam. 16:1, 12, 13; Jn. 1:29-34)
6. The writer Leon Morris notes, “Jesus might well have been up there in front standing with John and calling on sinners to repent.” What is the significance of his placing himself instead among the sinners flocking to John for baptism? (Is. 53:4, 12; Heb. 2:14-17)
7. The Holy Spirit’s descent upon Jesus and the Father’s voice from heaven evoke Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah (the Anointed One). Look at the following verses: Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1.
  - a. What echoes of these prophecies do you hear in verses 16 and 17 of today’s passage?
  - b. What do we learn about Jesus and the mission for which he was sent from the following prophecies? (Is. 52:13; 53:4-6, 9-12)

#### **Day 3: Read Matthew 4:1-11.**

8. Who prompts Jesus to go out into the desert? (v. 1) For what purpose?

\* The  symbol identifies verses for further study.

9. Who is doing the tempting? (vv. 1, 10) What do we know about him? (Gen. 3:1-7; Jn. 8:44)
10. The first two temptations are subtle. What do you think is the problem with the things Satan is asking Jesus to do?
11. The price Satan names in the third temptation—bowing before him in worship—is blatantly evil. But what is wrong even with his offer of “all the kingdoms of the world” (v. 8), to be handed to Jesus on a silver platter? (After all, God says to his son in Ps 2:8: “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”) What is Satan deliberately leaving out? (Consider Phil 2:5-11; Rev. 5:9, 12. 📖\* Recall also the Is. 53 passage from Day 2.)

**Day 4: Read Matthew 4:1-11.**

12. The devil’s desire in these temptations is to scuttle the mission of salvation for which Jesus has just been anointed. Commentator Tom Wright makes the following point about our own temptations: “The temptations we all face, day by day and at critical moments of decision and vocation in our lives...have exactly the same point. They are not simply trying to entice us into committing this or that sin. They are trying to distract us, to turn us aside, from the path of servanthood....”

What can we learn from Jesus in today’s passage and elsewhere about how to handle such temptations and struggles? (vv. 4, 7, 10; 16:23; 26:38-44) 📖\* (Jas. 4:7)

13. In response to Satan’s temptations, Jesus quotes passages in Deuteronomy that refer to the Israelites’ wanderings in the desert after their exodus from Egypt. Jesus prevails where the Israelites stumbled. (Deut. 1:26, 27) What encouragement does his victory give us? (Heb. 4:15, 16)

14. What areas of temptation are you currently facing?

What resources has God given you? (1 Cor. 10:13; Heb 2. 17, 18; 1 Jn. 2:1)

How can you apply these verses to these situations right now?

**Day 5: Read Matthew 4:12-17.**

15. A period of perhaps a year has passed between Jesus’ temptation and the events narrated in this passage. The phrase “From that time on” (v. 17) indicates a turning point, the start of something new. What is Jesus’ first message as he begins his public ministry? Why does this sound familiar? (3:1, 2)
16. Matthew wrote for a Jewish audience. But his inclusion of the “Galilee of the Gentiles” prophecy from Isaiah (vv. 15, 16) hints at something unexpected in the Messiah’s mission. This starts right away with the genealogy in chapter 1 and runs through the book. Spot the theme in the following snippets of Matthew’s Gospel: 28:19; 2:1, 2; 4:24; 8: 28 📖\* (12:18-21; 15:21-28)