

SESSION 16

JESUS STARTED HIS WORK

Matthew wrote in God's story about something that happened to Jesus.



MATTHEW 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ² For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³ During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

⁴ But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do 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, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶ and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"

⁷ Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'"

⁸ Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰ "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say,

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‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’”

¹¹ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

God’s Spirit was guiding Jesus. After Jesus was baptized, God’s Spirit led him to go by himself into the wilderness. Jesus stayed in the wilderness for 40 days without eating any food. Jesus had a body, just like we do, so he was very, very hungry. Satan came to talk to Jesus. Matthew calls Satan *the devil*. This is just other name for Satan.

Jesus had not eaten any food for about six weeks. He was very weak and hungry, and he was alone in the wilderness. We don’t know how Satan looked or if he showed himself in a body to Jesus. But God’s story says that Satan started to talk with Jesus. Satan said, “*If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.*” Satan knew that Jesus was very, very hungry. He wanted Jesus to think of himself and to make food for himself. He wanted Jesus to do something that God had not told him to do. Satan wanted Jesus to listen to him and not to listen to God. He was trying to trick Jesus. This was just like Satan had done with Adam and Eve. But Jesus knew what Satan was trying to do. So Jesus spoke some words that are written in God’s story in the Old Testament in the Book of Deuteronomy.



³ Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Jesus would not use his great power to help himself. The work that God wanted him to do was for other people, not for himself. And Jesus would not be guided by God’s Enemy. The words he spoke from Deuteronomy were first spoken by Moses many years before. When he spoke those words, Moses was remembering how God took the Israelites into the wilderness for 40 years. At that time, God was showing the Israelites that they should trust him to take care of them. He wanted them to know that things like food are not the most important things in life. God wanted them to trust him in every way to take care of them. God is the one who gives life and he wants people to know that he can take care of them.

Then God’s story says that Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the roof of the temple in Jerusalem. We don’t know how he did that, but we know it is true. Satan is very powerful and he can do things like that. Then Satan spoke to Jesus again. He told Jesus to jump off the temple to see if God’s angels would save him. Satan used some of God’s words about Jesus that are written in Psalms.



¹¹ For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go.
¹² They will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.

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Satan wanted Jesus to jump off to see if God would save him. If Jesus had jumped off the temple it would have shown that he did not really trust God. If he had jumped, he would have been testing to see if God really loved him or not. Satan used God's words but he was trying to trick Jesus.

But Jesus did not listen to Satan. He knew that God loved him and that God would always take care of him. Jesus did not have to make God show that he cared for him. He spoke to Satan and repeated some more of Moses' words that are written in the Old Testament: "*The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God'.*" Moses had spoken these words when the Israelites were trying to make God give them water in the wilderness. Moses and Jesus were saying that it is wrong to test God like that. It is wrong to try to make God do something that we think he should do. God always does the right thing. So people can just wait and trust him to do the right thing. And that is what Jesus did.

Now it says that Satan took Jesus up on a high mountain. They could see *all the kingdoms of the world and their glory*. Satan was showing Jesus all of the power and wealth that people had made. Since Adam and Eve had disobeyed God in the garden, Satan had become the false ruler of earth. He said to Jesus that he could give him all the power and the wealth of the earth. Satan asked Jesus to lie or kneel down on the ground and worship him, then Jesus could have all of those things.

Jesus did not listen to Satan at all. He knew that God had other work for him to do. He did not choose to have all the power and wealth on the earth. He just wanted to do what God wanted him to do. He told Satan to go away. Then he spoke some more of God's words from Deuteronomy: "*Get out of here, Satan,*" Jesus told him. "*For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'*"

In the beginning, Satan showed that he wanted people to worship him and not to worship God. Satan tricked Adam and Eve. They listened to him and they disobeyed God. But Jesus did not listen to Satan. He thought only about the work that God wanted him to do. Jesus knew that the work that God wanted him to do would be very difficult. But he chose to do God's work anyway. Jesus showed that he would not disobey God.

Jesus was sent by God to be God's Lamb; to save people from their sins. He was going to be the Rescuer of all the people of the world. He could only do that work if he did not ever sin, if he did not ever disobey God. Only a perfect man could be God's special, chosen Prophet, Priest and King. Only a perfect man could save people from Satan, sin and death. That is why Satan was trying to get Jesus to disobey God. Satan did not want Jesus to be able to do the work that God wanted him to do.

But this is God's story and it is God's rescue plan. And God always does what he says he will do. Jesus is the Son of God and so he always does what he says he will do, too.

After Jesus told Satan to go away, he did go away. Then God's story says that God's angels came to take care of Jesus. In the fight against Satan, Jesus won. He used the true words of God and he used his faith in God to defeat Satan.

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Now we will read from God's story in the Book of Mark. Mark was another man who was alive at the same time as Jesus. God chose four men to write down all the things that happened to Jesus in his life. Their words are written in the first four books of the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These men were guided by God's Spirit. The things that they wrote were exactly what he wanted them to say. These four books in God's story give a very clear picture of the life and work of Jesus the Messiah.



MARK 1:14,15

¹⁴ Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News. ¹⁵ "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

Mark wrote that John was arrested.¹⁸⁵ John was the one who God sent to get people ready for Jesus to come. He was the one who had baptized Jesus. God's story tells us that he was arrested because he said something against King Herod and the way Herod was living. Herod kept John in prison for a while, then, he had John killed by having his head cut off. John had done the work that God had given him to do. He told the people to repent. If they had agreed with God that they needed him to save them, John baptized them. John had done God's work of getting the people ready for the Messiah.

At this time, Jesus was about 30 years old. Mark wrote that *Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached*¹⁸⁶ *God's Good News*. God's good news was that Jesus was the Messiah that the Jewish people had been waiting for. Jesus went to towns and villages in the area of Galilee, which is in northern Palestine. Jesus told the people to repent, just like John had told them. Jesus wanted them to know that they could not do anything to escape¹⁸⁷ death for their sins. Only God could pay back the debt that they owed to him for disobeying him. Only God could make a way back to himself so that people could have a real and true relationship with him again.

Jesus said, "*The time promised by God has come at last! ... The Kingdom of God is near!*" He meant that the way to escape had arrived. Satan had ruled the earth since the beginning when people turned away from God. But now, Jesus was saying that Satan's rule would be broken. God had made many promises that a Rescuer would come. Now Jesus said that the kingdom of God was near. God wanted to have a close and real relationship with people. He wanted to be their Leader and their King. He wanted them to know him and to enjoy following him. He had a plan to rescue the people. And all of this was going to happen because Jesus had come. Jesus told the people to believe this good news from God.

185. **arrested** - put into prison or jail

186. **preached** - he taught people things about God

187. **escape** - to get away from something

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MARK 1:16-20

¹⁶ One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁷ Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ¹⁸ And they left their nets at once and followed him.

¹⁹ A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee’s sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. ²⁰ He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.

Mark wrote about how Jesus asked some men to follow him. He went up to Simon and Andrew. These men were brothers who caught fish in a big lake in Galilee. It is called the Sea of Galilee. Jesus told Simon and Andrew that he would teach them how to *fish for people*. Jesus meant he would teach them how to bring people to God, and to him, the Rescuer. They left their work on the boats and followed him.

Further along the shore were another two brothers, James and John. They were fixing their fishing nets. Jesus called them and they followed him as well. Part of the work Jesus would do for the next three years would be to teach these men. There would be some others too who would follow him like that. He wanted to have some men who knew about the work that God had given him to do.

Mark wrote about how Jesus started to show who he really was. He began to show people that he was God’s Son, the promised Messiah.



MARK 1:21-39

²¹ Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.

²³ Suddenly, a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ²⁴ “Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

²⁵ But Jesus reprimanded him. “Be quiet! Come out of the man,” he ordered. ²⁶ At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him.

²⁷ Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. “What sort of new teaching is this?” they asked excitedly. “It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!” ²⁸ The news about Jesus spread quickly throughout the entire region of Galilee.

²⁹ After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew’s home. ³⁰ Now Simon’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. ³¹ So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them.

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³² That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door to watch. ³⁴ So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.

³⁵ Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. ³⁶ Later Simon and the others went out to find him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you."

³⁸ But Jesus replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.

Jesus was in Capernaum, a fishing village on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. This area was where Simon, Andrew, James and John lived. Jesus went to the synagogue there to teach on the Sabbath day. The synagogue was the Jewish meeting house. The Sabbath day is the Jewish day of rest. The people there were amazed at how Jesus explained¹⁸⁸ what Moses and the other prophets had written.

The people in the synagogue had been taught before by the scribes. The scribes were men who made copies of God's words. They were experts in the laws of the Jewish religion. They were always trying to get people to follow all of God's laws and all of the other laws that they had made up themselves. So when these people in the synagogue heard Jesus teach, it was different to how the scribes had taught. Jesus *taught with real authority*. This means that when he spoke, he was very clear and very powerful in what he said. *Authority* means that you have the right to say something. Jesus had the right to speak the words of God, because he was the Son of God.

A man who was there in the synagogue had one of Satan's evil spirits living in him. Remember how in the beginning, many angels followed Satan? Some of these angels who had followed Satan were able to live in people and make them do what Satan wanted them to do. The evil spirit living in this man called out to Jesus. The evil spirit was very afraid of Jesus. He knew who Jesus really was. He said, "*I know who You are - the Holy One of God!*" He asked Jesus if he had come to destroy them.

Jesus wanted to be the one to show people who he really was. He did not want the evil spirit to tell people about him. So Jesus told the spirit to be quiet and to leave the man. When the spirit left the man it threw him into a convulsion¹⁸⁹ and called out loudly. The people were even more amazed. They saw that even the evil spirits had to obey what Jesus said. God is much, much more powerful than the evil spirits. They had to do what he said.

Jesus went to many towns and villages. He spoke to groups of people and also to individuals. Jesus wanted people to see that he was really God's Son. Mark wrote about some more things that happened to Jesus.

188. **explained** - to tell about something and what it really means

189. **convulsion** - to fall on the ground and have your body shake without being able to stop it



⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. “If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean,” he said.

⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. “I am willing,” he said. “Be healed!” ⁴² Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed.

A man with a very bad skin disease came to Jesus. He asked Jesus to help him. This man probably had leprosy. Leprosy was a very a bad sickness that could easily be passed on to other people. So people with leprosy had to live outside the town and not live near healthy people. God’s story says that Jesus was *moved with compassion*. That means that Jesus cared for this man very much and wanted to help him. Jesus reached out and touched the man. Jesus touched him and then he was healed. His sickness was totally gone.

Wherever Jesus went, he healed people who were sick or who had evil spirits living in them. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote about the many times that Jesus healed and helped people. But the real work of Jesus was not just to heal people of the sicknesses of their bodies. The work of God that Jesus came to do was to heal people from the payment for their sin. The man with leprosy had no way to heal himself. Only God could save him. Only Jesus could heal him. This was a real example to people of how only God could rescue them.



1. What was Satan trying to get Jesus to do? Why?
2. How did Jesus defeat Satan when Satan tried to get him to disobey God?
3. Jesus healed many sick people. What was he trying to show people about himself?
4. Why did the evil spirits obey what Jesus told them to do?



This lesson has been adapted from the book *His Story: The Rescue, The Bible message from Genesis to Christ in easy English* (ISBN: 978-0-9944270-4-5)

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