

STUDY QUESTIONS: MATTHEW 3:13-4:11

1. Why did Jesus insist on being baptized even though He was sinless (Matthew 3:13–15)?

Jesus' baptism was not for repentance but to **publicly identify with the sins of humanity**, foreshadowing His role as the sin-bearing Messiah. By saying "*to fulfill all righteousness*" (Matt. 3:15 NKJV), He affirmed His submission to the Father's redemptive plan. His baptism also inaugurated His public ministry and symbolized His future death and resurrection (cf. *Romans 6:3–4*). Additionally, Jesus' baptism validated John's ministry and connected the Old Testament prophetic witness to the dawning of the New Covenant.

Related Scripture:

- *2 Corinthians 5:21* — He became sin for us though sinless.
- *Isaiah 53:11* — The Righteous Servant bears the iniquities of many.
- *Hebrews 10:7* — "I have come to do Your will, O God."

2. What is the theological significance of the Spirit descending "like a dove" and the Father's voice affirming the Son (Matthew 3:16–17)?

This moment is one of the clearest **Trinitarian revelations** in Scripture:

- The **Son** is baptized,
- The **Spirit** descends,
- The **Father** speaks.

The dove symbolizes God's peace, purity, and commissioning. The Father's declaration—"My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"—affirms Jesus' divine Sonship and mission, echoing messianic passages like *Psalms 2:7* and *Isaiah 42:1*. It reveals Jesus as the Spirit-anointed Servant who will redeem and rule.

Related Scripture:

- *Isaiah 11:2* — The Spirit rests upon the Messiah.
- *Acts 10:38* — God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power.

3. Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted (Matthew 4:1)?

Jesus did not enter temptation by accident; the Spirit intentionally led Him to confront Satan. This demonstrates that **temptation can be part of God's training and proving**, not a sign of abandonment. Jesus becomes the **new and faithful Israel**, succeeding where Israel failed during its wilderness testings (cf. *Deuteronomy 8:2*). Furthermore, Jesus engages Satan on behalf of humanity, beginning the overthrow of the devil's dominion.

Related Scripture:

- *Hebrews 4:15* — Jesus was tempted in all points, yet without sin.
- *1 John 3:8* — The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

4. What is the significance of Jesus fasting forty days and forty nights before His temptations (Matthew 4:2)?

The forty-day fast recalls:

- **Israel's 40 years** in the wilderness
- **Moses' 40 days** on Sinai receiving the law (Ex. 34:28)
- **Elijah's 40-day journey** to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8)

Jesus embodies **Prophet, Priest, and King**. His fasting demonstrates His dependence on the Father and readiness for spiritual conflict. His weakness (hunger) becomes the arena where divine strength is displayed.

Related Scripture:

- *Deuteronomy 8:3* — Humans live by God's Word, not bread alone.
- *2 Corinthians 12:9* — God's strength is perfected in weakness.

5. Why did Jesus answer Satan's first temptation with Deuteronomy 8:3 (Matthew 4:3–4)?

Satan tempted Jesus to satisfy a legitimate physical need in an illegitimate way—**independently from the Father's will**. By quoting Deuteronomy, Jesus aligns Himself with God's purpose for Israel in the wilderness and affirms that obedience to God's Word is superior to physical need. Jesus demonstrates how Scripture becomes the believer's weapon in spiritual warfare.

Related Scripture:

- *Psalms 119:11* — The Word hidden in the heart guards against sin.
- *Ephesians 6:17* — The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit.

6. Why is Satan's use of Scripture in the second temptation dangerous, and how did Jesus correct it (Matthew 4:5–7)?

Satan quotes *Psalms 91:11–12*, but **rips it out of context**, turning a promise of God's protection into a dare to manipulate God. Jesus replies with *Deuteronomy 6:16*, teaching that **Scripture must interpret Scripture** and that genuine faith never tests God.

This reveals Satan as a selective reader of Scripture—dangerous because he uses truth in service of deception.

Related Scripture:

- *2 Timothy 2:15* — Handle the Word rightly.
- *Genesis 3:1* — Satan twists God's words.

7. Why did Jesus reject Satan's offer of the kingdoms of the world, and what does this reveal about worship (Matthew 4:8–10)?

Satan offered a shortcut to glory—avoiding the cross in exchange for worship. Jesus rejected this because:

1. **Satan's authority is limited and temporary** (cf. *John 12:31*).
2. **The only rightful recipient of worship is the Lord God** (Deut. 6:13).
3. Jesus will receive the kingdoms of the world legitimately through the Father (cf. *Psalms 2:8*), not through compromise.

This temptation underscores that worship is fundamentally about **allegiance**. To worship anything or anyone but God is idolatry.

Related Scripture:

- *1 Corinthians 10:14* — Flee idolatry.
- *Revelation 11:15* — The kingdoms of this world become Christ's.

8. What does the ministry of angels after Jesus' victory over temptation reveal about spiritual conflict (Matthew 4:11)?

The angels minister to Jesus, showing that God's care often follows seasons of testing. Their presence affirms that:

- **Spiritual battles are real**, but not fought alone.
- **Victory over temptation leads to strengthening** (cf. *Luke 22:43*).
- God honors obedience, even when it brings suffering first.

This moment foreshadows the ultimate victory: Jesus' triumph over Satan culminates at the cross and resurrection.

Related Scripture:

- *Hebrews 1:14* — Angels are ministering spirits for believers.
- *James 4:7* — Resist the devil and he will flee.

9. What are the key parallels between Deuteronomy 8:2–3 and Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4:1–4, and why are they significant?

Matthew deliberately presents Jesus' wilderness temptation as a **replaying—and reversal—of Israel's wilderness experience** described in Deuteronomy 8:2–3.

Wilderness Setting (Both Texts)

- *Israel*: "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness..." (*Deut. 8:2 NKJV*).
- *Jesus*: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness..." (*Matt. 4:1 NKJV*).

Parallel:

Both are *led* by God into the wilderness—Israel by God's pillar, Jesus by the Spirit. Neither arrives by accident; the wilderness is **God's chosen venue for testing, proving, and revealing hearts**.

Testing and Humbling

- *Israel*: "...to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart..." (*Deut. 8:2*).
- *Jesus*: Satan tests Jesus' trust and obedience by appealing to His hunger and identity.

Parallel:

In both accounts, hunger becomes the means of revealing **true loyalty**. Israel failed, complaining and distrusting God (Ex. 16:2–3). Jesus, however, remains completely faithful.

Hunger as an Instrument of Revelation

- *Israel*: "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger..." (*Deut. 8:3*).
- *Jesus*: "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry." (*Matt. 4:2*).

Parallel:

God uses physical hunger to uncover spiritual realities. Israel saw hunger as evidence of God's failure; Jesus saw hunger as an opportunity to prove perfect trust.

The Lesson of the Word

- *Israel*: "...that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." (*Deut. 8:3*).
- *Jesus*: "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone...'" (*Matt. 4:4*).

Parallel:

Jesus quotes the very passage that defined Israel's wilderness identity. He shows that **obedience to God's Word supersedes physical need**.

Israel failed to internalize this truth; Jesus embodies it perfectly.

Jesus as the Faithful Israel

Matthew intentionally shows Jesus succeeding where Israel failed.

- Israel was God's "son" (Ex. 4:22) tested in the wilderness but proved faithless.
- Jesus is God's **beloved Son** (Matt. 3:17) who passes every test.

Significance:

Jesus' victory is not merely personal—it is covenantal. He recapitulates Israel's story and becomes the **true, obedient Israel**, securing righteousness on behalf of His people.