



Satan Tempts Jesus

Matthew 4:1–11



LESSON GOAL

The student will acknowledge that only Jesus was righteous enough to take the punishment of their sin.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- After Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert, Satan tempted Him three times.
- God allowed Jesus to be tempted to show His perfection.
- Jesus answered Satan's temptations with Scripture.

KEY VERSE

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." —*Matthew 4:1*

APPLICATION

- Trust that Jesus forgives the sins of those who repent.
- Hate sin as much as Jesus did.
- Remember God's Word when you are tempted.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Calls the Disciples
Matthew 4:12–25

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

**Materials
Needed:**

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

In the Gospel of Matthew, the apostle writes to convince his audience that Jesus is the promised Messiah and that they should follow Him. In chapter 1, Matthew records both Jesus’ legal right to the throne of David and His divine origin. In chapter 2, Matthew shows that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills prophecy and who will either be worshiped or despised. In chapter 3, Matthew points to Jesus’ identity through God’s prophesied prophet John and through Jesus’ own baptism. Perhaps the most dramatic testimony to Jesus’ identity is the one which God Himself gives: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” As soon as the Father announced the Son’s character from heaven, He tested His Son’s character on earth by leading Him into the wilderness to be tempted. Through that period of temptation, Jesus grew in obedience and submission to His heavenly Father, proving that He indeed was the well-pleasing Son. Because of Jesus’ perfect righteousness, He could take the punishment of sinners when He died on the cross.

Period of Temptation Begins (Matt. 4:1–2)

The beginning of chapter 4 is unexpected: “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” Jesus had just gone through the most remarkable and public testimony to His ministry and identity as the Messiah. He was prepared and commended by God for His future work. But instead of sending Jesus to preach and perform miracles, God chose to test His Son’s character by allowing Him to be tempted by Satan. Although God has never tempted anyone to sin (James 1:13), God does test the obedience of those who belong to Him so that they can grow in righteousness. God tested the perfect righteousness of His Son by allowing Him to be tempted directly by Satan.

The true nature of Jesus’ obedience becomes even more impressive when His physical suffering is considered. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness of Judea, a hot, barren wasteland west of the Dead Sea. Jesus fasted for “forty days and forty nights,” not only communing with his Father but also being tempted by Satan (Luke 4:2). During this time of physical suffering and temptation, Jesus continued to rely on His Father for satisfaction and for strength to resist temptation. While Jesus deserved to be in heaven with His Father, He was on the earth undergoing severe hunger. A less faithful son would have misinterpreted such suffering and questioned his Father’s wisdom, the Spirit’s anointing, and His Messianic ministry. If not for Jesus’ true nature as the Son of God, the intense surrounding, the severe hunger and perpetual spiritual warfare would have revealed any disobedience. At the end of the 40 days, Matthew summarizes Jesus’ physical weakness by simply stating: “Afterward He was hungry” (4:2). The Son had suffered but not succumbed to Satan’s seduction.

First Temptation (Matt. 4:3–4)

When Jesus was at His physical weakest, Satan came and tempted Jesus three times. Although Jesus was tempted throughout the 40 days (Luke 4:2), both Matthew and Luke record these three specific temptations. In the first temptation, Satan tempted Jesus to disobey the Father by satisfying His hunger. Satan challenged Jesus: “If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread” (Matt. 4:3). Satan did not doubt that Jesus was the Son of God or that He had power to turn stones into bread. Instead, Satan was challenging the Son to disobey the Father. Satan tried to undermine Jesus’ submission to the Father by encouraging Him to satisfy His flesh rather than listen to the Father. The deceit in Satan’s plea was its simplicity. The Son truly did deserve to eat bread and stay healthy. But if the Son doubted the Father’s good plan in leading Him into the desert to fast, the Son would be disqualified and redemption never gained.

Jesus answered Satan’s temptation with Scripture. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Jesus’ response reveals that He understood what Satan was really after. Satan tempted Jesus not to trust God’s plan as revealed in God’s Word. Jesus’ answer quickly shut down Satan’s temptation. Jesus knew that it was more important to satisfy His father than His belly. His only need was to obey God’s commands—not to eat! Jesus trusted that the Father knew what His needs were and would supply those needs. Obedience to God’s Word was more necessary to life than food.

Second Temptation (Matt. 4:5–7)

Having failed in his first attempt, Satan again tried to trick Jesus into sinning against God. This time Satan encouraged Jesus to test God’s willingness to protect His Son. After taking Jesus to the highest point of the temple, Satan suggested that Jesus throw Himself from the height which overlooked the Kidron Valley. (Josephus, an ancient Jewish historian, indicates that the drop was 450 feet.) Satan tried to use Scripture (Ps. 91:11–12) to persuade Jesus that since Jesus is the Son of God and since God promises to protect those who trust Him, Jesus could trust God to save Him from crashing upon the rocks below. Satan was trying to get Jesus to usurp God’s authority by placing the Father in a position where He would have to save His Son.

Jesus correctly deduced the lie in Satan’s argument. He again quoted from the book of Deuteronomy (6:16) as He answered Satan: “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God’” (Matt. 4:7). Jesus knew that trusting God is different from testing God. Trusting God is relying upon God’s power and wisdom to preserve. Testing God is using one’s own power and wisdom to force God to act in a certain way. An obedient and submissive Son would never force His Father to show His character by exerting His own self-will. Jesus would not rob God of His authority.

Third Temptation (Matt. 4:8–10)

Satan’s third attempt to lead Jesus into sin was a brazen offer of all the world’s kingdoms. After bringing Jesus to the top of an “exceedingly high mountain” and showing “Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,” Satan told Jesus, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me” (Matt. 4:8–9). Satan offered Jesus all the power and authority His Father had promised to Him without the cost of self-denial, rejection and crucifixion. All Jesus had to do was dethrone God, exalt His own desires, and worship Satan. Since his own fall, Satan has longed to be worshiped. He could imagine no greater victory than to buy the Creator’s worship by offering Him His own creation in exchange.

Jesus once again resisted Satan's temptation and remained committed to obeying His Father. Jesus would one day have all the kingdoms of the world, but only when the Father gave them to Him. Before quoting Scripture, Jesus first commanded that Satan leave: "Away with you, Satan!" (Matt. 4:10). Instead of the Creator worshiping His creation, the Creator exercised all power over His creation. Jesus then responded by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:13–14: "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matt. 4:10). Jesus would neither worship Satan nor serve Himself. Instead, He completely submitted Himself to His Father's will and trusted the Father to take care of His beloved Son.

Period of Temptation Ends (Matt. 4:11)

Satan's foolish attempt at thwarting Jesus' submission to God's will ended in failure. The Son had resisted the devil so the "devil left Him" (Matt. 4:11). Not only did the fallen angel leave the Lord's presence, but the Father sent angels who "came and ministered to Him." (The Bible does not reveal how the angels ministered to Him, but they most likely brought food.) The Son's trusting obedience was rewarded when He was cared for by the Father. If the Son had listened to Satan's offers of pleasure and promotion, He would have lost His relationship with the Father. Instead, the Son trusted the Father to care for His Son and focused His attention on His one true need, worshiping and obeying His Father.

Conclusion

Jesus' resisting of Satan's temptation in the wilderness reveals His perfect submission to the Father. Before the testing, the Father had declared that His Son was pleasing to Him. Jesus continued to please His Father even though Satan tried to seduce Him toward disobedience. Jesus' perfect obedience demonstrates why He alone could take the punishment of sinful man. Because Jesus resisted the advances of Satan, repentant sinners can trust in Jesus as the sacrifice for their sins.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

How long had it been since a prophet had been in Israel?
400 years had passed since God had sent a prophet to Israel.

What was John doing in the wilderness?
John was baptizing people in the Jordan.

Who came to John to be baptized?
Jesus

Did John think he should baptize Jesus?
No.

What special thing happened after John baptized Jesus?

When Jesus came up from the water the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove. God the Father's voice called from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"



5

Will He Pass the Test?

As Jesus entered into the wilderness to be tempted, the reader is faced with the question, "Will He pass the test?" Break the class into two or more groups. Select representatives from each of the groups to perform a number of tests e.g. catch a ball, balance a stick, skip over a rope, etc. A team can only score if their representative passes the test. Jesus is the only person who could bear the sins of the world. In today's lesson we will be learning about a big test He faced at the beginning of His ministry. Lets see whether He passes the test.



Tried and Tested

Scripture testifies to Jesus' absolute obedience to the Father's will. Although He was tempted in every way, He was without sin (Heb. 4:15). Before teaching the lesson you can remind the children about some of the realities of temptation by giving them a puppet show. Introduce your hand puppet and give him some very clear instructions e.g. he must walk directly to school without playing. Then have a number of other puppets or situations tempt him and distract him e.g. some kids playing ball, some candy in a shop window, an interesting book, etc. Draw the class into the temptation by having your puppet ask them what he should do. In today's lesson we will be looking at some temptations Jesus faced and how He responded.



Wilderness Mural

At the beginning of class, hang butcher paper on the wall and let children decorate the wilderness scene. (Research what the wilderness that Jesus went into looked like.) Perhaps let the children only color with brown and black to make it look dry and barren. Finally, practice counting the 40 days and nights by alternately raising and lowering a sun and a moon (pictures or decorated paper plates on sticks can be used). This scene can be used in the proclaim time for skits, object lessons or illustrations.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

God had revealed to the world the Messiah, His Son, Jesus. At Jesus baptism, He had opened up the heavens and called out, "This is My Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (3:17) God was not yet ready, though, to send His Son out into the world to do His work. God had one more thing for Jesus to do before He went out to minister in Israel.

The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. Jesus was there all by Himself for 40 days, and he did not eat anything during that whole time. Physically, Jesus was weak. He was hungry and uncomfortable. The wilderness was hot and barren. There were not very many trees or other kinds of plant life. But this was part of God's plan. Jesus needed to be tested, so that He might show Himself to be without sin even while He was at His weakest point. God allowed Satan to come to Jesus and tempt Him to sin.

Satan tempted Jesus three times. The first time, Satan tried to get Jesus to eat something even though God had told Him not to. Jesus had not eaten for 40 days, so He was certainly very hungry, and of course food sounded good to Him. Satan said, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread" (4:3). Both Jesus and Satan knew that Jesus had the power to turn rocks into bread. Jesus had to trust His Father's plan more than He trusted His desires. Eating bread is not wrong, but disobeying God is. Jesus had to decide whether He would trust God or satisfy His hunger. He decided to trust God. He said to Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Jesus remembered a verse from the Scripture that helped Him know the right thing to do when He was tempted.

Satan tried to trick Jesus into sinning again. He took Jesus to the highest point of the temple and told Jesus to jump off because God would send angels to save Him. Satan was very tricky, because He used verses from the Scripture to try to make Jesus think that it would be okay. He quoted two verses from the Psalms that said, "He shall give His angels charge over you," and "In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone." (4:6) Satan was making the Scripture say what he wanted it to say, instead of what it really meant. He wanted Jesus to believe that He could throw Himself off the temple and God would send angels to save Him, because the angels job was to protect Him. What Satan was really trying to do was get Jesus to make God do something. But Jesus knew that it was wrong for Him to try to make God do anything. He knew that He was the Son, and God was the Father, and that He needed to be in submission to His Father, not try to force His Father to do something. Jesus said to Satan, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" (4:7) Once again, Jesus remembered a verse from the Scripture to help Him know the right thing to do when He was tempted.

Satan tried one last time to get Jesus to sin. He took Him to a high mountain top, where they could see the kingdoms of the world. God had allowed Satan to be the ruler of the kingdoms of the earth, and Satan offered to give Jesus the power over all of the kingdom if He would fall down and worship Him. Satan longed to be worshiped. God had already promised Jesus all the power and authority over the earth, but Jesus would have to suffer and die to get it, because the world needed to be bought back. Jesus knew that in God's plan, He would have to suffer and die to get the power and authority over the world. Satan was offering to give that power and authority to Jesus without any of the suffering or death. Jesus chose to stay with God's plan instead. He said to Satan, "Away with you Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall you serve.'" (4:10) Again, Jesus remembered Scripture to help Him do the right thing when He was being tempted. Jesus knew that He must obey and worship God alone, and obeying God would bring the greatest reward.

Jesus had commanded Satan to leave Him, and so Satan did. Having withstood the great temptations, and proving Himself to be righteous, He was now ready to go out into the world and minister to the people. Angels came to Jesus to minister to Him, to relieve Him after He had been tested spiritually and physically.

Lesson Questions

Who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted?

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted.

Who came to tempt Jesus?

The devil, or the tempter, came and tempted Jesus.

What had Jesus done for 40 days before He tempted?

Jesus had just been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, and was very hungry (4:2).

What was Jesus' first temptation?

Satan tempted Jesus to disobey the Father by satisfying His hunger (4:3).

How did Jesus resist the temptation?

Jesus answered Satan's temptation with Scripture. Jesus' only need was to obey God's command—not to eat!

What was Jesus' second temptation?

Satan tempted Jesus to see if God would protect His Son.

How did Jesus resist this temptation?

Jesus again used Scripture to resist Satan's temptation. Jesus' trust in God did not require for Him to test the Father.

What was Jesus' third temptation?

Satan tempted Jesus by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world.

How did Jesus respond to this temptation?

Jesus commanded Satan to leave (4:10). Then Jesus responded by saying that only God is to be worshiped.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Tested and Approved

After engineers have carefully designed a structure, they “load test” it in order to verify that the structure can indeed withstand all the forces for which it has been designed. Bring some Styrofoam blocks to class and stack two or three on top of one another. Explain to the children that each of Jesus’ temptations verified His strength. Place a heavy object on top of the blocks to see whether they will hold up. As you teach through each of the temptations, add heavier and heavier objects onto the blocks. End the lesson by posing the question, “Can Jesus carry me, with all my weight of sin?” A Christian is someone who trusts that Christ was strong enough to carry his sin on the cross. It is quite easy to watch other things being placed on top of the blocks, but it takes faith to entrust ourselves to Christ. If you have tested the blocks beforehand, you can stand up onto them to show how they are able to bear your weight. Christ has proved His strength by resisting temptation in the desert, by resisting temptation even to the point of death on a cross and ultimately by rising from the dead. The question is, “Will we trust Him with our lives?”



1-2-3 Posters

Have large posters on wall or easel with the numbers 1, 2 and 3. When you talk about Jesus’ first temptation, decorate the number 1 with stones and bread (could be construction paper cut outs, wads, or real pebbles and crusts glued on). For number 2, put a cutout of a man (Jesus) standing at the top of the number, just like standing at the pinnacle of the temple. For number 3, draw or glue on a city skyline (with a castle) to represent the kingdom.

Praise and Worship

O Worship The King

Undivided Heart

White As Snow

Make Me A Servant

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



The Sinful and the Spotless

After the lesson, read a variety of Scripture passages which highlight particular sins. Divide the board into two halves labeling the one half "people" and the other half "Jesus." Ask the children to raise their hand if they have ever committed this particular sin. Make a mark on the board for every hand raised. As you go through the various Scripture passages, the one half of the board will become covered in black marks. This depicts the world and the heart of each person (Rom. 3:23). Only Jesus lived a spotless life and therefore only Jesus could be the perfect payment for sin. A Christian is someone who has asked God to exchange his sin-stained heart for Christ's righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). Have they seen their sin? Do they desire Christ's righteousness?



Temptation Triarama

Materials: Copies of craft pages on cardstock, scissors, glue, crayons

Directions: Pass out cardstock pages and scissors to each student. Instruct students to cut along the sides of the square, and then along the dotted line from the bottom right corner to the center. Model how to fold the square inward along the lines from corner to corner, making a good crease. Fold on the solid line first, and then repeat with the other line that was cut to the midpoint. Show students how to fold the triangle with Matthew 4:10 printed on it on top of the triangle that says, "Glue here!" This will make the square into a three-dimensional pyramid shape. Do not glue at this point! Instruct the students to lay their square out flat again. Brainstorm ideas on what to draw for each of the three temptations. Provide the students with ample time to draw illustrations within each triangle. Make sure the students draw in the correct triangle for each temptation, and that they draw so that the illustrations will face upward once the square is folded into the 3D shape. The verses printed on each triangle record Jesus' response to each temptation. Once all illustrations are complete, instruct students to spread glue on the correct triangle to assemble the triarama.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He/she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.

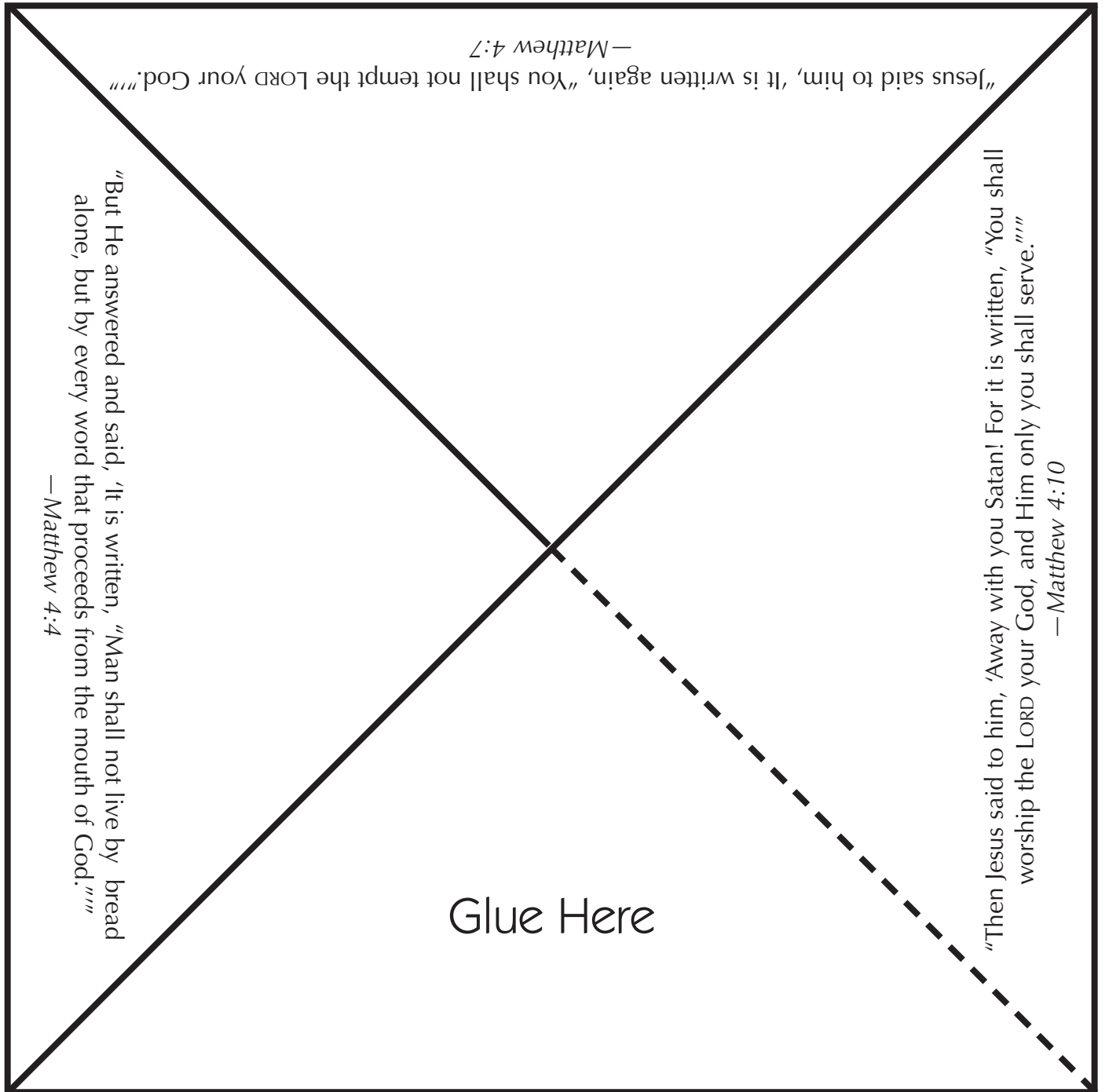


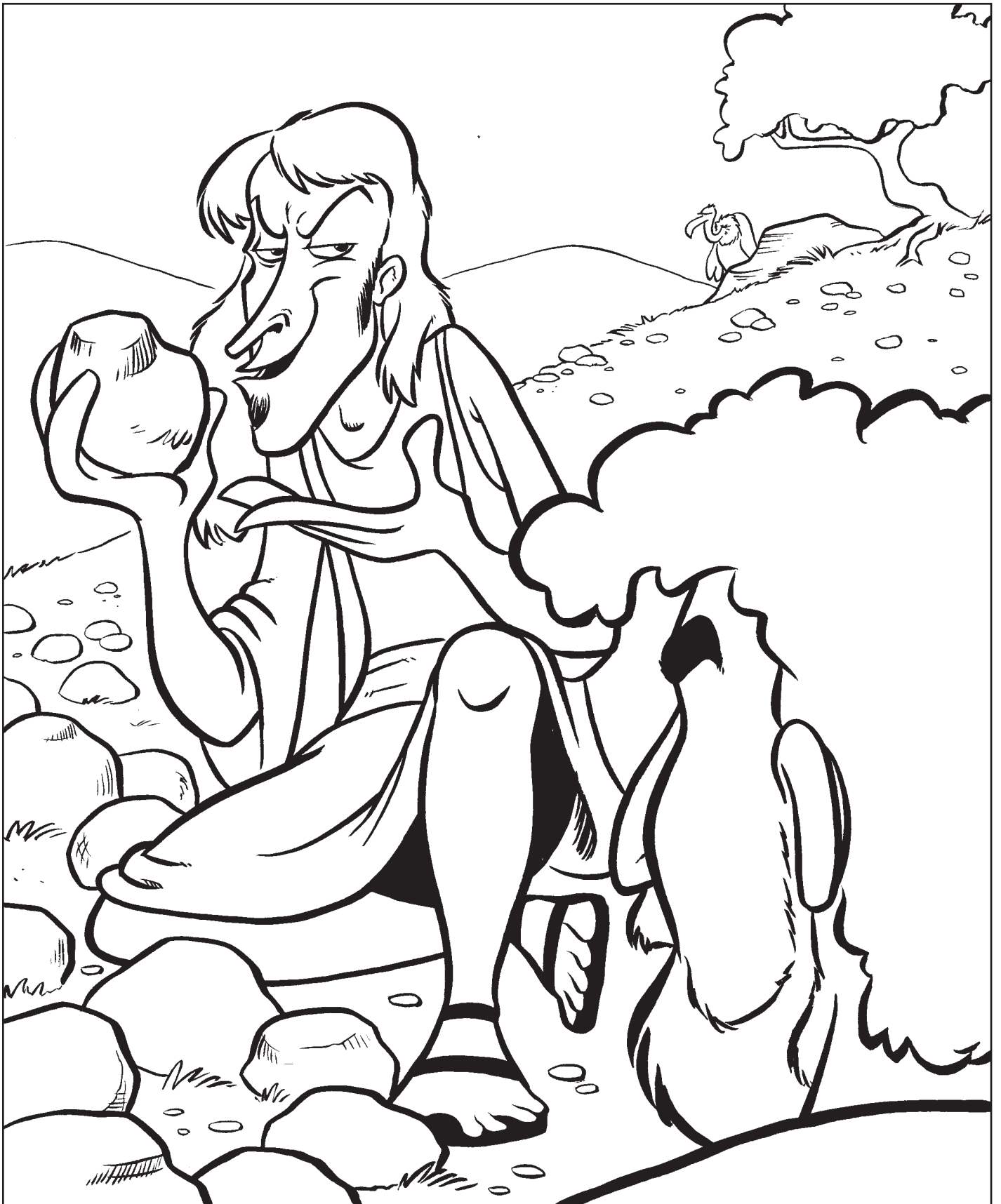
MEMORY VERSE

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

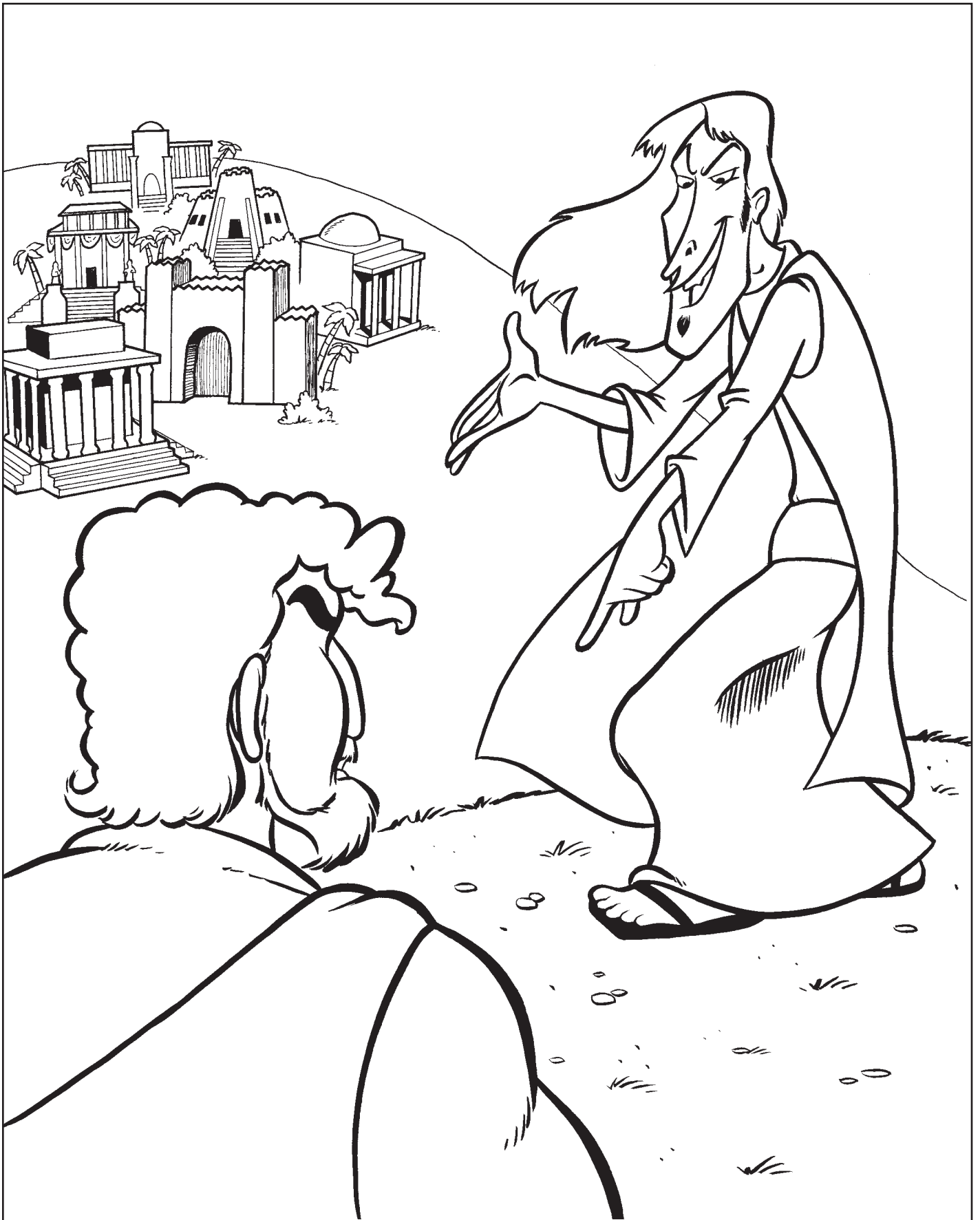
—1 Corinthians 10:13

Temptation Triarama





“Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”” —Matthew 4:3–4



“Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’” —Matthew 4:9

