

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**



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# Introduction (vv.1-2)

- a. The Wilderness in Scripture
  - i. Represents desolation and is defined by limited access to water
  - ii. Represents testing (Wilderness wanderings after unbelief; Num 14:16)

iii. Represents deliverance (from Egypt; Exo 14)

b. The Spirit is the active agent

i. Testing is part and parcel of the Christian life

ii. Exo 16:4

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

c. The term for tempting and testing are the same ( $\piειράζω$ ). Most translations use temptation because of who the temptation is coming from (Devil)

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

d. The Enemy has names

- i. Devil- Adversary/Accuser (Grk)
- ii. Tempter (v.3)- Trip (try)
- iii. Satan (v.10)- Adversary/Accuser (Heb)

e. Satan is a real individual created being, who is a spiritual enemy of God and his people

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

f. The 40-day period in the Bible is used to note a significant but limited period. Notable persons associated with 40 days would be:

- i. Moses on the mountain (Exo 24:18; 34:28)
- ii. Elijah in the wilderness (1Kgs 19:8)

# 1. The Temptation of Self-Satisfaction (vv.3-4)

- a. The enemy comes at him, challenging him to prove himself
  - i. Tucked away in this is a desire to create doubt about one's identity (If you are...)

b. The temptation to turn stones into bread would have been senseless to you or me, but the Devil knew whom he was talking to and that he was capable of miracles, even before having performed any.

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

- i. Satan's challenge: "Why are you going hungry when you created food?"
- ii. It is a challenge to act independently of God in a situation that He put you in
- iii. Any desire or satisfaction fulfilled outside of God's providence is sinful

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

c. Jesus responds with Deut 8:3 (It is written or stands as written), which was the rehearsal of the law to the second generation of Israel; it was given to them in hopes that they would not make the same mistakes their foreparents made

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

- i. Jesus says the word of God is more important than food
- ii. Jesus says that the Word of God is more sustaining than food
- iii. This is why we fast--to remind ourselves of this very truth

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

iv. God can provide food at any time, but His Word is always needed and available

v. "The Word of God is more fundamental than the provision of food"--D. Bock

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

## 2. The Temptation of Forcing God's Hand (vv.5-7)

- a. Jesus is taken by the Devil to the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem—its highest point, and says Jump down!
- b. He offers validation for such an act by misapplying Psalm 91

- i. Psa 91 is about the Lord's protection for those who abide in his shadow (Read vv.1-11)
- ii. The temptation and potential sin is in trying to get God to rescue you when there is no real need

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

iii. Like people who hurt themselves just to see who cares, this is presumption and a desire to back God into a corner

iv. Like the Word of Faith movement of yesteryear, this presumes God has to act

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

v. This is also a warning to us that Satan knows Scripture--he just doesn't believe it and so twists it for his own ends

c. Jesus responds with Deut 6:16 to Israel's wilderness experience, where they murmured and tested God, and Moses hit the rock instead of speaking to the rock

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

- i. God says don't test me but trust me
- ii. God expects us to trust him to do what he has promised and is in line with his character

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**

iii. However, he does not expect us to test him by assuming that he is responsible to perform frivolously

iv. Whenever we demand from God what he does not promise, we sin

*Jesus in the Wilderness*  
**MATTHEW IV**