

Matthew 4: Fasting & Temptation**Summary:**

Matthew 4 begins with Yeshua being led into the wilderness by the spirit of God. He goes on a forty day fast where he separated himself from the world and did not eat.

While in the wilderness, the devil went to tempt Yeshua. First he was tempted by the devil to turn stone into bread. It is a temptation because Yeshua was starving and had not eaten for 40 days and the devil asked him to prove he was the son of God by performing a miracle. Yeshua quoted scripture to the devil, giving him the reason that he would not turn the stone into bread. He said that man does not live by bread alone, but by the word of God.

The second time the devil tempted Yeshua by telling him to jump of a ledge and God would send angels to catch him. Again, Yeshua quoted scripture saying, the word of God says not to tempt our master who is God.

The third time Yeshua is tempted with material wealth if he worshiped the devil. He tells the devil the scriptures say to worship and serve only God.

After this, the devil left Yeshua and God sent messengers to speak to Yeshua. He found out that John the Baptist had been put in prison so he left the wilderness to go to Galilee.

Yeshua began to preach the kingdom of heaven and repentance.

He recruited some of his disciples from Galilee and tells them he will make them fisherman of men – in other words, soul winners.

In Galilee, Yeshua began preaching and performing miracles.

A lot of people began following him as the word of his teachings and miracles spread throughout the land.

Instructions: Read Matthew Chapter 4 in the King James Version and answer the questions below.

1. What are some deeper ideas and themes you notice about the story in Matthew 4?
2. Does anything stick out to you?

Insights:

In verse 1, Yeshua is led into the wilderness by the Spirit of God to be tempted by the devil.

Lesson: Being a child of God requires us to be tested. Even Yeshua was tested for his readiness to take on God's purpose for his life.

Yeshua separated himself from the world and did not eat and this was called "fasting".

Lesson: Fasting is not simply not eating, but designating a time to win the battle over the devil and all his temptations.

The devil tempted Yeshua three times.

1. First he tempted him with fleshly needs. He used Yeshua's hunger to try to get him to sin against God. But Yeshua told the devil, "the scriptures tell me that I cannot live by bread alone, but by the word that comes from the mouth of God."

Lessons:

- a. The devil uses our fleshly "needs" and desires to convince us to sin against God.
 - b. We must know scripture to fight off temptation.
 - c. True Life is sustained by hearing from God himself and even food is secondary to sustenance of Life.
2. Secondly, the devil tempts Yeshua using his spirit. He says, "If you are really a child of God jump from this ledge and God will send angels to catch him so that you will not be harmed." Interestingly, the devil quotes scripture to Yeshua to justify his temptation. But Yeshua tells the devil, the scripture says not to tempt our master, God.

Lessons:

- a. The devil uses our spiritual connection to God to convince us to sin against God, by challenging our position as children of the Most High.
 - b. We are not to test God, especially to prove his existence in us to the enemy.
 - c. The devil knows the bible too and uses it to tempt us into sinning against God.
 - d. Do not do foolish things, hoping that God will deliver us from our foolishness.
3. Third, the devil tempted Yeshua with material possession and power of the world in exchange for Yeshua bowing down to worship him. Yeshua told him to go away because the scripture says he is to worship and serve only God.
 - a. The devil uses material wealth and power to tempt us into sinning against God.
 - b. We are to only bow to, worship, and serve our Father in heaven and NO ONE else. We must be prepared to turn down the things of the world for the sake of being obedient to and trusting in God.

After Yeshua past the test, messengers from God came to talk to and teach him.

Lesson: The first mention of Yeshua having a prophetic experience was after he had fasted in the wilderness for forty days and nights and had passed the test of Satan's temptations. Fasting is a process by which we are tested to endure and for which we receive God's gift, the ability to hear his voice and carry on in our journey.

Yeshua learned that John the Baptist had been put in prison, so he left the wilderness and went to upper Galilee, which was mostly populated with gentiles during that time. On his way to upper Galilee he recruited his disciples, preached, and performed miracles, which attracted large groups of people from all around the land who followed him on his journey.

Lesson: Yeshua was not idle in his journey. All the way to his destination, he did God’s work of enlightening people by making them aware of God’s power and relationship to them.

Instructions: Take a second look at each of these events in Matthew 4 and find the lessons hidden within each event.

Insights for Application to Life:

- Fasting is part of the process of overcoming the devil. In fasting, we make our selves vulnerable to temptation. When we overcome those temptations we graduate in our relationship with God and in our journey and God-given purpose.
- Fasting is separating ourselves from the world and depriving ourselves of fleshly needs or pleasures.
- When we overcome temptation we receive the word of God from his own mouth.
- We must know scripture to be able to overcome the devil’s temptations.
- The devil knows scripture too, so beware of his tactics. You must know more than he does to beat him.
- The devil will tempt your flesh, your spirit, and your desire. If we are busy focusing on the things of this world, the devil will tempt us into sin and we will be so blind, that we may call it a blessing from God.

Deep Thought:

1. If a man offered you the millions of dollars today to worship him, would you do it? See we think that worshiping something or someone means physically bowing to it or them. It’s much deeper than that. We worship things and people when we place them before God, idolize them, do evil “favors” in exchange for worldly things, pump them up with nice words and gestures to have their favor, promote them to others, etc. These are all things we owe only to God... not the evil favors part, but obedience.

So be honest! Wouldn’t you think, “God is good. He sent this man to give me all this money, now I can have everything I ever wanted and help my family.” But if you know that scripture says that we should not store up for ourselves treasures of this world because whatever we treasure is what we serve, you would not be tempted by this. (Matthew 6:19-20)

What would you do today in this situation? _____

What should you do and why? _____

2. Are you making yourself vulnerable to overcome temptation by the devil by fasting?

-
-
-
3. When you fast, do you separate yourself from the things of this world, overcome temptation one at a time, and wait to hear from God. Yes, or No

Final Thoughts:

This week I fasted for seven days after being led by the spirit to do so. In a dream/vision I heard God say fast for seven days, on the 5th day I will bless you, but keep fasting through the 7th day.

In the vision I saw myself waking out of my sleep after hearing these words and praising God, rejoicing and yelling hallelujah. Then I was in this beautiful home that had been given to me, but I was so fearful because people were trying to kill the person who had given us the house. Because of the fear, I could not enjoy it. After some time, I went to look at the yard and my fears were put to rest by the beauty and perfection that was in the outer courts of the home. It was just right for me, had every feature I ever dreamed of having in a yard.

So the next morning I began my seven day fast. As I was going through the fast, I noticed that each time I fasted, I did not connect to God as deeply as when I was not fasting, but I continued to hear from him. I realized that fasting for me was a time of spiritual rest and overcoming temptation, to prepare me for the next era of my journey.

During the fast, I was tempted by my flesh and my spirit. On the 5th day, I waited for my miracle, but nothing happened. Later that night I broke down in tears, crying about my family and praying to God with all my heart to heal them all, mind body and soul, and help them find their way. I worried about my sister who was in the hospital and all kinds of negative thoughts crossed my mind so I prayed and cried harder. On the seventh day, she was released from the hospital and my faith returned to me multiplied.

It's funny how God works, he teaches us through our experiences and our spirit.

See, this is exactly what happened to Yeshua. He went and he fasted as God instructed him to and he stayed until he heard from God, despite how difficult it was and he overcame. He was hungry, but he didn't eat and did not allow temptation to overcome him. When it was all done, he didn't get good news, but learned that his first cousin and biggest supporter was imprisoned. So what was the point of the fast, right?

By fasting, he beat the devil and went on to do exactly what God ordained him to do, knowing his power over the devil, over flesh, and over the world was greater than his circumstances. He travelled and brought souls closer to God as he was purposed to do.

Now remember, this is Yeshua's first moments in his calling. Before he began performing miracles, he himself, was obedient to God, tried, and tested.

In all that we go through, God is increasing us. Even when it doesn't look that way on the outside. Imagine Yeshua being hungry and weak after not eating for forty days and telling the devil, "man shall not live by bread alone..." It looks pitiful, right? But when you realize that Yeshua is not defined by the

pity of that moment, but by the power of that moment and every moment like it, it becomes something different.

If we look back on our own lives and do not see the trial and test, we should be reminded to fast. And if we do see the trial and test, we should be happy that we have overcome and realize that it made us stronger and better. It gave us God-power that we did not have before it. This is how we grow our God-power, by overcoming this world. Yeshua did it first, that we may also have the knowledge and power to do the same.

God-power doesn't look like world-power, because it's purpose is to overcome world-power. We may look and feel weak and frail. That's ok, as long as we are pleasing God, he will increase us in all the ways that matter – give us the power to change the world.

Finally, be reminded that a man is not greater than his master. (John 13:16) If Yeshua had to do it and go through it, so does anyone who belongs to him, the real Hebrews.