



# Enter the Story

## ***Baptism & Temptation***

A narrative about the humanity  
and divinity of Jesus.

## ***THE BIBLE***

Matthew 3-4, Mark 1:1-13  
Luke 3-4 & 8, John 1:1-34

*Prepare for the Story*

## **ICEBREAKER**

- Imagine that we are all going on a 40-day camping trip. The tents are provided but other than that we have nothing except the clothes on your back. What one thing would you take to add to the group's supplies?

*Rewind the Story*

Can someone highlight what has happened in the story so far ...

- Homecoming – Nehemiah & Ezra
- Time Between Times – 400 years of silence.
- Birth of Jesus – The birth of the promised King.

*Hear the Story*

### **Scene One: A Wild Wilderness Prophet**

God sent a messenger named John to tell people to get ready because the Messiah was coming. John was a distant cousin of Jesus, born just six months before Him. He was a rugged man who lived in the wilderness, ate locusts and wild honey, and wore clothes made out of camel hair.

John boldly challenged the Jews, *“Don’t just say that you love God – prove it with your life. Turn from your sins and turn to God!”* He became known as John the Baptizer as he dunked those who had confessed their sins in the Jordan River. Baptism was a symbol of being washed clean from your sins and choosing a new way of living.

When some Jewish leaders asked John if he was the Messiah, he responded, *“No! But someone is coming soon who is far greater than me. I’m not worthy to untie his sandals or even be his slave. You see ... I baptize with water, but he will baptize with God’s Spirit!”*

Soon after that, Jesus came to be baptized. When John saw him, he said, *“I’m the one who needs to be baptized by you.”* But Jesus insisted, so John baptized Him in front of the crowds. When Jesus came out of the water, God’s Spirit came down from the sky. It looked like a dove floating down, and it rested on Him.

Then a voice from heaven said, *“You are my son who I love. You bring me great joy!”*

### **Scene Two: Jesus Tempted**

After leaving the Jordan River, Jesus was led by God’s Spirit to go into the wilderness. There, Satan, one of the angels that had rebelled against God, tempted him for forty days and forty nights. During that entire time, Jesus didn’t eat anything and became very hungry.

Satan tried to deceive Jesus, saying, *“Since you’re God’s Son, why don’t you turn these rocks to become a loaf of bread.”* But Jesus told him, *“No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone.’”*

Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, *“If you are the Son of God, jump off! Your sacred writings say, ‘God will send His angels to catch you, and you won’t even hit the ground!’”* Jesus replied, *“Moses also wrote, ‘Do not even try to test God.’”*

Next, the devil took him to the peak of a huge mountain and revealed all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. *“I will give the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,”* the devil said, *“Because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me.”* Jesus replied, *“The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”*

Throughout Jesus' life, He never sinned or rebelled against God. He always chose what was good and right and true.

### **Scene Three: The Time of the Lord's Favor**

Not long after that, John saw Jesus coming toward him and yelled out, *"Look! There is God's Passover Lamb. He will take away the sins of the world! God showed me He's the Messiah, the one we've been waiting for."*

After this, Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about Him spread quickly through the whole region. He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When He came to Nazareth, his boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him. He unrolled it and found the place where it was written:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."*

When He had finished reading this passage, He rolled up the scroll and sat down. All eyes were fixed on him. Then He said to them, *"The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"*

Everyone spoke well of him, and they were amazed at what he had to say. *"How can this be?"* they asked. *"Isn't this Joseph's son?"*

### *Retell the Story*

- Who was out in the wilderness preaching? What was his message?
- Who came to be baptized? What happened?
- Where did Jesus go after His baptism?
- What happened in the desert?
- What did the devil use to tempt Jesus?

- How did Jesus respond?
- What did Jesus do after returning from the wilderness?
- How did the people react to Jesus?

### *Discuss the Story*

- What images came to your mind when you were listening to the story? What did you see, hear, smell? How did this story make you feel?
- What stood out to you from this story? What did you notice for the first time?
- What from this story made you wonder?
- What was John's message? Why do you think people came to be baptized by him?
- What do we learn about Jesus from His baptism?
- Why do you think, following His baptism, Jesus heads into the wilderness to face temptation?
- Where have we seen Satan or evil tempt a person in previous stories?
- How did Jesus respond to Satan's temptations?
- Why did John say, "Look! There is God's Passover Lamb!?" What was the Passover Lamb?
- What do you think Jesus meant when He said that the passage from the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled that very day?
- Did you hear anything that reminded you of **other** stories?

- From this story, what did you notice about humans?
- From this story, what do you notice about God’s character or His qualities?

## *Join the Story*

### **1) Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

Why do you think God gave visible and audible signs of His presence at Jesus’ baptism? What do you think is the significance of the Father, Son & Spirit tangibly working together at the same event? What can we learn about God from these three different “personalities”? (think about their roles)

### **2) Temptation as Old as Time**

Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days and was tempted by Satan three different times. Take a look at Matthew 4:1-10 and put these temptations in practical terms (what was Jesus tempted with). What are some of the things Satan tempts you with that would fit into the same categories? Give examples of each.

### **3) Hometown Crowd**

After returning from the wilderness, Jesus begins a teaching and preaching circuit through Galilee. When He reaches His hometown, he goes to the synagogue on the Sabbath and teaches people who likely watched Him grow up. At first, they are amazed by His teaching. Read the rest of this encounter in Luke 4:22-30. What happened? What changed? Why do you think things escalated? Do see any similarities in your past responses to Jesus?

God,

*There is so much comfort in knowing that You know what it's like to walk in our shoes. You put on flesh and have been tempted in the same ways that we have been tempted. You are a God who empathizes with our situations and circumstances. Help us to learn the power of knowing Your word and hiding it in our hearts so that we might not sin against You. Give us courage to speak the truth and choose what is right even when there is an easier path in front of us. Amen.*