

IN THE WORD – March 4, 2018
THE FORTY OF WILDERNESS: The Temptation of Christ

- Lent practice of fasting for 40 days associated with Jesus' temptation in the wilderness
- **LOCATION**
 - Mt. Quarantania
 - The Valley of the Shadow (cf. Psalm 23)
- **THE TEMPTATION – SYNOPTIC GOSPELS**
 - Mark – 1:12-13
 - Begins his account in the wilderness
 - Matthew – 4: 1-11
 - Begins in the genealogy of Jesus (through Joseph) then moves into narrative
 - Luke – 4: 1-13
 - Begins in birth narrative
 - Baptism, "You are my beloved son" (3:22)
 - Genealogy [through Mary, "Being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph"] (3:23)
 - Temptation
 - Narrative sequence brings into focus the question of IDENTITY of Jesus
- **WHAT DOES THE WILDERNESS REPRESENT?**
 - The bad
 - Isolation
 - Danger
 - The good
 - Divine meetings
 - Hosea 2:14-15
 - V. 14 - "I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her..."
 - Lost love won back
 - Forgiveness initiated by offended party
 - V. 15 – "From there I will give her her vineyards..."
 - Restore to her what she forfeited
 - 2nd man/ last Adam (1 Cor. 15:47)
 - "...and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope."
 - First sin in Promised Land redeemed
 - "There she shall respond as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt."
 - 2nd Exodus – Israel reborn
 - Promised Land and the Valley of Achor (MAPS)
- **WHY DID JESUS GO THROUGH THIS TESTING?**
 - Satan's answer – to prove God is wrong
 - God's answer – to prove Satan is wrong
 - Our answer?
- **THE TEMPTATIONS** (following Lukan order)
 - Revolve around identity of Jesus, especially "if" he is the Son of God

- **First Temptation** – (Turn the stone into bread) – How will Jesus use his power?
 - “If you are the Son of God...” – questions identity as Son
 - Fasting is unusual for Jesus
 - Jesus’ response: Deut. 8:2-3; focus on the wilderness wandering of Israel
 - Doubt: Does Jesus have the same ability as Moses? Can he prove it?
- **Second Temptation** – (Authority over Kingdoms of the world) – Is Satan’s plan better/ easier/ quicker than God’s?
 - “I can give you this...” – Who is benefactor? Questions identity as King
 - Political Authority over physical world
 - Psalm 2:7-8 – God’s promise to his Son – an eternal kingdom (not of this world)
 - Worship of false gods harkens back to Achan’s sin
 - Doubt: Can I have the same outcome a different way?
 - Jesus’ reply: Duet. 6:12-15
 - Note – Matthew mentions this being on a “very high mountain.” Luke omits this detail, reserving “high mountains” in his narrative for God and prayer only
- **Third Temptation** – (Throw yourself off the Temple) – Are you sure God has you?
 - Luke places this temptation 3rd in sequence so that the dramatic climax occurs in the Temple in Jerusalem
 - “If you are the Son of God...” – questions identity as Son again
 - Ps. 91:11 “He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you.”
 - Jesus’ reply: Deut. 6:16 “Do not test the Lord your God.”
 - See also Ps. 91: 1-2 “*You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”*
 - Josephus records Temple as having a visible pinnacle. Rabbinical saying that the messiah would stand here – questions identity as King again
- **SUMMARY**
 - Satan’s temptations: doubt, disobedience, deflect from God’s purpose
 - Jesus as the true Son and King recaptures the story of God’s people
 - Occurrence of something 3 times means it is complete

NOTE: the images onscreen depicting the Temptation of Jesus are from French painter, James Tissot (1836-1902)