

SEEING WHAT'S THERE

1. Take a "walk" together through the incidents that happen in this chapter Using your imagination, talk about the kinds of sights, smells, sounds, and feelings you might experience.
2. For useful background to the answers Jesus gave to the devil's temptations (verses 1-11), look together at Deut 8:3; 6:16, and 6:13.
3. What truths from Scripture did Jesus use to defy the devil?
4. In verse 11, what do you think the angels actually did to minister to Jesus?
5. On a map, look together at the places mentioned in verses 24-25. Why do you think Jesus was having such widespread appeal?
6. From what you've seen so far in Matthew, how does the message Jesus preached compare with the one John the Baptist preached?
7. EYE FOR DETAIL—From what you recall seeing in this chapter, try answering the following question without looking at your Bible: How many days and nights did Jesus fast in the desert before the devil came to tempt Him? (See verse 2.)

8. AND MORE DETAIL—Another question to try answering without looking at your Bible: What were the three ways in which the devil tempted Jesus? (See verses 3,5-6, and 8-9.)

CAPTURE THE ESSENCE

9. After reviewing the three ways in which the devil tempted Jesus (verses 3-9), how would you comment on the devil's strategy against Jesus at this time, as it appears in this passage? What were the devil's desires, and how did he plan to achieve them?

10. For each of the three temptations, discuss what you think would have happened next if Jesus had yielded to Satan's wishes.

11. If Satan had succeeded in getting Jesus under his control, what do you think is the worst thing he could have done to Jesus?

12. From the evidence you see in this temptation passage (verses 1-11), how would you describe Jesus' relationship to God, His Father?

13. From what you see in verses 3-11, how would you describe the devil's character and personality?

14. From the way Jesus answered the devil each time, what conclusions can you draw about the value and the reliability of the Scriptures?

15. Think about the imagery in the words of verse 16. In what different ways can you see Jesus fulfilling this prophecy?

16. In verse 23 we read that Jesus was preaching the gospel—the good news of the kingdom. From what you see elsewhere about His teachings and ministry, what was this good news?

17. In this chapter, which of these character qualities in Jesus comes through most strongly to you: His compassion, His power, or His wisdom? (Explain your answer.)

18. What in this chapter do you think might be the most interesting to someone who was learning about Jesus Christ for the first time?

FOR LIFE TODAY

19. Notice again the three ways in which Jesus was tempted by Satan (verses 39). In what ways have you experienced similar temptations?

20. If the three answers Jesus gave to the devil (verses 4,7, and 10) were the only Scripture verses you knew, how much would each one help you as you faced various temptations? Are there any temptations you face for which you find no help at all in these three verses quoted by Jesus?

21. What kind of living was Jesus talking about in verse 4? How would you describe someone today who truly lives on every word of God?

22. Think about the temptation Jesus overcame in verses 5-7. In what ways today do we sometimes try to bind God to human plans?

23. Look again at verse 7, and decide how much you agree or disagree with this statement: We can't "box God in" by putting Him to the test, but He is probably pleased if we ask in true faith for signs and indications of His guidance.

24. Let the words of Jesus in verse 10 resound in your mind. Then discuss this question: Who or what do people sometimes worship today instead of God?

25. How could you paraphrase verse 16 and make it into a prayer for your family or friends or community?

26. Review verse 19. What things do we need to learn from Jesus in order to become "fishers of men"?

27. In light of how you're doing spiritually in your life today, which verse in this chapter do you think is the most important to you—and why?

FOR GOING DEEPER

Jesus quotes the Old Testament three times in this chapter. Look together at the following additional verses in Matthew in which Jesus referred to the Old Testament, then discuss what they show us about how Jesus regarded the Scriptures: Matt 8:4; 12:39-42; 19:3-6, and 24:37-39.