

## QUESTIONS WEEK BEGINNING 18 MAY 2025

### Scenario:

Jesus enters a time of fasting in the wilderness where He is tempted by the devil. The Greek for “tempted” can also be translated “tested”. Matthew’s account suggests that the temptations came **after** 40 days and 40 nights of fasting (v2-3). Luke’s account says Jesus was tempted **throughout** the 40 days (Luke 4:3).

### READ Matthew 4:1-11

1. Both Matthew and Luke record this incident in Jesus’ life which occurred after He had been baptised. Verse 1 says that it was the Holy Spirit who led Jesus into this time of temptation. Why would the Spirit have done that? What was the purpose for this time of testing?
2. During His time in the wilderness Jesus fasted from eating (v2). Fasting is usually associated with prayer – replacing physical food with spiritual food for a while to dedicate yourself wholly to God.  
Have you ever fasted?
  - i. If yes how would you describe your experience and its benefits?
  - ii. If not, is fasting something you have every considered doing?
3. Whilst Jesus may have been literally fasting in the wilderness for 40 days some suggest that the phrase “*forty days*” or “*forty days and forty nights*” is a figure of speech used to indicate a period of **intense testing**.” This term is used a few times in the Bible. Can you think of any of them?
4. In verse 3 the devil tempts the hungry Jesus to turn stones into bread. Why might the devil do this? What exactly is He tempting/testing Jesus to do?
5. Jesus’ response to this temptation is to quote Deuteronomy 8:3 “*“It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”* (v4).
  - i. How can a person live on ‘every word that comes from the mouth of God.’? What might that look like in practice?
  - ii. How much do the Scriptures influence your everyday living?
6. In the other two temptations Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy again and repeating the phrase “*It is written*” (v8 & v10).
  - i. What does this indicate about Jesus’ view of the Old Testament Scriptures?
  - ii. How should that influence our view of them?
7. In verse 6 the devil misapplies Psalm 91:11-12 by quoting a promise to protect those who take refuge in God and misusing it to taunt Jesus into recklessly flinging Himself off a high tower. Have you ever heard a Bible text being used out of context to justify a wrong action or to teach some dodgy doctrine?
8. In Genesis 3:1 the devil tempted Eve by casting doubt and distrust in God’s word saying, “*Did God really say*”. In these temptations (v3 & v6) he casts doubt on Jesus’ divinity saying, “*If you are the son of God*”. What would you say is the greatest temptation that the British church is facing today?
9. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (NIV). If all of Scripture is “God-breathed” (other versions say “inspired”) do you believe that there are any errors in the Bible?
10. On Sunday Glyn encouraged us to be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11) and examine the Scriptures more deeply if we come across any apparent contradictions. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to solve the following apparent contradiction:

In John 1:18, it says, “*No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known*”. In Genesis 32:22-30, however Jacob “wrestles with God” and it ends up saying “*So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.’*” (v30). How can John say no one has ever seen God when Jacob says he did?