*The Big Picture*

*Study 6: Jesus Begins His Ministry*

*Luke 4:1-21*

**Icebreaker**

Go around the circle, everyone say your name, where you are from, and what you are studying. And answer this question: If you could be famous for anything, what would it be?

**Introduction**

Tonight we are going to read a story from the Bible together. As Christians, we study the Bible because we believe that it is God’s word to us. We believe that humans wrote the different books of the Bible, but they did that with God’s help and guidance. God gave us the Bible so that we could use it to learn who he is and understand His plans. So the Bible is full of lots of different stories and teachings, but they all help tell a bigger story about God and about the world we live in, and how He is going to restore the brokenness we see through Jesus. It is the story of God and the story of us!

In this series, we have been looking at the big picture story in the Bible, starting from the beginning. In the last study, we finished up looking at the Old Testament. Now we will move on to the New Testament and look at the life of Jesus to see how He fits into the bigger story. Because we believe that God wants to help us understand His story, we are going to pray and then we will get started!

**Pray**

**Intro to the Passage**

As we looked at the Old Testament, we saw the story of Israel, God’s chosen people. God told them that He would bless them and use them to reveal Himself to the rest of the world. But unfortunately, the Israelites didn’t obey God and a lot of things got messed up. Their nation was invaded and taken over and their situation seemed pretty hopeless. But we read about how even though the people rebelled against God and did some very bad things, He still loved them and was not going to abandon them. He promised them that He was going to make things right and that He would send a savior to free them from oppression and fix their broken relationship with Him. That person, whom all the people of Israel were waiting for, was called the Messiah.

That brings us to the passage we are going to look at tonight. Fast forward a few hundred years from where we left off: we are now in Jesus’ lifetime. When Jesus was born, an angel told His mother that He was going to be the one who saved His people, but not that many people knew about that yet. In this passage, He is about 30 years old and has lived a fairly normal life. But, when he went through a religious ritual called baptism, a loud voice from the sky said, “You are my son whom I love and with whom I am well pleased.” This was God’s way of helping Jesus to understand His identity, and giving Him the signal to start His public ministry. The passage we are looking at tonight is right after this happened.

*Have everyone read the passage silently to themselves, and write down questions they have as they read. Then, read the passage out loud, each person reading one verse.*

**Now we are going to look at questions to help us understand this passage.**

**1. Who are the people in this passage?** Jesus, the Devil (ask if they know who that is, and then explain if necessary), the crowds

**2. Where does this passage take place?** In the wilderness, then in Galilee and Nazareth (What is special about Nazareth

**3. How many times did the devil try and tempt Jesus?** Three **How did the devil tempt Jesus at first? Why?** He said, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus hadn’t eaten for forty days, so He was very hungry. Also, if He really was the Son of God, He should have the power to turn stone into bread. Satan wanted Jesus to prove Himself.

**4. Does Jesus do what the devil tells him to do?** No…He says “It is written; Man shall not live on bread alone.” **Why does He respond like this?** Jesus is quoting Scripture. He is saying that there is more to life than just meetingphysical needs…in other words, even though He is hungry, there are more important things to care about. **So if Jesus had the power to turn stones into bread, why didn’t He?**

**5. What did the devil do next?** Led him to a high place and told him that He would give him power to rule the world if He would worship Him. **How did Jesus respond? Why?** Jesus quoted Scripture again, saying that you are to only worship the Lord your God. Jesus knew that the devil’s promises were false, and He knew that only God was worth worshipping and serving.

**6. What was the final way the devil tried to tempt Jesus?** He told Jesus to throw Himself off of the temple because, if He was the Son of God, surely God would save Him*. (Have someone read v. 10)*This verse is from the Old Testament. It was written about the Messiah long before Jesus was born, so the devil is trying to get Jesus to test God in order to prove that He really is the Messiah.**If Jesus really was the Messiah, then God would have saved Him. So what was the devil trying to get Jesus to do?** He was trying to get him to prove Himself and test God*.* **Why do you think Jesus refused to do what the devil wanted?** The devil was trying to get Jesus to doubt God and test him, but you don’t test someone who you completely trust. If I completely trust someone, I don’t test them to make sure they follow through with what they say, I just trust that they will do what I need. Because Jesus fully trusted in God, he didn’t need to test Him.

**7. Why did the devil tempt Jesus in the first place? What do you think he wanted to happen?** God just told Jesus that He was his Son that He loved. The devil wanted Jesus to question that. He kept saying, “IF you are the Son of God”, hoping that Jesus would doubt his own identity, and also that He would doubt God. **Was the devil successful?**

**8. In verse 1, it says the Holy Spirit, which is God’s Spirit, led Jesus into the wilderness where He was tempted. Why did God let Jesus be tempted?** Even though it was challenging for Jesus, God filled Jesus with His Spirit so that He could resist temptation. And after being tempted, Jesus was fully confident in His identity and was reassured about His trust in God.

**9. Have you ever experienced something that made you question your own identity, or your purpose in life? What happened? What was that like?**

**10. After the devil left Jesus, Jesus returned to Galilee and officially started His ministry. What did He do there? What about in Nazareth?** He taught in the synagogues. He went to the synagogue to teach. Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and said that He fulfilled the words.

**11. The scroll that Jesus read was from the Old Testament, written by a prophet named Isaiah (we studied part of that book in study 5). Jesus read a section that the Jews believed described the Messiah that they were waiting for…they believed that the Messiah would proclaim good news to the poor, give freedom for the prisoners, give sight to the blind, and set the oppressed free. Most Jews knew this passage, and most knew that it was describing their Savior. What did Jesus say when He finishes reading it?** He says, today the scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. **What do you think He meant by this?** He meant, I am the person this passage is describing.

**12. Obviously, Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but who do you think that Jesus thought he was? Why do you say that?** Jesus knew that He was the Messiah…that He was the Son of God. In the wilderness, He was tempted and struggled to realize His identity, but once it was over, He was so confident that He walked into the synagogue and declared that He was who they were waiting for. He was pretty bold!

**13. If you were one of the people listening to Jesus, how would you have responded to him? Imagine that you and your country have been waiting for years for a hero to come and save you, and then one day, some random man comes in and says that he is that guy. How would you respond?** We might all respond differently. And the people responded differently too. Some were amazed. Some found it hard to believe. In fact, many people got very angry with Him and chased Him out of the town. But some people heard what Jesus said and were curious to hear more.

**14. Do you have any other questions?**

**Closing**

This point in the story was a very, very exciting time for the people of Israel. They had experienced hundreds of years of suffering and oppression because of their own mistakes and were waiting for the person that God was going to send in order to save them all and start His new kingdom. And now, this man named Jesus came and declared that He was who they were waiting for. A lot of people will try and say that Jesus was a good teacher, but that He never claimed to be anything more than that. But in this passage, we can clearly see that Jesus fully believed that He was the Son of God and that He had come to save His people. His actions and words show that He was confident in His identity. He came to change the world. In the next few weeks, we are going to continue on and read about some amazing things Jesus did and taught and how it all fits into the story we’ve been looking at.

**Pray**