

Transfiguration, February 3, Matthew 17:1-9

- * “Six”: See Exodus 24:16.
- * Location of mountain: Geographical or theological? Hermon or Tabor? Irrelevant!
Moses: Exodus 24:12-18; Elijah, 1 Kings 19:8-18; both met with God on Sinai.
- * Brilliant light, white garments, overshadowing cloud.
 - His face shone like the sun: see Daniel 10:6, Exodus 34:27-35.
 - Clothes as white as light: see Daniel 7:9.
 - Cloud: associated with Sinai, Exodus 19:16-19, 24:15; Exodus 33:7-11
- * Tents: Perhaps the link is to the Feast of Tents/Tabernacles, Leviticus 23:39-42. This festival focused on the time the Israelites spent in the wilderness.
- * “This is My beloved Son” (**King**); Psalm 2:7.
“With whom I am well pleased” (**Servant**); Isaiah 42:1.
“Listen to Him” (**Prophet**—successor/replacement of Moses), Deuteronomy 18:15.
- * 9:6,7: A Matthean addition (see Daniel 10:9-10, 18-19).
- * 19:9-13: (only Matthew refers to the event as “vision”).

Although John the Baptist was the “expected, new Elijah,” he was killed. Furthermore, John did not achieve what the Jewish leaders were expecting.

Jesus states that He will experience a fate similar to that John experienced.

“**Son of Man**”: see Daniel 7:13. The term refers to the Jewish people as “the saints of the Most High” who will eventually rule the nations of the world forever. Jesus re-interpreted the term *radically*.

Note that in Luke’s version (17:1-9), Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus about His coming *exodus* (not “*departure*”) that He will *complete* (not *accomplish*) in Jerusalem.

Ash Wednesday, February 6, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Matthew 6:1-18 contains warnings about doing good in order to be seen, and gives three examples:

- 6:2-4 almsgiving
- 6:5,15 prayer
- 6:6-18 fasting

In each, the conduct of the “hypocrites” is contrasted with that demanded of the disciples.

Perhaps 6:2 (hypocrites) relates to opposition between Pharisaic Judaism and the church of Matthew. The scribes and Pharisees desire praise and have received what they are looking for.

In 6:5, the Greek verb *apecho* is a commercial term that has to do with giving a receipt for what has been paid in full.

Fasting, 6:16 The only fast prescribed in the Mosaic Law was that of the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16:31. However, the practice of regular fasting was common in Judaism (see Didache 9:1. The Didache is the oldest known document of a class denoted as “Church Orders” containing directives for catechetical instruction, worship, and ministry. The single surviving manuscript was transcribed in 1056.)

Lent 1, February 10, Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus’ baptism is recorded in 3:13-17. In the narrative that follows, Jesus is subjected to a triple temptation in which Satan tempts Jesus to rebel against God—subtly in the first two, more overtly in the third.

Each refusal of Jesus is expressed in language drawn from Deuteronomy; see Dt. 8:3, 6:13,16.

The testings of Jesus resemble those of Israel during the wilderness wanderings, and later in Canaan. Old Israel failed—Jesus, the New Israel, did not.

40 days/nights: see Exodus 24:18. However, the link is most likely to the 40 years in the wilderness when Israel was tested and tried, Deut. 8:2.

4:3,4: Jesus refuses to use His power to benefit Himself, to supply His own needs. He accepts whatever His Father wills, See Deut. 8:3.

4:5-7: In the second temptation, Satan appeals to Scripture to support his suggestion to/temptation of Jesus. Jesus refuses to “test” His Father by demanding from Him an extraordinary show of power.

4:9: Satan’s suggestion that Jesus worship him is probably intended to recall Israel’s worship of false gods. Jesus’ refusal is based on Deut. 6:13.

Lent 2, February 17, John 3:1-17

In this passage, Jesus speaks with Nicodemus about the need for “new birth from above.” This narrative is the first of John’s “discourse narratives.” There is a shift from dialogue (vv.-10) to monologue in vv.11-15.

3:1: Most likely, Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

3:3: “born”—see John 1:13. “From *above*”: The Greek adverb means both “from above” and “again.” Jesus means “from above”; Nicodemus understands it as “again”—and his misunderstanding opens the door for further instruction.

3:8: “Wind”: The Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*.

3:14: “Lifted up”: Note Numbers 21:9. Moses simply mounted a serpent upon a pole. Here the term has to do with “glorification.” Jesus—exalted to glory at His cross and resurrection—represents healing for all.

3:15: “Eternal life”: Used here for the first time in John. The focus is on *transformation* of life. God calls us to live *now* as we shall *then*.

3:16: God “gave” in Jesus’ incarnation and crucifixion.

3:17: The Greek root for “condemn” means both judgment and condemnation. Jesus came to save, but His coming provokes judgment. Some condemn themselves by turning away from God’s light.

Lent 3: February 24, John 4:5-42.

In this incident, Jesus ministers to a “half-Jew,” a woman living in Samaria. It continues the theme of “replacement.” Here Jesus replaces the “cult of Samaria” that had to do with worship on Mt. Gerizim with Himself. (In John 2:1-11, Jesus replaces the rites of purification; in 3:1-17, He replaces the mode of entry into God’s people.)

4:4: Jews often bypassed Samaria (when traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee to Jerusalem) by traveling along the east bank of the River Jordan.

4:5: Jerome identifies *Sychar* with *Shechem*.

4:9: Jews regarded Samaritan women as ritually unclean, and were forbidden to drink from any vessel that they had handled.

4:10: “*Living water*,” the water of life—the revelation that Jesus brings. The woman thinks of “*flowing water*”—more desirable than stagnant cistern water.

4:11: “Sir”—the Greek *kyrios* means master or lord—a respectful term for addressing a human being or a deity.

4:20: This mountain: the Samaritans built a temple on Mt. Gerizim in the 4th century B.C.—as a rival for the temple in Jerusalem. The Maccabees/Hasmoneans destroyed it in 128 B.C.

4:23: In Spirit and truth: The reference is to the Spirit given by God that reveals truth and enables a person to worship God in a God-pleasing manner.

4:25: The expectations of the Samaritans are expressed in Jewish terms. The Samaritans were not waiting for a messianic king of the house of David, but for a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15). The Samaritans accepted as divine revelation only Genesis–Deuteronomy.

4:26: I am He. It could also be translated as **I AM**—an Old Testament term for God. See Isaiah 43:3, etc.

4:27: Talking with a woman: A Jewish religious and social restriction that Jesus ignored!

4:29: The woman is pictured as a missionary—described in virtually the same terms as the disciples are in Jesus’ prayer (17:20).

4:42: The Samaritan “converts” *see* in Jesus the Savior of the World. They can *see*—but the Jewish people remain *blind!*