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Saturday, 25 February 2012 13:31 - Last Updated Sunday, 26 February 2012 15:02

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By [Bro. Bobot Apit](#)

If we are only sorry for the consequences of our sins and bad choices, we will very likely keep repeating them. True repentance requires a contrite heart (Psalm 51:17) – a true sorrow for sin and a firm resolution to avoid it in the future.

YAHWEH EL SHADDAI, only by your grace can a true sorrow for sin and the decision to "about face" can truly happen. Thank you lord for continually urging us thru the holy spirit to decide for you. IN JESUS NAME! AMEN!

**Mark 1:12-15** The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. (13) And he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.

(14)

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee

, preaching the gospel of God,

(15)

and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom

of

God

is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."

### **Meditation by Don Schwager**

What is the significance of Jesus spending 40 days and nights of solitude, prayer and fasting in the Judean wilderness? In the Old Testament 40 days was often seen as a significant period of testing and preparation for entering into a covenant relationship with God.

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In the days of Noah, God judged the earth and destroyed its inhabitants in a great flood because of their idolatry and total rejection of God. Noah and his family were spared because they obeyed God and took refuge in the ark for 40 days.

When the flood subsided God made a covenant with Noah and promised that he would not destroy the human race again. Jesus came to fulfill that promise. When God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt he brought them into the wilderness of Sinai. Moses went to the mountain of the Lord at Sinai and stayed there in prayer and fasting for 40 days (Exodus 24:18). At the conclusion of this 40 day encounter God made a covenant with Moses and the people.

After the prophet Elijah had confronted idolatry in the land of Israel and destroyed the 400 priests of Baal, he fled into the wilderness and journeyed for 40 days to mountain of God at Sinai. There God spoke with Elijah and commissioned him to pass on the work of restoration of true worship of God in the land (1 Kings 19:8).

After Jesus was anointed by the Spirit in the waters of the Jordan River, he journeyed to the wilderness of Judea for 40 days to prepare himself for the mission which the Father sent him to accomplish in establishing a new covenant that would supercede all the previous covenants which God had

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made with his people.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us in their gospel accounts that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Mark states it most emphatically: "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12). Why was Jesus compelled to seek solitude for such a lengthy period? Was it simply a test to prepare him for his ministry?

Or did Satan want to lure him into a trap? The word tempt in English usually means to entice to sin. The scriptural word here also means test in the sense of proving and purifying someone to see if they are ready for the task at hand. We test pilots to see that they are fit to fly. Likewise God tests his servants to see if they are fit to be used by him. God tested Abraham to prove his faith. The Israelites were sorely tested in Egypt before God delivered them from their enemies.

Jesus was no exception to this testing. Satan, in turn, did his best to entice Jesus to choose his own will over the will of his Father. Despite his weakened condition, due to fatigue and lack of food for 40 days, Jesus steadfastly rejected Satan's subtle and not so subtle temptations. Where did Jesus find his strength to survive the desert's harsh conditions and the tempter's seduction? He fed on his Father's word and found strength in doing his will. Satan will surely tempt us and will try his best to get us to choose our will over God's will. If he can't make us renounce our faith or sin mortally, he will then try to get us to make choices that will lead us, little by little, away from what God wants for us.

As soon as John the Baptist had finished his ministry, Jesus began his in Galilee, his home district. John's enemies had sought to silence him, but the gospel cannot be silenced. Jesus proclaimed that the time of restoration proclaimed by the prophets was now being fulfilled in his very person and that the kingdom of God was at hand.

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What is the kingdom of God? The word "kingdom" means something more than a territory or an area of land. It literally means "sovereignty" or "reign" and the power to "rule" and exercise authority. The prophets announced that God would establish a kingdom not just for one nation or people but for the whole world. God sent us his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, not to establish an earthly kingdom but to bring us into his heavenly kingdom – a kingdom ruled by justice, truth, peace, and holiness. The kingdom of God is the central theme of Jesus' mission. It's the core of his gospel message.

How do we enter the kingdom of God? In announcing the good news, Jesus gave two explicit things each of us must do to in order to receive the kingdom of God

: repent and believe. When we submit to Christ's rule in our lives and believe the gospel message, the Lord Jesus gives us the grace and power of Holy Spirit to live a new way of life as citizens of God's kingdom.

Jesus gives us grace and conviction to renounce sin and Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44) and the ruler of this present world (John 12:31

). That is why repentance is the first step. Repentance means to change – to change my way of thinking, my attitudes and disposition, and the choices I determine for my life, so that Christ can be the Lord and Master of my heart rather than sin, greed, and selfishness. If we are only sorry for the consequences of our sins and bad choices, we will very likely keep repeating them.

True repentance requires a contrite heart (Psalm 51:17) – a true sorrow for sin and a firm resolution to avoid it in the future. The Lord Jesus gives us grace to see sin for what it really is – a rejection of his love and wisdom for our lives and a refusal to do what is good and in accord with his will. His grace brings pardon, healing, and help for turning away from everything that would keep us from his love and truth.

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To believe is to take Jesus at his word and to recognize that God loved us so much that he sent his only begotten Son to free us from bondage to sin and harmful desires. God made the supreme sacrifice of his Son on the cross to bring us back to a relationship of peace and friendship with himself. He is our Father and he wants us to live as his sons and daughters.

God loved us first and he invites us in love to surrender our lives to him. Do you believe that the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, has power to free you from bondage to sin and fear?

“Lord Jesus, your word is life and joy for me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit that I may have the strength and courage to embrace your will in all things and to renounce whatever is contrary to it.” # # #

**GOD BLESS US ALL!**

**O Theos Na Mas Evlogisi!**

**PRAY** as if everything depended on **HIM**. **ACT** as if everything depended on **YOU**. – **Bobot Apit**

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