

A New Year of FAITH



FIRST MELISSA

Theme Verse for 2023

You shall not make [עָשָׂה 'asah] other gods besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make [עָשָׂה 'asah] for yourselves.

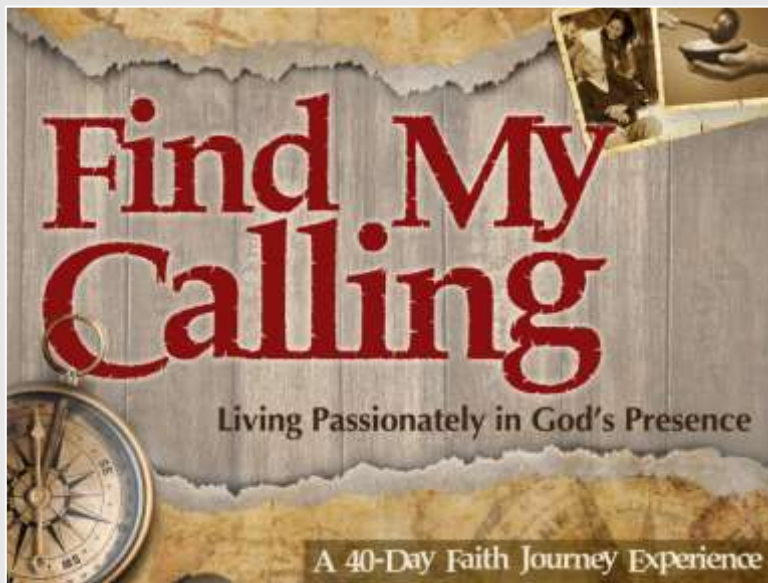
Exodus 20:23

What does “make” mean?

1. To “believe”
2. To “produce”

How can you “make for yourself a god”?

- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that have no spiritual value, I “make them” into a god
- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that only entertain me, I “make them” into a god
- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that only boast about myself, I “make them” into a god
- When I choose to emphasize and prioritize things that only insult and denigrate others, I “make them” into a god
- There is only room for one God in our lives, King Jesus



January 2014



January 2015



January 2016



January 2017



January 2018

**40 Days
of FAITH**



January 2019



January 2021

**40 Days
of FAITH**



January 2020



January 2022

A 40-DAY FAITH EXPERIENCE



GROWTH

FIRST MELISSA

BEGINNING JANUARY 15, 2023

During this 40-Day Faith Experience,
First Melissa challenges you to commit to:



GROWTH
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Attend worship each Sunday

Attend a small group

Pray and study every day using the Daily Workbook
Attend Wednesday night 40-Day services each week



Why 40 Days?

The number “forty” + (time period) is mentioned at least 146 times in Scripture.

It symbolizes trial, probation, or the fulfillment of promises.

It's a number associated with testing and the hardships one must endure to become more spiritually aware.

The Number 40 in the Bible

- It rained for 40 days and nights when God wanted to cleanse the world and start over. (Genesis 7:12)
- Noah waited another 40 days after it rained before he opened a window in the Ark (Genesis 8:6)
- Moses was on the mountain with God for 40 days (TWICE) (Exodus 24:18 & 34:28-29)
- Moses' face shone after 40 days on the mountain (Exodus 34:29)
- The Israelite spies spent 40 days searching the Promised Land (Numbers 13:25)
- The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness, one year for each day the spies explored the Promised Land (Exodus 16:35, Numbers 14:33-34)
- Israel was judged for 40 years each by Eli, Othniel, Barak, Gideon
- King Saul reigned for 40 years (Acts 13:21)

The Number 40 in the Bible

- Goliath cursed and yelled for 40 days before being killed by David (1 Samuel 17:16)
- Ishbosheth (Saul's son) was 40 years old when he began his reign (2 Samuel 2:10)
- King David reigned over Israel for 40 years (2 Samuel 5:4)
- King Solomon reigned over Israel for 40 years (1 Kings 11:42)
- Elijah had one meal that gave him strength for 40 days (1 Kings 19:8)
- Ezekiel bore the iniquity of Judah for 40 days (Ezekiel 4:6)
- King Joash reigned 40 years in Jerusalem (2 Kings 12:1)
- God gave the people of Nineveh 40 days to repent (Jonah 3:4)
- Jesus was on the earth 40 days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3)

The Number 40 in the Bible

- 40 lashes (stripes) was the maximum whipping penalty (Deuteronomy 25:3)
- God allowed the land to rest for 40 years (Judges 3:11, 5:31, 8:28)
- Abdon, a judge in Israel, had 40 sons (Judges 12:14)
- Israel did evil; God gave them into the hands of the enemy Philistines for 40 years (Judges 13:1)
- The holy place of the temple was 40 cubits long (1 Kings 6:17)
- Egypt was to be laid desolate for 40 years (Ezekiel 29:11-12)

**To be people of FAITH for 40 Days,
we need a Role Model**

Matthew 4

Luke 4

Then Jesus
was led up by
the Spirit into
the
wilderness to
be **tempted**
by the devil.
Matthew 4:1



Jesus is tempted in the wilderness

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan [River] and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being **tempted** by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. Luke 4:1–2

What is Temptation?

- Matthew 4:1 and 4:3; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2
- πειράζω *peirazo* verb
- Definition: to try whether a thing can be done; to attempt, endeavor; to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quantity, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself.
- πειρασμός *peirasmos* noun
- Definition: an experiment, attempt, trial, proving

Why was Jesus led by the Spirit to be tested for 40 Days?

Moses said, “All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. **You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.** He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.” Deuteronomy 8:1-6

What are categories of Temptations?

For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the boastful **pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

1 John 2:16

*Let's use this verse as a study paradigm

First Temptation - DO NOT TRUST GOD

Lust of the flesh

And after He [Jesus] had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ ” Matthew 4:2-4 (quoting Deuteronomy 8:3)

Jesus is tempted in the wilderness

And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’ ”

Luke 4:3-4 (quoting Deuteronomy 8:3)

Some stones
are coated in
soft lime
and
curiously
resemble
loaves of
bread –
making the
temptation
doubly
painful.

The Judean Desert near Masada

Lust of the Flesh (1st Temptation)

Jesus knew that God the Father wanted Him to:

- Fast and pray
- Believe God the Father would provide for Him
- Trust in God the Father for everything
- Replicate the wilderness experience of the Israelites
- Understand God's discipline
- Keep God's commandments

Lust of the Flesh (1st Temptation)

Satan tempted Jesus to:

- Use His power as the Son of God
- To provide His own food
- Act in His own ability

Jesus quotes the very verse (Deuteronomy 8:3) given to the Israelites when instructed to follow God's commands.

Second Temptation - PUT GOD TO THE TEST

Lust of the eyes

Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’ ” (quoting Psalm 91:11-12) Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” Matthew 4:5-7 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:16)



Model of
Temple in
the days of
Jesus

Top was
150 feet
high

Jesus is tested

And he [the devil] led Him [Jesus] to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You to guard You,’ and, ‘On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’ ” And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” Luke 4:9-12

“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.” Deuteronomy 6:16

Lust of the Eyes (2nd Temptation)

Satan's Strategy

Satan attempted to use Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12) to:

- Fool Jesus into a false sense of security
- Get instant power and recognition

Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” “Testing God” never draws people to God. Neither do miraculous signs. Genuine understanding and love ignites a genuine relationship with God.

Testing God

- In Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 where people are commanded to not test God.
- There is only **one** occasion in the Bible where the people of God are commanded to test God.
- “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and **test Me now in this**,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.” Malachi 3:8-10

Quoting and Misquoting Scripture

- You can easily misquote God if you don't know God's Word well.
- You can know God's Word but not live out God's Word.
- Our only offensive spiritual weapon in the "Full Armor of God" is the Bible (Ephesians 6:17).
- Why do we give in to temptation so often and so easily? Because we don't know and live out the Word of God.

Why Did Satan Cite the Psalms? by Dr. Nicholas J. Schaser

- In Matthew 4:1-11 (and Luke 4:1-13), the devil tempts Jesus in the wilderness. The Messiah responds to the devil's temptations with three references to Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 6:13, 6:16; 8:3), but Satan cites from Psalm 91:11-12. That Satan, the ruler of demons, refers to this particular text is ironic, since **Psalm 91 was almost universally understood in the ancient Jewish world as a prayer *against* demonic forces!**
- In the original Hebrew, Psalm 91 reminds the reader not to fear violent enemies or agricultural disasters: “You shall not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence (דֶּבֶר *dever*) that stalks in the darkness, or of the destruction (יָשׁוּד *yashud*) that wastes at noon” (Psalm. 91:5-6). **Hundreds of years after this Hebrew psalm was first penned—but also hundreds of years *before* Jesus—the Jews who translated these verses into Greek saw a reference to the demonic: “You shall not be afraid of the terror by night nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the thing (πράγματος; *pragmatos*) that walks in darkness... and the **demon** (δαιμόνιον; *daimonion*) at noon.” (Psalm 91:5-6 LXX).**

Why Did Satan Cite the Psalms? By Dr. Nicholas J. Schaser

- The Septuagint (Old Testament) in Greek reflects a valid way of reading the original language. Depending on which vowel points are appended to the Hebrew letters, the words could read “pestilence” (דֶּבֶר *dever*) and “destruction” (שׁוּד *shud*) or “thing” (דָּבָר *davar*) and “demon” (שֵׁד *shed*) – the Greek translator decided on the latter meanings, “thing” and “demon.”
- Hundreds of years after the Septuagint, the Aramaic translators of the Hebrew Bible (around 4th century AD) followed Greek-speaking Jews and found references to demons all over Psalm 91: “You will not be afraid of the terror of the demon (מַזִּיק *maziq*) that goes about in the night... nor of the company of demons (שִׁידִין *shedin*) that destroy at noon.... No evil shall befall you, and no plague or demons (מַזִּיקָיָא *maziqaya*) shall come near your tent, for he will command his angels concerning you.” (Psalms Targum 91:5-6, 10-11).
- Thus, the devil’s decision to cite Psalm 91 during Jesus’ temptation is the worst possible choice to make, since first-century Jews would have known that Psalm 91 was a prayer that guarded against demons; of all the scriptural possibilities, Satan chooses a passage that was meant to drive him away!

Third Temptation - RULE THE WORLD AND BOW TO SATAN

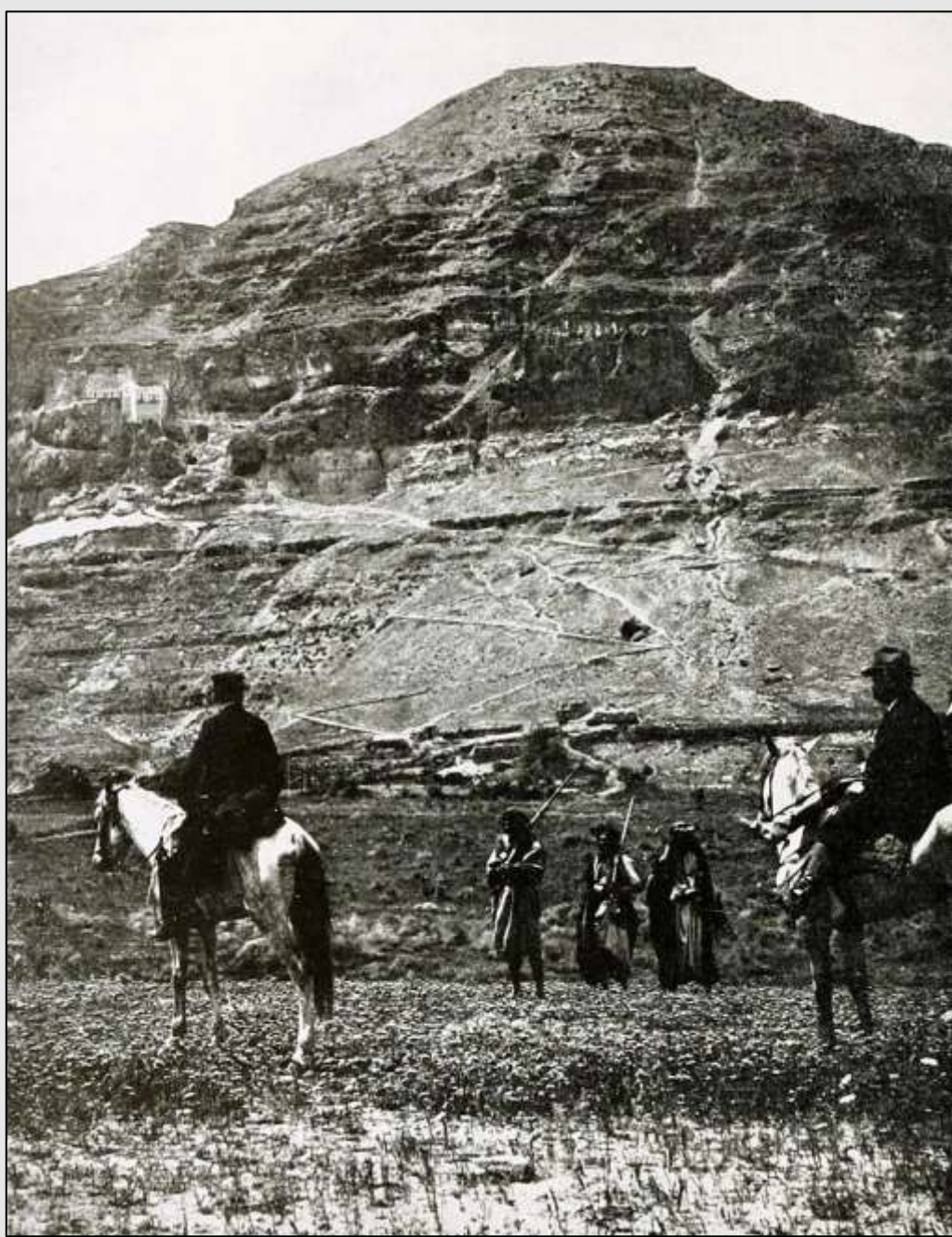
Pride of life

Again, the devil took Him [Jesus] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’ ”
Matthew 4:8-10 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20)

And he [Satan] led Him [Jesus] up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’ ” Luke 4:5-8

You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. Deuteronomy 6:13

- The Judean Hills reach up to 2,447 feet above sea level and offer extensive views westwards towards the Mediterranean coast and eastwards across the Dead Sea.
- The place where Jesus was tempted by the devil is traditionally regarded as **Jebel Qurantal** (the “mountain of temptation” in Arabic), overlooking the Jordan Valley near the site of Ancient Jericho.



Mount of Temptation in 1910



Mount of Temptation today

Pride of Life (3rd Temptation)

Satan is ready to give the world to anyone who worships him. God gave Satan authority earth to tempt people because He wants us to choose obedience. God did not create robots.

40 Days of Testing Ends

Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. Matthew 4:11

When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time. Luke 4:13

What About Us?

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been **tempted** in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

What About Us?

No **temptation** has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be **tempted** beyond what you are able, but with the **temptation** will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

How Do We Overcome Temptation?

- By storing God's Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11)
- By living a lifestyle pleasing to God (Colossians 1:10)
- Complete surrender (Romans 12:1)
- Complete obedience (John 14:23)

Because Jesus submitted to the will of God and resisted the devil, the devil ran away from him.

James 4:7 says, "submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

The Spirit of God chose to make the very first mission of the Messiah a contest between the king of this world [Satan] and the real King [Yeshua]. The devil could only use the things of this world, the things that all men are enslaved by, the enticing pleasures of sin, to offer Jesus. He was no match for Jesus because sin had no power over Him.

Jesus/Yeshua

Our Role Model for 40 Days of FAITH

- **F** Follow the Holy Spirit
- **O** Obey God's Word
- **R** Resist the devil
- **T** Trust in God's goodness
- **Y** Yield to the Father's will



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