

48 Keys to Dynamic Bible Study
Footprints of Jesus in the Old Testament: Israel's Story
Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3 and Matthew 4:1-11

The wind swirled around the people as it lifted the veils that swiped at their faces. No one could ever say that it was actually cold on the wilderness plains, but the overcast sky and the dampness from an early morning shower made some shiver as they waited for Moses to address them. His words had recently become for his people like the precious statements of a dying father: merely weeks remained for Moses to live. Thus, when Moses stood before them to speak, children were hushed, and the antsy shifting of thousands of bodies stilled in anticipation. People leaned slightly forward as they listened to Moses retelling the stories of their past.

"You must remember," Moses began, "to obey the instructions Yahweh your God has given to you; only then can you enter the land He promised your forefathers."

Micah crouched down to pick up his three year old as he thought, *it's amazing!* He flipped Hannah over his head and onto his shoulders. *Moses' voice is still strong.* Then Micah guarded her from toppling with one arm. *And he's a hundred and twenty years old!*

"Don't forget," Moses said, "that it was Yahweh who led you in the wilderness for forty years."

Such a long time, Rachel whispered to herself as she fidgeted with momentary grief. She was remembering that her mother and father had died in this wilderness. *If only they hadn't listened to the ten spies who brought back the bad report.*

"Yahweh was humbling and testing you," said Moses, scanning the horizon beyond the people, momentarily reflecting on their victories and their failures. "He wanted to see what was in your heart—would you obey His commands?" Moses' eyes lowered back onto his people again. "He even let you be hungry. That was so He could feed you with the manna that neither you nor your parents had ever tasted or known of before."

Moses paused in order to emphasize the most significant point: "Yahweh wanted to make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh."

Readers of the Old Testament may find the footprints of Jesus there--the Old Testament narratives often foreshadow the narratives of the life of Christ. Examples include the young boy Samuel who "grew in stature and in favor both with the LORD and men," as he grew up in the sanctuary of God (1 Samuel 2:26). Jesus, as a lad like Samuel, "grew in stature, and in favor with God and men," following His visit to the Temple of God (Luke 2:52). Moses fed manna to his people, just as Jesus would produce bread for the multitudes. As Jonah was rescued from the belly of the great fish on the third day, Jesus would rise from the grave on the third day.

Matthew's recording of Jesus' temptation, in 4:1-17, demonstrates that we even see Jesus' footprints in the account of Moses' speech in the last days before he died. According to Matthew, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit of God after His baptism in the Jordan River—just as the Israelites were led by God into the wilderness after crossing the Red Sea. Israel was tested by God for forty years in the wilderness; whereas, Jesus, in the wilderness, was tempted by Satan for forty days.

Moses told the people that God let them be hungry, and, so, Jesus became hungry. The children of Israel, whom God had called His sons in Exodus 4:23, were tested by that hunger to see if they would obey God. They did not; whereas, Jesus did. Moses had informed His people that they could not live by bread alone, “but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.” Jesus repeated these same words to Satan, when Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread.

By resisting Satan’s temptations three times, Jesus established that He was the obedient Son of God worthy to die for His people. He, not Israel, lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.