



Day 8: A dozen parallels

Read

'Jesus called together his twelve disciples. He gave them the power to force out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and sickness.' Matthew 10.1 (ESV)

'Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.' Matthew 4.1-2 (ESV)

Reflect

The Gospel writers would have known their Scriptures (our Old Testament) pretty well, and we've seen their hints to it in their genealogies, but there's more! Over the next few days, we'll be teasing out some of these parallels in the nativity stories that might seem obscure to us but would have resounded like a megaphone with the first readers. But today's reflection is on the amount of striking parallels between Jesus and the nation of Israel, beyond the Christmas story, when he's grown up!

The rest of Matthew's Gospel makes the parallel between Jesus and Israel clear. There are Israel's 12 tribes and Jesus' 12 apostles; Israel's 40 years in the wilderness and Jesus' 40 days of temptation in the wilderness. Israel passed through the Jordan river to the Promised Land, Jesus came up out of Jordan to begin his kingdom ministry. As if we couldn't already see the link with Abraham, Matthew makes it really clear that Jesus is like a second 'Israel'. Today's challenges are in 12s or 40s!

Challenge 1

Message 12 people with something that will cheer them up

Challenge 2

Make 12 cakes to give out to colleagues or neighbours

Challenge 3

Go without checking your phone for 40 minutes