

Day 15

*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength
Philippians 4:13*

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Matthew Study 4 (15-Feb-2017) : Matthew 4:1-25 “?”

Opening Question:

This term we're looking at the NT book "Matthew"

Recap what we have learned so far about Matthew

- *The Magi visit Jesus*
- *Joseph and Mary escape to Egypt*
- *Herod kills all boys in Bethlehem*
- *Jump 30 years... John the Baptist preaches*
- *Jesus is baptised*

In fact, the first section of this book has Matthew making it clear that Jesus is the Messiah:

- *Look at his family tree*
- *Look at the circumstances of his birth*
- *Look at the Magi*
- *Look at how they fled to Egypt (fulfilling prophecy)*
- *Look at how God says "This is my son..."*

And in first half of Matthew 4, we see "Look at his temptation in the desert"

Read Matthew 4:1-11

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

*"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"*

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Q: How long was the period between the end of chapter 2 and the start of chapter 3?

A: *We thought it was about 30 years*

Q: How long was the period between the end of chapter 3 and the start of chapter 4?

A: *Looks like it's more or less straight away - chapter 4 starts with "Then.."*

Q: Do you think "fasting forty days and forty nights" is possible?

A: *There are examples of people doing this. Probably Jesus did drink water, but not eat food. He would have been very weak though*

Q: After fasting so long, Jesus is hungry. It doesn't seem wrong that Jesus might use his power to provide food. What is wrong with that?

A: It's easiest to understand this by looking at Jesus' answer, which comes from Deuteronomy 8:2-3 - someone read this:

Read Deuteronomy 8:2-3

2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.
3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Q: What is the passage in Deut referring to?

A: The time when the Israelites had been led out of Egypt and had complained about the lack of food, and God had provided them with manna. In that case, the Israelites whined and moaned and did **not** put their trust in God. What Jesus is doing here is showing that he **does** trust in God

In Mark's sermon he made the point that sometimes the path to sin can start with something that appears relatively harmless (chatting about concern for others can turn into gossip) so it's important to stamp it out right at the start

Q: What is tempting about Satan's suggestion that Jesus throw himself off the temple?

A: Maybe you would say this is more "testing" than "tempting". Although perhaps a temptation to Jesus to prove that he is who he claims to be and make the devil shut up

Q: What bit of scripture does Jesus quote in his answer to Satan?

A: Deuteronomy 6:16 (someone read it?)

The reference to "Massah" comes from Exodus 17:1-6

Read Exodus 17:1-7

1 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."
Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?"
3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"
4 Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."
5 The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the place Massah[a] and Meribah[b] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Q: How does this passage help understand what's going on in vv5-7?

A: In Exodus, the people are **not** trusting in God (like the manna again). "Massah" means "testing"

In v9, Satan says that Jesus can command all the Kingdoms of the world. Someone read Matt 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me

So we can see that at the end of the gospel, Jesus **has** the power and authority which Satan offers him in the desert.

Q: Why might Jesus be tempted by Satan's offer, when he (and presumably Satan) **know** that Jesus will be given this authority anyway? Jesus doesn't respond to Satan and say "I'm going to get that anyway", he says "Away from me Satan!"

A: *What Satan is offering is really not the power and authority, but a short-cut to the power and authority which would avoid the pain and suffering that Jesus must endure in the rest of his life.*

So at this point, Matthew has shown many reasons and justifications for his claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Now he turns to Jesus' ministry.

Read Matthew 4:12-25

Jesus Begins to Preach

12 *When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— 14 to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:*

15

*“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—*

16

*the people living in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.”*

17 *From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”*

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

18 *As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

Jesus Heals the Sick

23 *Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,[g] Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.*

Q: What is the significance of Jesus learning that John had been imprisoned?

A: *The preparatory work done by John has ended. It's now time for Jesus to begin his ministry*

Q: What does “the kingdom of heaven has come near” mean?

A: *means Christ is here. Kingdom here means more than “there is a place ruled by a king” but has the sense of “the reigning activity of the king is happening”*

Q: There's a heading in the NIV “Jesus calls his first disciples” but the word “disciple” doesn't actually appear in the section we're reading. What is a “disciple”?

A: *First of all, a disciple is a student of a master - someone who is intent to learn all that his master has to teach him. Second of all, a disciple is a follower - someone who believes and supports the teachings of his master.*

Q: If Jesus is the greatest teacher there is, and he wants to make sure his message is communicated effectively, what kind of people would you expect him to choose as his disciples?

A: *Probably not fishermen! But why might fishermen be effective? Perhaps they're more easy for people to identify with than professional philosophers etc. And it's encouragement to us! We don't need to be sophisticated or learned*

Q: v20 has “At once they left their nets and followed him” Does this tie in with our experience of how people respond to the message of the gospel?

A: *We'd like to think that would happen and maybe sometimes it does but usually not. But as Tim said in his*

sermon, although this is the first time that Matthew mentions Jesus meeting them, it's highly likely that they'd already spent a year with Jesus before this incident.

Q: What does Jesus mean by "fish for people?"

A: *Bring people into God's Kingdom by spreading the Gospel message*

Q: Read Matthew 19:27 (*Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"*) Are we ever tempted to make this kind of argument to Jesus?

Q: What is the significance of people in Syria learning about him and bringing people to him for healing?

A: *It goes back to Genesis 12 and God's plans for all nations to come to him*

Q: What are the true purposes of Jesus' miracles?

A: *To identify who he was. Only God could do such things*

To illustrate what he had come to do. To return all to how it should be

Takeaway

- Jesus leans heavily on God's word from OT when he encounters the devil, as well as doing properly what the Israelites failed to do
- Small and apparently innocuous temptations are dangerous because they can lead to more serious sin
- Jesus doesn't require disciples who are skilled speakers or thinkers