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 Monday, December 21, 2015

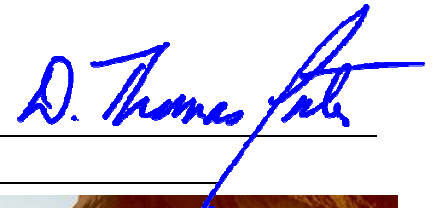
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LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

MATTHEW — THE KING IS TEMPTED

Lord's Day, December 27, 2015

Teaching and Study Preparation



OVERVIEW

Preparation for Session "4" Matthew 4

I've always been tempted to show off. Being a middle child, it was often difficult to get noticed — unless I "showed off." Sometimes I was indeed noticed, with parental looks that could kill. Other times I was praised. Regardless, it was always about Tommy.

My Jesus was tempted to show off. He, however, had the right stuff. Like Superman, He could have flown down from the temple pinnacle and landed to the applause of all who watched. Like Bobby Flay, He could have turned stones into a delicious, award-winning bread pudding. And, like the most powerful man on the planet, He could have taken over the planet, ruling with power — no one questions Me!



But, motives are everything. If I fly like Superman to be admired, rather than help those in distress, I am neither super nor a man. If I excuse satiation because I'm "really" hungry, rather than consume Holy Spirit's urgings, I am neither hungry nor righteous — I am but an animal, driven by bios, rather than theos. If I have power without compassion,¹ I am but an socialized creature, civil but hardly Godly. I become a cymbal, clanging neither in time nor in harmony.

Jesus took Satan on, and won. He demonstrated hunger need not be an excuse for leaving God. Power is nothing without Godly glory. And, showing off means nothing, if it only brings attention to us, rather than Him. He won so I could. I love Jesus. Man, what a man!

¹See <http://TheScoop.DThomasPorter.com> for December 27, 2015 (<http://TheScoop.DThomasPorter.com/?p=443>).

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT (MATTHEW & THE INTER-TESTAMENTAL ERA)

In the days of Matthew the Roman equivalent of the IRS was ominous. Tax collection was done by agents, almost always indigenous individuals; i.e., people who knew where the money was. Rather than pay these collectors a “salary,” they were paid by a commission of sorts where they could charge whatever the market bore. When this system was implemented among the Maccabee-impassioned citizens of Judah, all hell broke loose. It was neither politically correct to be a tax collector nor a Jew. To be both? Well, that was Matthew, the human author of our studies in Scripture for the next three months.

When Matthew was given the opportunity to serve the Lord God Jehovah, he became the worst disciple—no teacher or prophet of any standing would permit a *tax collector, a whore of Rome* to be a student. Yet, Jesus the Christ showed that anyone could be a follower, if he follows the One. And so we have this rather poignant description, by none other than Matthew himself...

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and `sinners'?"

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' [He is quoting Hosea 6:6] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." –Matthew 9:9-13

Note the irony—Jesus' reputation was on the line. Jesus was consorting with a whore of Rome. Matthew's reputation was on the line as well. Matthew was consorting with a revolutionary, a man who would soon prove Himself to be Deity, Rome's most serious adversary, ever. How do we know they were "consorting?" Nothing sealed the bargain of friendship more publicly than eating dinner together, not at the local Village Inn, but in one's home. Jesus was indeed consorting with sinners.



Matthew was not written in a vacuum. Lots of pressures, cultural anomalies and Holy Spirit Himself are reflected in his record of the Christ. For Matthew, Jesus the Christ was indeed Jesus Christ Superstar.

When you study Matthew, you are studying the history of people's first personal, face-to-face, kinetic encounter with the Lord God Almighty. As the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth brought a new covenant, a new understanding of who Yahweh is and how to understand Yahweh as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Jesus of Nazareth we see the magnificence of obedience to purpose, the profound passion of Deity devoted to His creation, and the perfect resolution of justice and mercy. His earthly name was Jesus. Matthew was His tax collector.

KEY TEXT ISSUES (MATTHEW 4)

Matthew 4:1-11. *Jesus encounters a test of His mission—and wins!* After Father God had pronounced His affection for Jesus, the Son of God, Holy Spirit led Him into the desert to be tested by Satan. For forty days and nights, Satan pushed and pushed. Finally, Satan poured it on...

I know you're hungry now. So, if you're really divine, the Son of God, tell some of these rocks to become bread. Betcha can't do it!

Yeshua was not impressed—Scripture says people are not to live only by that which is physical, but by all that comes from the mouth of the Lord God Jehovah.

Humm. That didn't work, so Satan took Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple. The Kidron Valley stood some 100 feet below.

If You are indeed the Son of God, jump off the temple. Remember Scripture has said, "He will command His angels to protect You—you won't even hit your foot against a stone."

This time Jesus was more impressed—by jumping He could quickly demonstrate He was not only Messiah, but Divine as well. No one could survive such a fall except Deity. But, Jesus shot back, again with Scripture—"Do not put the Lord your God to the test." In other words, don't tug on Superman's cape; don't spit into the wind, and certainly don't pull the mask off the Lone Ranger. *I look unto the hills from which my strength comes*, the Lone Ranger speaking to Tonto.²

Then Satan took Jesus to a high mountain where both could see all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. You want this? I will give it all to You—all You have to do is bow down and worship me.

MATTHEW 4:1-11

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

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" [Deuteronomy 8:3]

⁵Then 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."

[Psalm 91:11,12]

⁷Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" [Deuteronomy 6:16]

⁸Again, 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."

¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" [Deuteronomy 6:13]

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

²<http://www.our-savior.org/website/Portals/0/vision/2011/5%202011.pdf> (page 2).

Jesus had had enough—“Get away from Me, Satan! The Scriptures are clear—Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him alone.”

Then Satan left Him for a more opportune time. Angels came and took care of Him.

- Q Given that it was not Satan who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested, why did Holy Spirit lead Jesus into the desert?
- Q What was being tested by telling Jesus to cast rocks into bread?
- Q What was being tested by telling Jesus to jump off the temple?
- Q What was being tested by telling Jesus to worship Satan?
- Q Which of these tests do you have the most difficulty passing? Why?
- Q Why was it necessary for Jesus the Christ to be tested in the wilderness by Satan himself?
- Q Why are we not to live by bread alone?
- Q Why are not to test the Lord our God?
- Q Why are we to worship the Lord God Jehovah and serve Him alone?



When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, He went and lived in Capernaum...

Matthew 4:12-25. *Jesus leaves home for a broader ministry.* John was put in prison for questioning the morals of Philip (Herod the Great's grandson) who divorced his wife to marry his brother's wife (also named Philip). So, upon hearing this Jesus went to Galilee, leaving his home town Nazareth. Just like Isaiah said, a light has dawned in the Galilee of the Gentiles.

From then on, just like John, Jesus began to preach repentance—the kingdom of heaven is near, now.

Once when He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He noted two brothers: Simon Peter and Andrew. They were fishing by casting a net into the water.

Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people. At once they left their nets and followed Him. From there, he met saw two other brothers—James and John. In a boat with their father Zebedee and preparing their nets, Jesus called them as well. Immediately, they left the boat, and their father, and followed Him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in the synagogues of the region, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of heaven among them. Jesus took the opportunity to heal all kinds of diseases—the news spread fast. Throughout Syria, people brought the ill, severely hurting, those possessed by demons, and those suffering from seizures and paralysis. He healed them all.

Large crowds from the entire region of the ten cities came, from Jerusalem they came, from Judea they came, and even beyond the Jordan they came and followed Him.

Q Why did He leave Nazareth? Why couldn't He have started/continued His ministry based in Nazareth instead of Capernaum?

MATTHEW 4:12-25

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— ¹⁴to 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—¹⁶the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” [Isaiah 9:1-2]

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

¹⁸As 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.” ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹Going 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, ²²and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴News 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.

²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis [i.e., “ten cities”] Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

- Q What was Jesus' message at this point in His ministry? How would this message be articulated today, in today's culture?
- Q Why did Jesus call Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow Him? Why did they do so immediately? [Careful. This was not Jesus' first encounter with Simon and Andrew (see John 1:35-42).]
- Q Why did James and John leave their father Zebedee and follow Yeshua, Yahweh? Do you suppose they knew He was Yahweh Himself then?
- Q Where did Jesus do a lot of His teaching? Why there?
- Q Why did Yahweh heal all these people?

COMMENTARY³ ON MATTHEW 4^(NIV85)

4:1-11 The significance of Jesus' temptations, especially because they occurred at the outset of his public ministry, seems best understood in terms of the kind of Messiah he was to be. He would not accomplish his mission by using his supernatural power for his own needs (first temptation), by using his power to win a large following by miracles or magic (second temptation) or by compromising with Satan (third temptation). Jesus had no inward desire or inclination to sin, for these in themselves are sin (Mt 5:22,28). Because he was God he did not sin in any way, whether by actions or word or inner desire (2Co 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1Pe 2:22; 1Jn 3:5).

Yet Jesus' temptation was real, not merely symbolic. He was "tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin" (Heb 4:15). He was confronted by the tempter with a real opportunity to sin. Although Jesus was the Son of God, he defeated Satan by using a weapon that everyone has at his disposal: the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17). He met all three temptations with Scriptural truth (vv. 4,7,10) from Deuteronomy.

4:1 *led by the Spirit . . . to be tempted.* This testing of Jesus (the Greek verb translated "tempted" can also be rendered "tested"), which was divinely intended, has as its primary background Dt 8:1-5, from which Jesus also quotes in his first reply to the devil (see v. 4 and text note below).

- ✓ There Moses recalls how the Lord led the Israelites in the desert 40 years "to humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands."
- ✓ Here at the beginning of his ministry Jesus is subjected to a similar test and shows himself to be the true Israelite who lives "on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." And whereas the man and the woman of Eden failed the great test and plunged the whole race into sin (Genesis 3), Jesus was faithful and thus demonstrated his qualification to become the Savior of all who receive him.
- ✓ It was, moreover, important that Jesus be tested/tempted as Israel and we are, so that he could become our "merciful and faithful high priest" (Heb 2:17) and thus be "able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb 2:15; see Heb 4:15-16).
- ✓ Finally, as the one who remained faithful in temptation he became the model for all believers when they are tempted.

³Adapted, corrected and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

tempted by the devil. God surely tests his people, but it is the devil who tempts to evil (see Genesis 22:1; see also 1Jn 3:8; Rev 2:9-10; Rev 12:9-10). Not "tempted," for God does not tempt (James 1:13). Satan tempts us (see 1Co 7:5) in order to make us fall; God tests us in order to confirm our faith (Exodus 20:20) or prove our commitment (Dt 8:2).

Like the Hebrew for "Satan," the Greek for "devil" means "accuser" or "slanderer." The devil is a personal being, not a mere force or influence. He is the great archenemy of God and the leader of the hosts of darkness.

4:2 *forty days and forty nights.* The number recalls the experiences of Moses (Ex 24:18; 34:28) and Elijah (1Ki 19:8), as well as the 40 years of Israel's temptation (testing) in the desert (Dt 8:2-3).

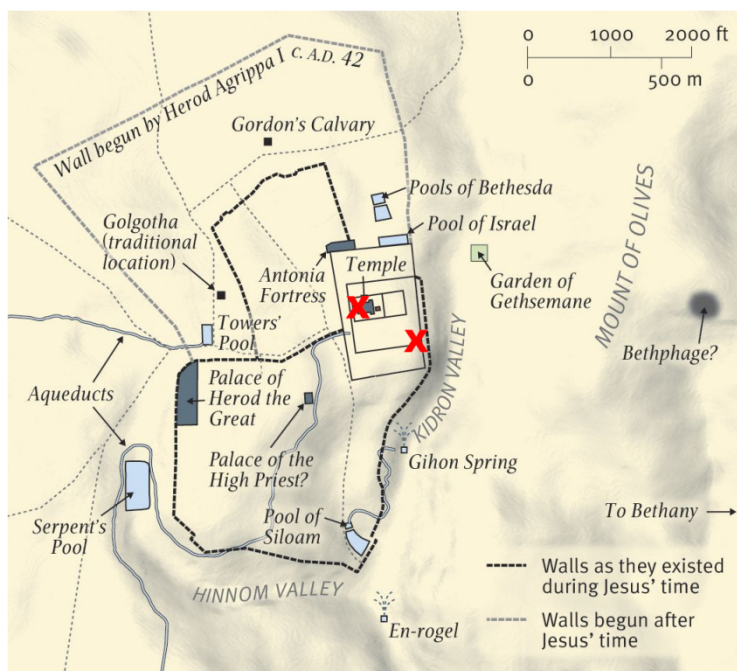
4:3 *If you are the Son of God.* Meaning "Since you are." The devil is not casting doubt on Jesus' divine sonship, but is tempting him to use his supernatural powers as the Son of God for his own ends.

4:4 Just as God gave the Israelites manna in a supernatural way (Dt 8:3), so also man must rely on God for spiritual feeding. Jesus relied on his Father, not his own miracle power, for provision of food.

4:5 See Luke 4:2. . Luke states Jesus was tempted for the 40 days he was fasting, and the three specific temptations recounted in Matthew and Luke seem to have occurred at the close of this period—when Jesus' hunger was greatest and his resistance lowest. The sequence of the second and third temptations differs in Matthew and Luke. Matthew probably followed the chronological order, since at the end of the mountain temptation (Matthew's third) Jesus told Satan to leave (Matthew 4:10). To emphasize a certain point the Gospel writers often bring various events together, not intending to give chronological sequence. Perhaps Luke's focus was geographical, as he concludes with Jesus in Jerusalem. And, he notes the devil left for a more opportune time.

highest point of the temple. Either the south-east corner of the temple colonnade, from which there was a drop of some 100 feet to the Kidron Valley below, or the pinnacle of the temple proper.

temple. The temple, including the entire temple area, had been rebuilt by Herod the Great. The courtyard had been greatly enlarged, to about 330 by 500 yards. To accomplish this, a huge platform had been erected to compensate for the sharp falling off of the land to the southeast. An enormous retaining wall made of massive stones was built to support the platform. On the platform stood the temple building, porches and courtyards flanked by beautiful colonnades.



4:12 See the map on page 4.

John had been put in prison. See Mark 1:14; According to Josephus, John the Baptist was imprisoned in Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities*, 18.5.2). This did not occur until sometime after the beginning of Jesus' ministry (see John 3:22-24). John the Baptist was imprisoned because...

Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her." Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet. —Matthew 14:3-5

4:13 *Capernaum*. Although not mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was evidently a sizable town in Jesus' day. Peter's house there became Jesus' base of operations during his extended ministry in Galilee (see Mark 2:1; 9:33). A fifth-century basilica now stands over the presumed site of Peter's house, and a fourth-century synagogue is located a short distance from it.

4:15-16 Another Messianic prophecy from Isaiah. Jesus spent most of his public ministry "in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali" (v. 13), which is north and west of the Sea of Galilee.

4:17 *From that time on*. These words indicate an important turning point in the life of Jesus and occur three times in Matthew's Gospel (see also 16:21; 26:16). Some think these words mark the three main sections of the book.

Repent. Jesus began his public ministry with the same message as that of John the Baptist (3:2). The people must repent because God's reign was drawing near in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Repentance is more than a change of mind or feeling sorry for one's sins. Repentance is a radical and deliberate turning or returning to God that results in moral change and action which glorifies the Lord God Jehovah.

4:18 *net*. A circular casting net used either from a boat or while standing in shallow water.

4:19 *fishers of men*. Evangelism was at the heart of Jesus' call to his disciples.

4:20 The call to discipleship is definite and demands a response of total commitment. This was not Jesus' first encounter with Simon and Andrew (see John 1:35-42).

4:21 *preparing their nets*. Washing, mending and hanging the nets up to dry in preparation for the next day's work.

4:23 *teaching . . . preaching . . . healing*. Jesus' threefold ministry. The synagogues provided a place for him to teach on the Sabbath. During the week he preached to larger crowds in the open air. A very important religious institution among believers of that day. Originating during the exile, it provided a place where believers could study the Scriptures and worship God. A synagogue could be established in any town where there were at least ten married Jewish men.

4:24 *Syria*. The area north of Galilee and between Damascus and the Mediterranean Sea.

those having seizures. The Greek word for this expression originally meant "moonstruck" and reflects the ancient superstition that seizures were caused by changes of the moon.

the paralyzed. A transliteration of the Greek that has come directly into English. Greek physicians were among the best in ancient times, and many of our medical terms come from their language.

4:25 *the Decapolis*. A league of free cities characterized by high Greek culture. All but one, Scythopolis (Beth Shan), were east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. The league stretched from a point northeast of the Sea of Galilee southward to Philadelphia (modern Amman). See the map on page 4.