

General Comments on Matthew 4

The central subject of this chapter is Jesus being granted all of the keys of Godhood, and going out to fast and commune with the Father shortly thereafter. The matter on Jesus' mind is likely his imminent public ministry and what it entails.

This sets the stage for Satan's temptations. Jesus, a mortal, has just been granted Godhood. Two seemingly contradictory things are now one, and the gravity of the Atonement must be weighing upon him. Along comes Satan to test and try Jesus in the window of opportunity. Jesus has just been granted all the power there is to possess, and he has no experience in mortality at wielding it. The call of being Messiah has been extended, but the call is for a spiritual Messiah, not a physical one like the people in general want, so public rejection looms large. And the Atonement with its ghastly requirements of intense suffering and crucifixion are now entirely too real. This is the prime opportunity to tempt Jesus, all of the power and responsibility has got to be overwhelming. Satan comes in and tries to get him to abuse his power and shirk his responsibilities.

His first two temptations are "Prove it!" style faith destroyers. Satan says "You think you are the Son of God? Prove it to yourself that you are the Son of God, like you think you are!" Jesus declines to prove it. Satan then changes tactics and plays on any lingering doubts in a different fashion, note in the third temptation the "If thou be..." is omitted. Instead, Satan offers him all the glory and kingdoms of the world. If Jesus is not sure he is the Son of God because he refuses to prove it to himself, then perhaps he will settle for being the Son over the world, a certainty easily within grasp. Satan offers him something he can see, something tangible. Challenging his faith hasn't worked, so Satan changes tactics and simply appeals to that which requires no faith. The proof is before his eyes, and the offer is real. All the glory and kingdoms of the world, instead of being rejected, humiliated, and crushed in the Atonement. But again, Jesus declines.

All three temptations deal with carnal appetites: hunger, fame, materialism. Sensual appetites of self-indulgence that require no faith and are eminently tangible and satisfying. How many people have fallen prey to these same three temptations? But, in all three cases Jesus quotes Scripture back at Satan contradicting him, and rejecting him.

The IV differs significantly from the KJV in that it presents Jesus as being led about by the Holy Spirit, and subsequently being left to be tempted by the adversary three times. This resolves the theological problem in the KJV as that

account suggests Jesus is somehow subject to Satan for some time to be led about and tempted.

KJV

1 Then was Jesus led up
of the Spirit
into the wilderness
to be tempted of the devil.
2 And when he had fasted
forty days and forty nights,
he was afterward an hungered.

3 And when the tempter
came to him,
he said,
If thou be the Son of God,
command that these stones
be made bread.
4 But he answered and said,
It is written,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceedeth
out of the mouth of God.
5 Then the devil taketh him up
into the holy city,
and setteth him
on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him,
If thou be the Son of God,
cast thyself down:
for it is written,
He shall give his angels
charge concerning thee:
and in their hands
they shall bear thee up,
lest at any time
thou dash thy foot
against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him,
It is written again,
Thou shalt not tempt
the Lord thy God.

8 Again,
the devil
taketh him up into
an exceeding high mountain,
and sheweth him all
the kingdoms of the world,
and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him,
All these things
will I give thee,
if thou wilt fall down

IV

1 Then Jesus was led up
of the Spirit,
into the wilderness,
to be with God.
2 And when he had fasted
forty days and forty nights,
and had communed with God,
he was afterwards an hungered,
and was left to be tempted
of the devil.

3 And when the tempter
came to him,
he said,
If thou be the Son of God,
command that these stones
be made bread.
4 But Jesus answered and said,
It is written,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceedeth
out of the mouth of God.

5 Then Jesus was taken up
into the holy city,
and the Spirit setteth him
on the pinnacle of the temple.

6 Then the devil
came unto him and said,
If thou be the Son of God,
cast thyself down,
for it is written,
He shall give his angels
charge concerning thee,
and in their hands
they shall bear thee up,
lest at any time
thou dash thy foot
against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him,
It is written again,
Thou shalt not tempt
the Lord thy God.

8 And again,
Jesus was in the Spirit,
and it taketh him up into
an exceeding high mountain,
and showeth him all
the kingdoms of the world
and the glory of them.

9 And the devil came unto him again,
and said,
All these things
will I give unto thee,
if thou wilt fall down

and worship me.
10 Then saith Jesus unto him,
Get thee hence,
Satan:
for it is written,
Thou shalt worship
the Lord thy God,
and him only shalt thou serve.
11 Then the devil leaveth him,

and, behold,
angels came
and ministered unto him.
12 Now when Jesus had heard
that John was cast into prison,
he departed into Galilee;
13 And leaving Nazareth,
he came and dwelt in Capernaum,
which is upon the sea coast,
in the borders of
Zabulon and Nephthalim:
14 That it might be fulfilled
which was spoken
by Esaias the prophet,
saying,
15 The land of Zabulon,
and the land of Nephthalim,
by the way of the sea,
beyond Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles;
16 The people which sat
in darkness saw great light;
and to them which sat
in the region and shadow of death
light is sprung up.
17 From that time
Jesus began to preach,
and to say,
Repent:
for the kingdom of heaven
is at hand.
18 And Jesus,
walking by the sea of Galilee,
saw two brethren,
Simon called Peter,
and Andrew his brother,
casting a net into the sea:
for they were fishers.
19 And he saith unto them,

Follow me,
and I will make you
fishers of men.
20 And they

and worship me.
10 Then said Jesus unto him,
Get thee hence,
Satan;
for it is written,
Thou shalt worship
the Lord thy God,
and him only shalt thou serve.
Then the devil leaveth him.
11 And now Jesus knew
that John was cast into prison,
and he sent angels,
and, behold,
they came
and ministered unto him.

12 And Jesus departed into Galilee,
and leaving Nazareth, in Zebulun,
he came and dwelt in Capernaum,
which is upon the seacoast,
in the borders of
Nephthalim,
13 That it might be fulfilled
which was spoken
by Esaias the prophet,
saying,
14 The land of Zebulun,
and the land of Nephthalim,
in the way of the sea,
beyond Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles;
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Jesus began to preach,
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17 And Jesus,
walking by the sea of Galilee,
saw two brethren,
Simon, called Peter,
and Andrew, his brother,
casting a net into the sea;
for they were fishers.
18 And he said unto them,
I am he of whom it is written
by the prophets;
follow me,
and I will make you
fishers of men.
19 And they,

straightway left their nets,
and followed him.

21 And going on from thence,
he saw other two brethren,
James the son of Zebedee,
and John his brother,

in a ship with
Zebedee their father,
mending their nets;
and he called them.

22 And they immediately
left the ship and their father,
and followed him.

23 And Jesus went about
all Galilee,
teaching in their synagogues,
and preaching the gospel
of the kingdom,
and healing all manner of sickness
and all manner of disease
among the people.

24 And his fame
went throughout all Syria:
and they brought unto him
all sick people that were taken
with divers diseases and torments,
and those which
were possessed with devils,
and those which were lunatick,
and those that had the palsy;
and he healed them.

25 And there followed him
great multitudes of people
from Galilee,
and from Decapolis,
and from Jerusalem,
and from Judaea,
and from beyond Jordan.

believing on his words,
left their net,
and straightway followed him.

20 And going on from thence,
he saw other two brethren,
James,
and John his brother,
the sons of Zebedee,

in a ship with
Zebedee their father,
mending their net;
and he called them.

21 And they immediately
left their father in the ship,
and followed him.

22 And Jesus went about
all Galilee
teaching in their synagogues,
and preaching the gospel
of the kingdom;
and healing all manner of sickness,
and all manner of diseases
among the people
which believed on his name.

23 And his fame
went throughout all Syria;
and they brought unto him
all sick people that were taken
with divers diseases, and torments,
and those who
were possessed with devils,
and those who were lunatic,
and those that had the palsy;
and he healed them.

24 And there followed him
great multitudes of people
from Galilee,
and Decapolis,
and Jerusalem,
and Judea,
and beyond Jordan.

Comments on Matthew 4

1 THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He

shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in [their] hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

v1-11 Jesus goes into the wilderness to fast and commune with his Father (v. 2), and the adversary comes to tempt him (v. 1). The adversary tempts him with abuse of power to make bread to feed his hunger (v. 3), but Jesus rejects him (v. 4). He is tempted again with a public display to show himself off (v. 5-6), but Jesus rejects it (v. 7). And, he is tempted a third and final time with all the power and wealth of the world (v. 8-9), which Jesus again rejects, this time dismissing the adversary (v. 10), and the adversary leaves (v. 11).

v1-2 Matthew presents Jesus as the "prophet like Moses" (cf. Deut. 18:15, Acts 3:22) as Moses fasted 40 days in the wilderness and thereupon communed with God, received the Law, and interceded on behalf of Israel, cf. Exod. 34:28, Deut. 9:9.

v3 Satan attempts to play on any doubt Jesus may be having at this time and says, "If you are the Son of God, then prove it to yourself by turning these stones into bread." Satan cleverly appeals to both his desire to know the truth as well as his physical hunger. Jesus rejects him quoting Deut. 8:3.

v5-7 Jesus, standing upon the top of the Temple, surveys the Temple sanctuary as well as all of Jerusalem. Satan comes to him again trying to play upon his doubts, but also tempting him with fame. If Jesus were to leap from the Temple and be rescued by angels in the Temple grounds, such a public act in such a religiously high profile place would be sure to result in his immediate fame. Satan even goes so far as to quote Psalms 91:11-12 at Jesus as a twisted proof text. Jesus again rejects him quoting Deut. 6:16 and Exod. 17:2.

v8-10 Satan's last ditch effort. He isn't having any success playing on any doubts Jesus' may have about his calling, so instead he offers him the eminently tangible: everything he can see with his eyes, all the glory and splendor of all the kingdoms of the world. The catch? Jesus has to bow down to the god of

this world (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4) in order to get it. Jesus commands Satan to leave while rejecting him by quoting Exod. 20:3, Exod. 34:14, also cp. Moses 1:15.

v11 Satan departs. The KJV then has angels ministering to Jesus, but the IV completely changes this and v. 12 to say when Jesus learns of John Baptist's captivity he sends angels to John to minister to him in his affliction.

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, [by] the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

v12-17 Matthew notes Jesus goes into the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali and quotes Isa. 9:1-2 as a messianic proof text. Jesus begins his public ministry proclaiming "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

With Jesus' calling as Messiah being extended and his being granted all the necessary keys, he goes about accomplishing his mission.

18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left [their] nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James [the son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

v18-22 Jesus calls the brothers James and John to abandon their fishing and become his full-time disciples. They were apparently well-to-do fishermen, cf. Mark 1:20.

John Beloved apparently first meets Jesus during John Baptist's ministry as he is likely the unnamed disciple in John 1. He follows Jesus at that point, but in the mean time Jesus has gone into seclusion in the events of v. 1-10. John apparently went back to his fishing, only to be called to abandon it a short while later in favor of fishing after men.

v19 The IV has Jesus positively identifying himself as the

Messiah predicted in the Prophets. This is an interesting point because it contrasts the doubt which is central to the subject of v. 1-10. Here, when Jesus undertakes the public ministry, his certainty is complete.

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. 24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and [from] Decapolis, and [from] Jerusalem, and [from] Judaea, and [from] beyond Jordan.

v23-25 Jesus' initial ministry is well attended with his drawing people from all over the region. He heals people of various maladies, which probably resulted in quite a lot of his fame because of sign seekers.

The IV on v. 24 indicates he only healed those who believed on him.

Matthew doesn't quote Isa. 53:3-4 here as a proof text, but does so later in 8:17.

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