CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 4 — The Temptation of Jesus and the Beginning of His Ministry

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 3 ended with heaven opening.

The Spirit came down on Jesus.

The Father said:

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew Chapter 4 begins with a surprising next step.

The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness.

Not to rest.

Not to celebrate.

But to be tempted by the devil.

For forty days Jesus fasts.

Then the tempter comes with three temptations.

Each one attacks Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

Each one offers a shortcut around the Father's plan.

And each time, Jesus answers the same way:

“It is written.”

Jesus does not win by arguing.

He wins by standing on the Word of God.

Where Adam failed in a garden, Jesus stands firm in a wilderness.

Where Israel failed for forty years, Jesus stands firm for forty days.

Then the second half of the chapter begins Jesus' public ministry.

John has been put in prison.

Jesus moves to Capernaum in Galilee.

He begins to preach:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

He calls four fishermen to follow Him.

He travels throughout Galilee teaching, preaching, and healing.

News about Him spreads everywhere.

Large crowds begin to follow Him.

Matthew 4 therefore shows two great victories:

Victory over temptation in the wilderness.

And:

Victory over darkness as the Light begins to shine in Galilee.

The central truth of Matthew 4 is:

Jesus, the faithful Son of God, defeated the devil by the Word of God and began His ministry of bringing light, calling disciples, and healing the broken.

I. LED BY THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 4:1 — To Be Tempted by the Devil

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

Notice the word **“Then.”**

Right after the Father's words of love, Jesus faced the devil's attack.

Great spiritual moments are often followed by great spiritual battles.

Notice also who led Jesus.

The Spirit.

This temptation was not an accident.

It was part of God's plan.

The devil intended to make Jesus fall.

God intended to prove Jesus faithful.

The word **devil** means **“slanderer”** or **“accuser.”**

He is a real enemy who opposes God and His people.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 8:2

> Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way through the wilderness these forty years. He did this to humble you and test you, to find out what was in your heart and whether you would obey His commands.

1 Kings 19:8

> So Elijah got up, ate, and drank. The food gave him strength, and he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

Luke 4:1

> Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, came back from the Jordan River. The Spirit led Him into the wilderness.

Spiritual Principle

Being led by the Spirit does not mean avoiding hard places.

Sometimes the Spirit leads us into the wilderness to strengthen us.

Key Truth

God tests to prove and strengthen.

The devil tempts to destroy.

The same situation can be both.

II. FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

Matthew 4:2 — Very Hungry

“After fasting for forty days and forty nights, He was very hungry.”

Jesus went without food for forty days and forty nights.

This connects Him to two great servants of God.

Moses fasted forty days on the mountain when he received the law.

Elijah traveled forty days to the mountain of God.

It also connects Him to Israel's forty years in the wilderness.

Matthew then gives a simple, human detail:

He was very hungry.

Jesus was fully God.

But He was also fully man.

He felt real hunger.

He felt real weakness.

And the devil chose that moment to attack.

Cross References

Exodus 34:28

> Moses stayed there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating food or drinking water. He wrote the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments, on the stone tablets.

Deuteronomy 9:9

> When I went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets of the covenant, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I did not eat food or drink water.

Luke 4:2

> There the devil tempted Him for forty days. Jesus ate nothing during that time, and when it was over, He was hungry.

Spiritual Principle

Temptation often comes when we are weakest.

The enemy attacks when we are tired, hungry, lonely, or hurting.

Key Truth

Jesus understands our weakness because He experienced it Himself.

III. THE FIRST TEMPTATION

Matthew 4:3 — “Tell These Stones to Become Bread”

“The tempter came and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’”

The devil is called “the tempter.”

His first words go straight to Jesus' identity:

“If You are the Son of God.”

Only days before, the Father had said, “This is My beloved Son.”

Now the devil tries to plant doubt.

The temptation looks harmless.

Jesus was hungry.

Bread is not sinful.

But the devil was asking Jesus to use His power for Himself, apart from the Father's will.

He was asking Jesus to meet His own needs instead of trusting His Father to provide.

This is the same pattern the devil used in the Garden of Eden.

He offered something that looked good for food.

Cross References

Genesis 3:6

> The woman saw that the tree's fruit was good to eat, nice to look at, and desirable for making a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Job 1:9

> Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job respect God for no reason?”

Luke 4:3

> The devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

Spiritual Principle

The devil often tempts us to meet good needs in wrong ways.

Hunger is not sin.

Meeting it outside of God's will is.

Spiritual Warning

The enemy's first attack is often on our identity.

He wants us to doubt what God has said about us.

IV. NOT BY BREAD ALONE

Matthew 4:4 — “It Is Written”

“But Jesus replied, ‘It is written: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’”

Jesus did not argue with the devil.

He did not prove Himself with a miracle.

He quoted Scripture.

“It is written.”

In Greek, this phrase means “It stands written and remains written.”

God's Word is settled.

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3.

In that passage, Moses reminded Israel that God let them go hungry in the wilderness and then fed them with manna.

God was teaching them that life depends on more than food.

It depends on God and His Word.

Israel complained in their hunger.

Jesus trusted in His.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 8:3

> He humbled you by letting you go hungry, and then He fed you with manna. He did this to teach you that people do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

John 6:35

> “I am the bread of life,” Jesus said. “Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.”

Luke 4:4

> Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘People do not live on bread alone.’”

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is more necessary than daily bread.

Our bodies need food.

Our souls need God's Word.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus fought the devil with the same weapon He has given to us — the written Word of God.

V. THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE

Matthew 4:5 — The Holy City

“Then the devil took Him to the holy city, Jerusalem, and set Him on the highest point of the temple.”

The second temptation takes place in a very different location.

Not in the wilderness.

But in the holy city.

And at the highest point of the temple.

This was a place of worship.

It was the center of Israel's religious life.

The devil does not only tempt in dark places.

He also tempts in holy places.

The highest point of the temple may have been a corner overlooking a deep valley.

A fall from there would have meant certain death.

Cross References

Nehemiah 11:1

> The leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. The rest of the people threw lots to choose one family out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city.

Ezekiel 8:3

> He reached out something like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and sky and brought me in visions from God to Jerusalem.

Luke 4:9

> Then the devil took Him to Jerusalem and placed Him on the highest point of the temple. He said, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.”

Spiritual Warning

No place is too holy for temptation.

The devil can attack in church as well as in the world.

VI. THE DEVIL QUOTES SCRIPTURE

Matthew 4:6 — “For It Is Written”

“He said, ‘If You are the Son of God, 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.”’”

Now the devil changes his approach.

Jesus had answered with Scripture.

So the devil quotes Scripture too.

He quotes Psalm 91.

But he twists it.

Psalm 91 is a promise of protection for those who trust God while walking in His ways.

It is not a promise to protect someone who deliberately puts himself in danger to force God to act.

Notice also what the devil leaves out.

He skips the words “to guard you in all your ways.”

The promise is for those walking in God's ways, not for those doing foolish stunts.

Cross References

Psalms 91:11

> For He will command His angels to protect you wherever you go.

Psalms 91:1

> Whoever lives under the protection of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Luke 4:10

> For it is written: “He will command His angels to watch over you and protect you.”

Spiritual Warning

Scripture can be misused.

The devil knows the Bible and twists it to deceive.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture must be read in its context and alongside the rest of Scripture.

A single verse pulled out of place can be turned against God's will.

VII. DO NOT TEST THE LORD

Matthew 4:7 — “It Is Also Written”

“Jesus answered, ‘It is also written: “You shall not test the Lord your God.”’”

Jesus answered the twisted verse with another verse.

“It is also written.”

Scripture explains Scripture.

Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16.

That verse refers to Massah, where Israel demanded water and said:

“Is the LORD with us or not?”

They tried to force God to prove Himself.

Jesus refused to do the same.

He did not need to jump from the temple to prove the Father loved Him.

He already knew.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:16

> Do not test the LORD your God the way you tested Him at Massah.

Exodus 17:7

> He named the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites complained there and tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD with us or not?”

Luke 4:12

> Jesus answered him, “It is said: ‘Do not test the Lord your God.’”

Spiritual Principle

Faith trusts God; it does not try to force God.

Demanding signs is not faith.

It is unbelief dressed up as faith.

Application

We test God when we:

- Take foolish risks and expect Him to rescue us.
- Demand signs before we will obey.
- Make deals with Him to prove Himself.

- Ignore wisdom and call it faith.
- Doubt His love unless He does what we want.

VIII. THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD

Matthew 4:8 — A Very High Mountain

“Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.”

The third temptation is the boldest.

The devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

Wealth.

Power.

Honor.

Fame.

Everything the world values was put in front of Him.

Moses once stood on a high mountain and saw the Promised Land.

Now Jesus stood on a high mountain and saw the whole world.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 34:1

> Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land.

Daniel 4:17

> This is so that everyone who lives will know that the Most High God rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone He chooses.

Luke 4:5

> Then the devil took Him up to a high place and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Key Truth

The devil may show the kingdoms.

But God is the One who rules over them.

IX. BOW DOWN AND WORSHIP ME

Matthew 4:9 — The Devil's Real Goal

“He said, ‘All this I will give You if You will bow down and worship me.’”

Now the devil reveals what he really wants.

Worship.

From the beginning, the devil wanted to be like God.

He wanted the worship that belongs only to God.

His offer was a shortcut.

Jesus would one day rule over all the nations.

But the Father's way to that throne went through the cross.

The devil offered a crown without a cross.

Glory without suffering.

A kingdom without obedience.

Cross References

Isaiah 14:13

> You said to yourself, “I will go up to heaven. I will set my throne above God's stars. I will make myself like the Most High.”

Daniel 4:30

> The king said, “Look at this great city of Babylon! I built it by my own power to be my royal home and to show the glory of my majesty.”

Luke 4:6

> The devil said to Him, “I will give You all this power and all this glory. It has been handed over to me, and I can give it to anyone I want.”

Spiritual Warning

Every temptation is ultimately about worship.

Whatever we obey above God becomes our god.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The devil always offers a shortcut around the cross.

X. GET AWAY FROM ME, SATAN

Matthew 4:10 — Worship God Alone

“Jesus said to him, ‘Get away from Me, Satan! For it is written: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”’”

Jesus commanded the devil to leave.

“Get away from Me, Satan!”

The name Satan means “adversary” or “enemy.”

Then Jesus quoted Scripture a third time.

Deuteronomy 6:13.

Worship belongs to God.

Service belongs to God.

Only.

There is no room for divided loyalty.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 6:13

> Respect the LORD your God. Serve Him, and make your promises using His name.

Deuteronomy 10:20

> Respect the LORD your God and serve Him. Hold on tightly to Him and make your promises in His name.

Luke 4:8

> Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him.’”

Spiritual Principle

Some temptations must be firmly rejected, not discussed.

Jesus did not negotiate.

He commanded the enemy to leave.

Key Truth

Worship and service go together.

What we truly worship, we will serve.

XI. ANGELS CARE FOR JESUS

Matthew 4:11 — The Devil Leaves

“Then the devil left Him, and angels came and cared for Him.”

The battle was over.

The devil left.

Luke tells us he left until another time.

The devil would return.

But this time, Jesus had won completely.

Then angels came and cared for Him.

The devil had said angels would catch Jesus if He jumped.

Jesus refused to test God.

And in God's own time, the angels came anyway.

Cross References

1 Kings 19:5

> Then Elijah lay down under the bush and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”

Hebrews 1:14

> Aren't all the angels spirits who serve God? They are sent to help those who will receive salvation.

Luke 4:13

> When the devil had finished every kind of temptation, he left Jesus until another time.

Spiritual Principle

God provides for those who trust Him instead of taking shortcuts.

What Jesus refused to grab, the Father gave.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Resist the devil, and he will flee; trust the Father, and He will provide.

XII. JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE

Matthew 4:12 — John Put in Prison

“When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He returned to Galilee.”

John the Baptist had been arrested.

Herod Antipas put him in prison because John spoke against Herod's sinful marriage to his brother's wife.

The voice in the wilderness had been silenced.

But the One John pointed to was just beginning.

Jesus returned to Galilee.

He did not run from danger.

He moved into the place where God wanted His ministry to begin.

Cross References

Mark 1:14

> After John was put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the good news of God.

Luke 3:19

> But John had corrected Herod the ruler because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the other evil things Herod had done.

Mark 6:17

> Herod himself had ordered John to be arrested, chained, and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom Herod had married.

Spiritual Principle

When one servant's work ends, God's work continues.

John's ministry closed, and Jesus' ministry opened.

Key Truth

Prison could silence John.

It could not silence the gospel.

XIII. JESUS MOVES TO CAPERNAUM

Matthew 4:13 — By the Sea

“Leaving Nazareth, He went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali.”

Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth.

He moved to Capernaum.

Capernaum was a busy fishing town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

It sat on an important trade road.

People from many nations passed through.

It became the home base of Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

Matthew mentions that it was in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali.

These were two of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Their land was in the far north.

Cross References

Joshua 19:32

> The sixth land assignment was given to the tribe of Naphtali, family by family.

Joshua 19:10

> The third land assignment was given to the tribe of Zebulun, family by family. Their border went as far as Sarid.

Luke 4:31

> Then Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught the people on the Sabbath.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus goes where the people are.

He moved to a crossroads town where many could hear the message.

XIV. FULFILLING ISAIAH

Matthew 4:14 — The Prophet's Words Come True

“This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:”

Once again, Matthew shows that Jesus' life followed God's plan.

Even where Jesus lived was foretold.

Isaiah had spoken of the land of Zebulun and Naphtali more than seven hundred years earlier.

Cross References

Isaiah 9:1

> But there will be no more gloom for those who were in trouble. In the past, God brought shame on the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future, He will bring honor to the road by the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, and Galilee of the nations.

Isaiah 8:23

> But there will be no more gloom for those who were in trouble. In the past, God brought shame on the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future, He will bring honor to Galilee of the nations. (In Hebrew Bibles this verse is numbered Isaiah 8:23. In English Bibles it is Isaiah 9:1.)

Luke 4:21

> Then Jesus said to them, “Today this Scripture has come true while you were listening.”

Key Truth

God's Word is precise.

It tells not only who the Messiah would be, but even where He would shine.

XV. GALILEE OF THE GENTILES

Matthew 4:15 — The Way of the Sea

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—”

Galilee had a troubled history.

Zebulun and Naphtali were among the first areas conquered by the Assyrians.

Many Israelites were carried away.

Many foreigners settled there.

It became known as “Galilee of the Gentiles.”

People in Jerusalem looked down on Galilee as a mixed and less religious area.

But this is exactly where Jesus chose to begin.

His ministry to Galilee was a preview of His mission to all nations.

Cross References

1 Kings 9:11

> King Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty towns in the land of Galilee.

Joshua 20:7

> So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali, as a city of safety.

Isaiah 42:6

> “I, the LORD, have called You to do what is right. I will hold Your hand and protect You. I will make You a covenant for the people and a light for the nations.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus begins in the places others overlook.

The land people looked down on was the first to see the Light.

XVI. A GREAT LIGHT HAS DAWNED

Matthew 4:16 — Light in the Darkness

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

Isaiah described the people of Galilee as living in:

Darkness.

The land of the shadow of death.

Darkness is a picture of sin, ignorance, sorrow, and separation from God.

The shadow of death is a picture of hopelessness.

But Isaiah promised something wonderful:

A great light.

That light is Jesus.

He does not wait for people to find their way out of the darkness.

He comes into the darkness and shines.

Cross References

Isaiah 9:2

> The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light. A light has shined on those who live in a land of deep darkness.

Luke 1:79

> He will shine on those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death. He will guide our feet onto the path of peace.

Isaiah 60:2

> Darkness now covers the earth, and deep darkness covers the nations. But the LORD will rise over you, and His glory will be seen on you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the Light the world needs.

No darkness is too deep for His light to reach.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Light did not wait for the darkness to clear; the Light came into the darkness.

XVII. JESUS BEGINS TO PREACH

Matthew 4:17 — “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven Is Near”

“From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”

“From that time.”

This marks the beginning of Jesus' public preaching.

His message was the same message John had preached.

Repent.

The kingdom of heaven is near.

But there was a difference.

John said the King was coming.

Jesus is the King who has come.

The kingdom was near because the King was standing in front of them.

Cross References

Mark 1:15

> “The time has come,” Jesus said. “The kingdom of God is near. Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!”

Isaiah 55:7

> Let wicked people leave their evil ways, and let evil people stop thinking evil thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and He will show them mercy. Let them turn to our God, because He will freely forgive them.

Ezekiel 18:31

> Get rid of all the sins you have done, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why should you die, people of Israel?

Spiritual Principle

The message of the kingdom always begins with repentance.

Jesus did not change the call; He fulfilled it.

Key Truth

The kingdom of heaven is near because the King of heaven has come.

XVIII. JESUS SEES TWO FISHERMEN

Matthew 4:18 — Simon Peter and Andrew

“As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers—Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother. They were throwing a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.”

Jesus was walking by the sea.

He saw two brothers at work.

Simon, who would be called Peter.

And Andrew.

John's Gospel tells us that Andrew had already met Jesus and had brought Peter to Him.

Now Jesus came to call them to follow Him full-time.

They were ordinary working men.

They were not scholars or priests.

They were fishermen doing their daily job.

Cross References

Mark 1:16

> As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake. They were fishermen.

Luke 5:3

> Jesus got into one of the boats, the one that belonged to Simon, and asked him to push off a little from shore. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

John 1:41

> The first thing Andrew did was find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls ordinary people in the middle of ordinary life.

He found His first disciples at work.

XIX. FISHERS OF PEOPLE

Matthew 4:19 — “Follow Me”

“Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people.’”

Jesus' call had two parts.

A command:

“Follow Me.”

A promise:

“I will make you fishers of people.”

In those days, students chose their rabbi.

But Jesus chose His disciples.

He did not say, “Follow My teaching.”

He said, “Follow Me.”

Discipleship is first about a relationship with Jesus.

Then Jesus promised to change their work.

They had spent their lives catching fish.

Now they would spend their lives bringing people to God.

And notice who would do the making:

“I will make you.”

Jesus would train them and shape them.

Cross References

Jeremiah 16:16

> “Look, I am going to send for many fishermen,” says the LORD, “and they will catch them.”

Mark 1:17

> “Come, follow Me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of people.”

Ezekiel 47:10

> Fishermen will stand along the shore. There will be places to spread their nets, and there will be many kinds of fish, like the fish of the Great Sea.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus always leads to reaching others.

A true disciple becomes a fisher of people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Our part is to follow; His part is to make us into what He wants us to be.

XX. IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

Matthew 4:20 — They Left Their Nets

“Immediately, they left their nets and followed Him.”

Peter and Andrew did not delay.

Immediately.

They left their nets.

Their nets were their business.

Their income.

Their security.

They left them behind to follow Jesus.

Cross References

1 Kings 19:20

> Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. He said, “Please let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and then I will follow you.”

Mark 1:18

> Right away they left their nets and followed Him.

Luke 5:11

They brought their boats to shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus means leaving something behind.

We cannot hold onto everything and follow Him fully.

Application

Following Jesus may mean leaving:

- Old habits.
- Sinful relationships.
- Personal plans.
- Worldly security.
- The need for control.
- Anything that keeps us from Him.

XXI. JAMES AND JOHN

Matthew 4:21 — Mending Their Nets

“Going farther, He saw two other brothers—James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, repairing their nets. Jesus called them,”

Jesus called a second pair of brothers.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

They were partners with Peter and Andrew in the fishing business.

They were in the boat with their father, repairing their nets.

Later, Peter, James, and John would become Jesus' closest disciples.

They would see things the others did not see.

John would write a Gospel, three letters, and the book of Revelation.

James would become the first of the twelve apostles to die for his faith.

Cross References

Mark 1:19

> Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in their boat repairing their nets.

Luke 5:10

> James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were Simon's partners, and they were amazed too. Jesus said to Simon, “Don't be afraid. From now on you will be catching people.”

Genesis 12:1

> The LORD said to Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's family. Go to the land I will show you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus calls people from every kind of background, but He calls each one personally.

Like Abram before them, they were called to leave and go where God would lead.

XXII. THEY LEFT THEIR FATHER

Matthew 4:22 — Leaving the Boat and Their Father

“and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.”

Peter and Andrew left their nets.

James and John left even more.

They left the boat.

They left their father.

This does not mean they stopped loving their father.

Mark tells us Zebedee had hired servants with him, so he was not left alone.

But it does mean Jesus came first.

Their loyalty to Christ was greater than their loyalty to family or business.

Cross References

Mark 1:20

> Right away Jesus called them. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers and followed Him.

Luke 9:59

> Jesus said to another man, “Follow Me.” But the man said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

Deuteronomy 33:9

> He said about his father and mother, “I do not think about them.” He did not recognize his brothers or claim his own children. He did this because he obeyed Your word and kept Your covenant.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus must come first, even before the people we love most.

Loving Jesus most teaches us to love others best.

Key Truth

There is no such thing as following Jesus halfway.

XXIII. TEACHING, PREACHING, AND HEALING

Matthew 4:23 — Throughout All Galilee

“Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”

This verse is a summary of Jesus' ministry.

It has three parts.

Teaching — explaining God's Word in the synagogues.

Preaching — announcing the good news of the kingdom.

Healing — showing the power and compassion of the kingdom.

Jesus did not only tell people about God's kingdom.

He showed them what it looks like.

And notice the word every.

He healed every disease and every sickness.

No illness was too hard for Him.

Cross References

Mark 1:39

> So Jesus traveled all over Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Isaiah 61:1

> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has chosen Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal those with broken hearts and to announce freedom to the captives.

Luke 4:44

> And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel is both words and works.

Jesus spoke the truth and showed God's love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus taught the mind, preached to the heart, and healed the body.

XXIV. NEWS SPREADS THROUGHOUT SYRIA

Matthew 4:24 — He Healed Them All

“News about Him spread throughout Syria. People brought to Him all who were sick with various diseases and suffering—those troubled by evil spirits, those who were paralyzed, and those with seizures—and He healed them all.”

The news about Jesus went beyond Galilee.

It spread throughout Syria, the Roman province to the north.

People brought every kind of need.

Sickness.

Pain.

Evil spirits.

Paralysis.

Seizures.

Some problems were physical.

Some were spiritual.

Jesus had power over all of them.

And He healed them all.

Cross References

Isaiah 53:4

> Surely He took our sicknesses and carried our pain.

Mark 3:10

> He had healed many people, so all who were sick kept pushing forward to touch Him.

2 Kings 5:1

> Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man and highly respected. He was a brave soldier, but he had a skin disease.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus has authority over sickness and over evil spirits.

There is no power greater than His.

Key Truth

Like Naaman the Syrian long before, people from outside Israel found healing through the God of Israel.

XXV. LARGE CROWDS FOLLOW HIM

Matthew 4:25 — From Every Region

“Large crowds followed Him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan River.”

People came from everywhere.

Galilee — the north.

The Decapolis — ten cities east of the Sea of Galilee with many Gentiles.

Jerusalem and Judea — the south.

Beyond the Jordan — the east.

Jews and Gentiles.

City people and country people.

They all came to Jesus.

This sets the stage for the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

Cross References

Mark 3:8

> People came from Jerusalem, Idumea, the land beyond the Jordan River, and the area around Tyre and Sidon. A huge crowd came to Him when they heard about all He was doing.

Isaiah 49:6

> I will also make You a light for the nations, so that My salvation will reach the ends of the earth.

Luke 6:18

> They came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. Those who were troubled by evil spirits were healed too.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus draws people from every place and background.

His light shines for the whole world.

XXVI. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 4

1. God's Word Is Our Weapon

Jesus resisted every temptation by quoting Scripture.

He showed us how to fight spiritual battles.

Principle:

We cannot use a weapon we have not picked up — we must know God's Word to fight with it.

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2. Do Not Test God

Trust Him instead of demanding proof or signs.

Principle:

Faith rests on what God has said, not on what we demand He prove.

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3. Worship Belongs Only to God

Satan's greatest desire is misplaced worship.

Jesus showed the way of faithfulness.

Principle:

Whatever we bow to, we will serve — so bow to God alone.

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4. Jesus Is the Light

His coming fulfills prophecy, bringing light to people in darkness.

Principle:

No darkness is beyond the reach of Christ's light.

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5. The Call to Discipleship Is Immediate

Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything to follow Jesus.

This shows the cost and urgency of obedience.

Principle:

When Jesus calls, the right time to follow is now.

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6. The Kingdom Is for the Broken

Jesus healed sickness, freed the oppressed, and welcomed the needy.

This reveals God's compassion.

Principle:

Jesus does not turn away the hurting; He draws them to Himself.

XXVII. THREE TEMPTATIONS, THREE ANSWERS

The First Temptation — The Desire of the Body

The Temptation: Turn stones into bread.

The Lie: Meet your own needs your own way.

Jesus' Answer: Deuteronomy 8:3 — People live by every word from God.

The Second Temptation — The Desire for Proof

The Temptation: Throw Yourself down from the temple.

The Lie: Make God prove His love.

Jesus' Answer: Deuteronomy 6:16 — Do not test the Lord your God.

The Third Temptation — The Desire for Power

The Temptation: Bow down and receive the kingdoms.

The Lie: Take the crown without the cross.

Jesus' Answer: Deuteronomy 6:13 — Worship and serve God only.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

All three of Jesus' answers came from the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy was written to Israel at the end of their forty years in the wilderness.

Jesus answered the devil with the very lessons Israel failed to learn.

XXVIII. JESUS, ADAM, AND ISRAEL

Matthew 4 shows that Jesus succeeded where others failed.

Adam Was Tempted in a Garden

He had everything he needed.

He still fell.

Israel Was Tested in the Wilderness

For forty years they complained, tested God, and worshiped idols.

Jesus Was Tempted in the Wilderness

For forty days He was hungry and alone.

He did not fall.

Key Truth

Jesus is the faithful Son who obeyed where Adam and Israel disobeyed.

Spiritual Principle

Because Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin, He is able to help us when we are tempted.

XXIX. HOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION

Jesus' victory gives us a pattern to follow.

Know Your Identity

The devil said, “If You are the Son of God.”

Jesus knew who He was.

Believers must remember who they are in Christ.

Know the Word

Jesus answered every temptation with Scripture.

We must read, study, and memorize God's Word.

Use the Word Correctly

The devil twisted Scripture.

Jesus used all of Scripture rightly.

Refuse Shortcuts

Every temptation offered a shortcut around God's plan.

Keep Worship Pure

Every temptation is ultimately about who we will worship.

Resist Firmly

Jesus said, “Get away from Me, Satan!”

Some temptations must be rejected immediately.

Key Truth

The best defense against temptation is a heart filled with God's Word and set on God alone.

XXX. WHAT MATTHEW 4 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 4 presents Jesus as:

The Faithful Son

He trusted His Father in the wilderness.

The Victor Over Satan

He defeated every temptation.

The Living Word

He lived by every word from God.

The Great Light

He shines in the darkness.

The Preacher of the Kingdom

He called people to repent.

The Caller of Disciples

He said, “Follow Me.”

The Healer

He healed every disease and sickness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who defeated the devil in the wilderness is the same Jesus who calls us, heals us, and leads us out of darkness into His light.

XXXI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted?

God allowed the temptation to prove that Jesus was the faithful Son.

Jesus succeeded where Adam and Israel failed.

His victory also shows that He understands our temptations and can help us.

Question 2

What is the significance of the forty days and forty nights?

It connects Jesus to Moses, who fasted forty days on the mountain.

It connects Him to Elijah, who traveled forty days to the mountain of God.

It also connects Him to Israel's forty years in the wilderness.

Question 3

Why was it wrong for Jesus to turn stones into bread?

Bread itself was not sinful.

But the devil was tempting Jesus to use His power for Himself, apart from His Father's will.

It was a temptation to stop trusting the Father to provide.

Question 4

Why did Jesus answer every temptation with Scripture?

God's Word is the truth that defeats the devil's lies.

Jesus showed us how to fight temptation.

He did not use special power that we do not have.

He used the written Word that God has given to all of us.

Question 5

How did the devil misuse Scripture?

He quoted Psalm 91 but took it out of context.

The psalm promises protection for those who trust God and walk in His ways.

It does not promise protection for those who deliberately put themselves in danger to force God to act.

Question 6

What does it mean to test God?

Testing God means trying to force Him to prove Himself.

Israel did this at Massah when they asked, “Is the LORD with us or not?”

True faith trusts God without demanding signs.

Question 7

What was the devil really after in the third temptation?

He wanted worship.

From the beginning, he wanted to take the place of God.

He offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world without the cross.

Question 8

Why did Jesus move to Capernaum?

Capernaum was a busy town on an important trade road by the Sea of Galilee.

It became the home base for His ministry.

His move also fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about Zebulun and Naphtali.

Question 9

Why was Galilee called “Galilee of the Gentiles”?

After the Assyrians conquered the area, many foreigners settled there.

It had a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles.

Jesus' ministry there was a preview of the gospel going to all nations.

Question 10

What does it mean to be “fishers of people”?

It means bringing people to God the way a fisherman brings in fish.

Jesus promised to make His disciples into people who would reach others with the gospel.

Question 11

What did the first disciples leave to follow Jesus?

Peter and Andrew left their nets.

James and John left their boat and their father.

They left their business, income, and security because Jesus came first.

Question 12

What should Matthew 4 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 4 should cause believers to live:

- Filled with God's Word.
- Ready to resist temptation.
- Trusting God without testing Him.
- Worshiping God alone.
- Shining Christ's light in dark places.
- Following Jesus immediately.
- Reaching others as fishers of people.
- Caring for the sick and hurting.

XXXII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 4 asks several important questions.

Do I Know God's Word Well Enough to Fight Temptation?

Jesus answered every attack with Scripture.

Where Am I Most Likely to Be Tempted?

The devil attacked Jesus when He was hungry and alone.

Am I Trying to Meet My Needs Outside of God's Will?

Good desires can be met in wrong ways.

Am I Testing God or Trusting Him?

Do I demand signs before I obey?

What Is Competing for My Worship?

Money, power, comfort, approval, or anything else can take God's place.

Am I Taking Shortcuts Around God's Plan?

The devil offered a crown without a cross.

Have I Truly Left My Nets?

Is there anything I am holding onto that keeps me from following Jesus fully?

Am I a Fisher of People?

Who am I helping to come to Jesus?

Do I Care About the Hurting the Way Jesus Does?

Jesus healed the sick and welcomed the needy.

XXXIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Victory in Private Comes Before Ministry in Public”

Before Jesus preached a single sermon, He won a battle in the wilderness.

No crowds saw it.

No disciples were there.

No one applauded.

It was just Jesus, His Father's Word, and the enemy.

Only after that private victory did Jesus begin His public ministry.

Then came the preaching.

Then came the disciples.

Then came the crowds.

Then came the healings.

This creates a powerful principle.

The battles we win when no one is watching prepare us for the work God gives us in front of others.

What happens in the wilderness shapes what happens in Galilee.

Principle:

Faithfulness in the hidden place prepares us for fruitfulness in the public place.

XXXIV. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 4 begins in a lonely wilderness and ends with crowds from every direction.

At the beginning, Jesus is alone and hungry.

At the end, He is surrounded by people seeking His help.

In between, two great things happen.

Jesus defeats the devil.

And Jesus begins to shine as the Light of the world.

The devil offered bread.

Jesus chose God's Word.

The devil offered a dramatic show.

Jesus chose trust.

The devil offered the kingdoms of the world.

Jesus chose to worship God alone.

Then Jesus walked into Galilee, a land of darkness, and the Light began to shine.

He called fishermen.

They left their nets.

He preached the kingdom.

He healed the sick.

He freed the oppressed.

Matthew 4 therefore reminds us:

The devil is real, but he is not stronger than Christ.

Temptation is real, but God's Word is stronger.

Darkness is real, but the Light has come.

Before the crowds came the wilderness.

Before the miracles came the victory.

Before the disciples could fish for people, they had to follow Jesus.

The story of Jesus' ministry begins with:

A Son who would not bow.

A Word that would not fail.

A Light that would not stay hidden.

And a call that would not wait.

The same call still stands:

Stand on God's Word.

Worship God alone.

Walk in the Light.

Follow Jesus now.

Fish for people.

And until He returns:

Keep standing.

Keep worshiping.

Keep following.

Keep fishing.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Jesus, Your faithful Son.

Thank You that He was tempted in every way, yet He never sinned.

Thank You that He won the victory where we have failed.

When we are tempted, help us remember that Jesus understands.

When we are weak, hungry, tired, or alone, keep us from falling.

Fill our hearts and minds with Your Word.

Teach us to read it, study it, remember it, and obey it.

When the enemy lies to us, help us answer, “It is written.”

Keep us from twisting Your Word to serve ourselves.

Teach us to trust You instead of testing You.

Keep us from demanding signs before we obey.

Guard our hearts from anything that would take Your place.

Help us worship You alone and serve You only.

Keep us from taking shortcuts around the path You have chosen for us.

Thank You that Jesus is the great Light who shines in the darkness.

Let His light shine in every dark place in our lives.

Use us to carry His light to others.

Lord Jesus, we hear You say, “Follow Me.”

Help us leave our nets behind.

Help us follow You right away, not later.

Make us fishers of people.

Give us compassion for the sick, the hurting, and the oppressed.

Let our lives show the good news of Your kingdom in both word and action.

Draw people from every place and background to Yourself.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people.’” — Matthew 4:19

Central Truth

Jesus, the faithful Son of God, defeated the devil by the Word of God and began His ministry by bringing light to those in darkness, calling disciples to follow Him, and healing the broken.

Matthew 4 in One Sentence

Jesus defeats the devil in the wilderness by standing on God's Word, then begins His ministry in Galilee by preaching repentance, calling fishermen to follow Him, and healing every sickness as the Light that has dawned on those in darkness.