

### **III. THE PREPARATION AND PUBLIC MINISTRY OF THE KING**

**Matthew 3:13-4:25**

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#### **A. MATTHEW GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF TWO SPECIFIC INCIDENTS WHICH WERE PREPARATORY FOR JESUS' MINISTRY.**

1. The first incident preparatory to Jesus' ministry involved His baptism and acclamations of approval (Matt. 3:13-17).
  - a. In preparation for His ministry Jesus came from Nazareth to the Jordan and was baptized by John the Baptist. This act not only inaugurated the ministry of Jesus and introduced Him as the Messiah but it also identified Him with those for whom He came to save. John the Baptist testified on this occasion and bore witness that Jesus was the Son of God (Jn. 1:29-34).
  - b. Notice at this particular time when Jesus was baptized He also received the acclamation and approval of His heavenly Father (Matt. 3:17). Two things bore witness of Him. First, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and lit upon Him. Then, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
2. The second incident preparatory to Jesus' ministry involved His being tempted in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11).
  - a. In preparation for ministry Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tested. This temptation, Or testing, was a result of Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness and it came after a period of fasting for forty days in which He was hungry (4:1,2). Notice fasting was often associated with ministry in the O.T. ( II Sam. 12:16; Neh. 1:4; Esth. 4:16; Dan. 9:3).
  - b. In preparation for ministry Jesus was faced with Satan's attempts to get Him to act in self-will rather than in obedience to the Father's will.
    - (1) The devil first appealed to Jesus' physical need to satisfy His hunger by use of His divine power. Jesus used the Word of God to resist the devil's appeal (Matt. 4:3,4).
    - (2) Next, the devil appealed to Jesus to demonstrate His power in accordance with the Word of God (Matt. 4:6,7). Here Satan used the Scriptures but he used them out of context. This promise of God concerned those walking in the path of obedience. Therefore Jesus refused Satan's appeal quoting the Scriptures. Notice from this account that the devil often uses God's Word in appealing to others.
    - (3) Thirdly, Satan showed Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world and appealed to Him with the offer of control over them if He would worship him. Jesus again refused Satan's appeal using the Word of God (Matt. 4:8-10). Notice Jesus did not deny that Satan was over the Kingdoms of this world. The Bible teaches that when Adam transgressed and fell he abdicated dominion over this world and Satan presently has control (II Cor. 4:3,4). Verse 11 says the

devil then left the Lord Jesus and angels came and ministered to Him. While it is not stated, apparently they supplied His physical needs of nourishment.

Notice in this incident Satan was defeated and it was shown that Jesus was the Son of God with power over the devil.

## **B. MATTHEW RECORDS THE MANNER IN WHICH JESUS BEGAN HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY (Matt. 4:12-25).**

1. This record discloses the place where Jesus began His ministry and what His message was (Matt. 4:12-17).

When Jesus heard that John the Baptist was imprisoned He departed from Nazareth and dwelt in Capernaum. Matthew points out for the seventh time, that Jesus' ministry in Capernaum is a fulfillment of the Scriptures. In Isa. 9:1,2 Jesus is portrayed as a great light shining to people who sat in spiritual darkness. Jesus' message was the same as John the Baptist's message. It called for repentance for the kingdom to be established. The kingdom being at hand meant that it was being offered in the person of the prophesied King. Later, Jesus would pronounce judgment on this city because they rejected the time of God's visitation and rejected their Messiah.

2. This record discloses how Jesus called His first disciples (Matt. 4:18-22).

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum He saw two fishermen, Simon and Andrew, who were brothers, and called them to follow Him. These two left their nets and followed Jesus.

Then Jesus saw two other brothers, James and John, and called them. These also left their fathers and followed Him. These first four disciples demonstrated repentance in leaving their occupation, their home and their families to follow Jesus.

3. This record details the region and the results of Jesus' initial ministry (Matt. 4:23-25).

Matthew says Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in the Synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. As He preached Jesus healed all manner diseases. These miracles authenticated that He was indeed the Christ, the anointed of God and the Messiah. As a result we are told that great multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem and from Judea followed Him. Notice the fact that Jesus did what only God can do should have caused others to believe on Him (Jn. 20:30,31).

### **EXPOSITORY NOTES**

#### **3:13-15**

Why was Jesus baptized since He had no sins of which to repent? Two things seem to be involved. First, it was a ceremonial rite by which He was introduced into the ministry and introduced as Messiah to His people. Note how the Aaronic high priests were introduced by a special ceremony (Ex. 29:4-7). This seems to co-inside with the testimony of John the Baptist (Jn. 1:29-34). Secondly, the baptism of Jesus showed His identification with sinners whom He came to redeem (Isa. 53:12; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:16,17).

**4:1** The Bible says Jesus was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin and is therefore able to help those who are tempted (Heb. 4:15,16; 2:18). This no doubt refers to the three areas through which the devil tempts us as recorded in I Jn. 2:16. Could Jesus have sinned? **Absolutely not!** He was the sinless Son of God (Heb. 7:26; I Pet. 1:19; 2:22; Jn. 8:46). The purpose of the temptation was not to see if Jesus would sin but to show the devil that He could not sin being the perfect Son of God.

It should be understood that Jesus had a perfect human nature and not a sin nature as we. Therefore, He was not tempted from within with sinful lusts and passions. So then, from His human side He was "not able" to sin and by the exercise of His will He was "able not" to sin (Jas. 1:13).

**4:3,6** Note the word "if" is used in a Greek grammar construction which may well be translated "since". Satan no doubt knew who Jesus was. There was no question about that.

### QUESTIONS WE CAN APPLY TO OUR LIVES

(1) Why was Jesus baptized and how does His example of obedience relate to believers?

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(2) What do Chapter 3 verses 16 and 17 show us about the existence of God?

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(3) What truth about Jesus' person is evidenced in chapter 4 verses 3-11?

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(4) What fact about the devil is revealed in verse 11?

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(5) What did Jesus use to be victorious over the temptations of the devil that we should also use when tempted?

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(6) How does the gospel of the Kingdom, which John the Baptist and Jesus preached, differ from the gospel of grace which is preached today?

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(7) What kind of people did Jesus call to serve Him in the ministry and how does that relate to us?

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(8) What facts can we learn about the manner of baptism from Matt. 3:16 and John 3:23?

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(9) What can we learn about the devil from Matt. 4:6?

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