

Notes for Matthew –Chapter 4 (Page 1 of 6)

Introduction Part 1 – Understanding God's will for our life:

1. How does one practically do God's will through the day?
 - a. We don't get e-mails, nor phone messages from God saying, "Good morning, here is a list of the things I expect you to do today. ☺"
 - b. The answer is to study God's word, so you know how to apply it. God desires that you study the text, contemplate what it means and contemplate how it applies to your life.
2. Solomon figured this out at the end of his life: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NIV).
 - a. The New Testament Perspective: Our salvation does not depend upon how well we keep the "10 commandments" or any other commandments anywhere in the Bible.
 - b. Those commandments are there for our happiness. God wants us to live a full, rich abundant life. God-the-Father, who loves us beyond what we can comprehend, wants to bless you tremendously. For God to bless us, we have to do what He wants us to.
Christianity is not just saying you believe in Jesus, it is taking action based on that belief.
3. Next, remember the age-old idiom, "you are what you eat".
 - a. That happens to be true. We physically grow based on what we eat.
 - b. It is also true that we become what we worship.
 - c. If we spend our lives worshipping Jesus, studying the Bible, studying the life patterns, the word-pictures, we become what we worship. There is no exception to this fact.
4. Your daily marching orders come from your obedience to what God teaches us from the bible. We pray "thy (your) will be done" as we need God's supernatural intervention for us to have the power and ability to do God's will.

Introduction Part 2 – Overview of Chapter 4

1. The first half of the chapter is about Jesus being tempted by Satan. (Verses 1-11)
 - a. The big-picture idea to see is God the Father's will being carried out through Jesus despite the temptations to do otherwise.
2. The 2nd half is Jesus choosing some of his disciples and setting up his ministry. (Verses 12-25)
3. The overriding theme is God's will getting done.
 - a. It is hard to see God's will getting done moment by moment. When we look back at our lives, we can often see how God was working through our lives all for His glory.

Chapter 4 Verse 1: Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

1. The last verse of Chapter 3 was Jesus being baptized, and the voice of God the Father saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased".
2. It appears, right afterward, Jesus was called into the desert to be tempted.
3. When Jesus received the Holy Spirit, from this point forward, Jesus lived to do the Father's will. The Father's will in effect was, "OK son go to the wilderness, don't eat & watch out for Satan". ☺
4. Why this was the Father's will (live in the desert/be tempted) is discussed elsewhere in the Bible.
 - a. "Because he (Jesus) himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." (Hebrews 2:18, NIV)
 - b. God the Father's first order of business after Jesus was baptized, was not to do miracles, not to heal sick people, not to preach the Gospel or even go immediately to the cross. It was to be tempted, so that we can relate to Him.
5. Some commentators compare Jesus being tempted in the desert to Adam and Eve being tempted in the Garden of Eden.
 - a. Where Adam & Eve failed, Jesus succeeded.

Notes for Matthew Chapter 4 (Page 2 of 6)

Chapter 4, Verse 1 (cont.)

- b. Jesus, under the worst of circumstances, not only can relate to our problems, but gives us a model of how, if we obey God's commandments, shows us how we can mature to live the full, abundant life that God the Father desires for us.
- 6. Before I move on to Verse 2, let's talk a little about Satan himself.
 - a. The two great mistakes to make about Satan are that 1) he doesn't exist and 2) he is everywhere. It is a mistake to think of him as a fictional character. The other problem is we can blame Satan when often it is our own free will that causes us to mess up our lives.
 - b. I believe Satan is the most powerful creature made by God. We are unable to resist him in our own power. The only way to resist Satan is to call upon God and rely upon his Word. That is how Jesus overcame him, as we'll see in this passage.

Verse 2: After fasting forty days and forty nights, he (Jesus) was hungry.

- 1. Well, who wouldn't be hungry after 40 days? ☺
 - a. People who have studied fasting will say that after a few days your body will "shut down" and no longer desire food. At about a 40-day period, you can starve to death. The body now needs food again simply to survive. That is what is meant by the text.
- 2. The number "40" in the bible is usually associated with "trials".
 - a. After leaving Egypt, the Israelites were in the desert for 40 days when the spies came back from the Promised Land. When they came back, the reports of "giants in the land" gave them fear of doing what God commanded them to do and conquer the land. God then punished them for 40 years (a year for each day). (See Numbers 14:34)
 - b. Also with Noah, it rained for "40 days and 40 nights" (Genesis 7:12)
 - c. Remember that Matthew's primary concern is to show Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus' success at His 40-day trial in the wilderness is meant to be compared to the Israelites failure on their 40-day trial.
- 3. The next 10 verses will discuss Jesus being tempted by the devil.
 - a. Notice that the fasting didn't prevent Satan from tempting Jesus.
 - b. If anything, Satan used that moment of weakness to tempt Jesus.
 - c. There is an English acronym associated with human weakness called "H.A.L.T.". It means one should never get too (H)ungry, (A)ngry, (L)onely or (T)ired. When one is suffering from one or more of those things, that is when we are weak and are more susceptible to Satan's Attacks.

Verse 3: The tempter (Satan) came to him (Jesus) and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

- 1. Notice Satan acknowledges that Jesus is the "Son of God".
 - a. He is not saying it as a form of denial or question, but saying in effect, "Since you are who you claim you are, then use your power to turn the stones into bread.
 - b. Could Jesus do that? If Jesus is God, he can do anything.
 - i. If you know your bible, you should be familiar with the story of how Jesus "multiplied" the loaves of bread on two occasions: one was to feed 5,000 men and the other was to feed 4,000 people. If Jesus could multiply the loaves then, he certainly could have used some miraculous power to feed himself here.
- 2. OK, so what is wrong with Satan asking this question? Here was Jesus starving to death.
 - a. Satan was not telling Jesus to "go starve to death", but to save his own life.
 - b. In Verse 4, Jesus teaches why this is a temptation.

Notes for Matthew - Chapter 4 (Page 3 of 6)

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

1. The problem was not Jesus eating bread. The problem was this was not the desire of God the Father for Jesus to do at this moment in His life.
2. Let's face it; it is logical for Jesus to eat bread here to live.
3. This verse has scary implications for us as Christians.
 - a. Does that mean the "logical" thing for us to do is not always "God's will"?
 - b. It is something to stop every now and then to pray about.
 - c. Sometimes God may ask us to do illogical things (by the world's idea of what is right) as God has a greater purpose in mind.
 - d. This situation applies to the time where you are feeling supernaturally "led" to do something that defies logic. Again, you will know it is God's will if 1) it is not something that violates any biblical principal and 2) the results ultimately work out for God's glory.
4. In Verse 4, Jesus quotes part of Deuteronomy 8:3.
 - a. Notice the verse says we are to live on every word that comes from God's mouth.
 - b. To live on every word, would mean to learn every word.
 - c. This is why Christians encourage regularly readings of the entire bible.
 - d. Further, it says that man is not to live by bread alone.
 - i. Jesus does not condemn eating food and sustaining our life.
 - ii. It is about putting things in perspective.
 - iii. It is about seeking God's will first, and then our food or whatever else you desire.

Verses 5-6: 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. "

1. Somehow, Satan took Jesus from the desert to Jerusalem. Specifically, he took Jesus to the high point on top of the temple.
 - a. How Satan "transported" Jesus is not revealed in the text.
 - b. It gives us a glimpse into Satan's power.
2. The top of the temple to the ground (via the back side) was a 450-foot drop! (Source: Josephus).
3. Let me paraphrase what Satan was saying:
 - a. "Hey Jesus, the Bible says in Psalms 91:11-12 that angels will protect you. So why don't you just prove to everyone that you are the Messiah. Jump off the temple. People will see angels catch you, realize you are the Messiah and save a whole lot of trouble."
4. This verse indicates that Satan can quote Scripture!
 - a. Further he can twist it to tempt you with all kinds of things.
 - b. This is why false-teachers are emphasized so much in the New Testament. Every book in the New Testament has at least some reference to false teachings and false teachers. If Satan can cause temptation by misapplying Scripture, imagine what man can do!
5. Further, Satan knew that this prophecy in Psalms 91:11-12 was about Jesus!
 - a. When Satan quoted these two verses, he skipped one sentence. Satan skipped the last sentence of Verse 11 that says, "to guard you in all your ways" (NIV).
 - b. That sentence is the key to the temptation.
 - c. "Your ways", refers to the ways of God-The-Father. The prophecy is that the Messiah would come to do 100% do the will of God the Father.
 - d. God the Father desired that Jesus pay the price for all of mankind's sins.

Notes for Matthew - Chapter 4 (Page 4 of 6)

Verses 5-6 (cont.):

6. Remember Satan's goal is to stop, or (later) slow down God's redemptive plan for mankind.
 - a. God the Father, by definition is perfect. In order for us to spend eternity with God, a perfect sacrifice would be needed for sin.
 - b. If Satan could cause Jesus, even for a moment, to not do God the Father's will, Jesus no longer becomes the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
 - c. These temptations never deny Jesus as God. In fact, they attempt to make Jesus show off his power. They focus on attempting to make Jesus anything less than perfect so the sacrifice on the cross no longer becomes a perfect sacrifice.
7. Let us personalize this second temptation.
 - a. The first temptation has to do with sustenance. There is nothing wrong with eating food or enjoying life, it should simply be done in accordance with God's will.
 - b. This second temptation is about power. There is a need in man to have and obtain power.
 - i. There is nothing wrong with power per se. Somebody has to lead and be in charge. God raises up people to be our leaders. (See Rom. 13:1).
 - ii. The point has to do with committing sin in order to achieve or use that power. If we are not following biblical principals in order to get power, then we are in sin.
 - iii. Satan was offering Jesus a "short-cut" for his power. The application is to resist Satan's temptations of "short-cuts" in order to live our lives.
 - iv. It comes back to doing God's will. God does desire the best for us and wants us to accomplish great things. But God desires we do it his way, and at His timing.

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

1. This is Jesus' response to Satan's second temptation.
2. This is a quote of Deuteronomy 6:16.
3. Notice Jesus did not say to Satan, "You didn't properly quote the bible";
4. Instead, Jesus used his authority as God to resist Satan. He said that one does put God to the test. He was referring to himself, not God the Father in this situation.
5. Remember that Satan has been given the power and authority to tempt and test us.
 - a. God allows this for our growth and maturity. The same way we test our children to see if they learn. God allows temptations to keep us dependant upon Him.
 - b. Our only hope of resistance is to turn to God for help. (Reference: See Jude 1:9)

Verses 8-9: 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."

1. Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Again, we don't know if was "like a movie" just how Satan did this. We simply take the text at face value.
2. An important concept to understand is Satan owns this world.
 - a. If Satan didn't own the kingdoms of this world, Jesus can't be tempted by it.
 - b. You will notice in this section of Scripture (Verses 8-11) that Jesus never denies Satan owns this world! He simply rebukes Satan by again quoting Scripture.
 - i. Not just the ugly aspects, but also the beautiful aspects of nature, the beautiful things man has built. You name it, if it is part of the earth, man-made, or God-made, and it does not swear allegiance to Jesus, it belongs to Satan.

Verse 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.

1. Again, the temptation focuses on Jesus taking a "short cut" to the cross.

Notes for Matthew - Chapter 4 (Page 5 of 6)

Verse 10: (cont.)

2. You almost get the impression that the 3rd temptation was a desperate attempt to get Jesus to fail. If he wasn't going to eat bread despite his extreme hunger, if he wasn't going to take a "short cut" to the cross (via throwing himself off the temple to prove his Messiahship), then he wasn't going to bow down to Satan even if Satan offered everything he had to Jesus.
3. The same story of the "three temptations" is told in Luke Chapter 4.
 - a. In Luke 4, the same story is told, but the order of the temptations is different.
 - b. In Luke's account, the 2nd temptation and the 3rd temptation are reversed.
 - c. The logical explanation is that Matthew tells the story *chronologically* and Luke tells them in *climatically*. The 2nd temptation (throw yourself from the temple) appears to be the greatest temptation. The 3rd temptation (worship me) appears to be a desperate attempt by Satan to get Jesus to take a short cut.
4. Notice Satan fled right after this third temptation.
 - a. Why? Because Jesus commanded him to leave. Satan must obey Jesus, as Jesus is Lord.
5. Notice the last phrase of Verse 11 says, "Angels came and attended him".
 - a. The logical assumption is that angels came and fed him and strengthened Jesus.

Verses 12: When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee.

1. Verse 12 is a bridge verse. In fact, there may be a time gap here of up to a year.
 - a. The purpose of Matthew's Gospel is not to give a detail-by-detail account of Jesus' life.
 - i. It is to focus on specific events that show that he is the promised Messiah.
 - b. Some of the early chapters of John's Gospel appear to have taken place in the time-gap between Verses 11-12 of Matthew.

Verses 13-16: 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: ^{4:15} "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along 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."

1. Nazareth is where Jesus grew up. I assumed he stopped there, lived with relatives and then moved to Capernaum. Capernaum was a town on the Sea of Galilee and was his "headquarters".
2. We will read in Matthew 9:9 that this was where Matthew himself met Jesus.
3. The average Jew might have thought "shouldn't the Messiah be based in Jerusalem?"
 - a. Matthew quotes Old Testament Scripture to support the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. He is quoting Isaiah 9:1-2 to support Jesus basing his operations in Capernaum.
4. If you read the same quote in Isaiah, the word order is a little different.
 - a. Our English translation of the Old Testament is directly from the Hebrew.
 - b. In Matthew we read the Hebrew to the Greek to English. This changed the word order.
5. Notice Verse 16 again "the people living in darkness have seen a great light".
 - a. That is from Isaiah. It sounds like it is from The Gospel of John:
 - i. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:4-5, NKJV)
 - b. Sometimes as Christians we take for grant it how non-believers "live in darkness".
 - i. They may understand the gospel message but they either refuse to believe it or simply refuse to think about it. They don't want to change their lifestyle.

Verse 17: From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

1. These are the first recorded words to Jesus to anyone other than Satan.
2. The kingdom of heaven is "near" refers to the fact that salvation is not a long distance away or one has to wait until one dies. It is "near" in the sense that one has to believe in Jesus.

Notes for Matthew - Chapter 4 (Page 6 of 6)

Verse 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 make you fishers of men." ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

1. In John's Gospel we learn that Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist. He may even have been a witness to Jesus' baptism. (See John 1:40)
 - a. John's Gospel said that Jesus first spoke to Andrew & Peter at the time of Jesus' baptism. So here in Matthew, some time later is Jesus calling Peter and Andrew to be his disciples.
2. Verse 19 is one of the most famous verses in the entire bible. It is the command given by Jesus to Peter and Andrew to 1) "follow me" and 2) I will make you "fishers of men".
 - a. One of the greatest testimonies in the bible is that they left their profession to follow Jesus.
 - b. God often asks the same thing from us. We have to be willing to give up everything to follow him. Once you accept that, it may be fine to keep your present occupation or position, or God may call you to something else.
 - c. I believe all Christians are called to be "fishers of men".
 - d. One has to follow Jesus in order to be "fisher's of men". The order is important.

Verses 21-22: 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.

1. I find it interesting that James and John were called, but their father was not.
2. One of the hardest things a person can do is to leave their family in order to follow Jesus.
 - a. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law' (Matthew 10:34-35, NIV).
 - b. This is a prediction by Jesus how he will cause family splits over Him.
3. Some commentators pick up on the fact that Andrew and Peter were casting their nets while James and John were mending their nets in their father's boat.
 - a. Some Christians are called to "cast" their nets and be involved in evangelism.
 - b. Others are called to "mend". Those people work on maturing the Christian believers.

Verse 23: Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

1. From hereon in to the cross, Jesus mission is to spread the word that the Messiah *is here*.
2. The purpose of the miracles, over the rest of Matthew is to validate Jesus as the Messiah.
 - a. All the healing miracles are temporary fixes. Those people still died.
 - b. Accepting Jesus as payment for your sins is the permanent fix.

Verses 24-25: 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, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

1. My favorite word in this whole section is "all". All the people were healed were brought to Jesus.
2. Matthew lists different types of diseases so you wouldn't think Jesus was limited in his power.
3. Yes God cares about your salvation, and that is His primary purpose.
 - a. He also cares about your physical well being in the meantime.
4. The text mentions territory associated with non-Jews as well as Jews.
 - a. The text hints that Jesus was healing people whether or not they were Jewish. He came for everyone, although his primary mission at this point is for the Jews.