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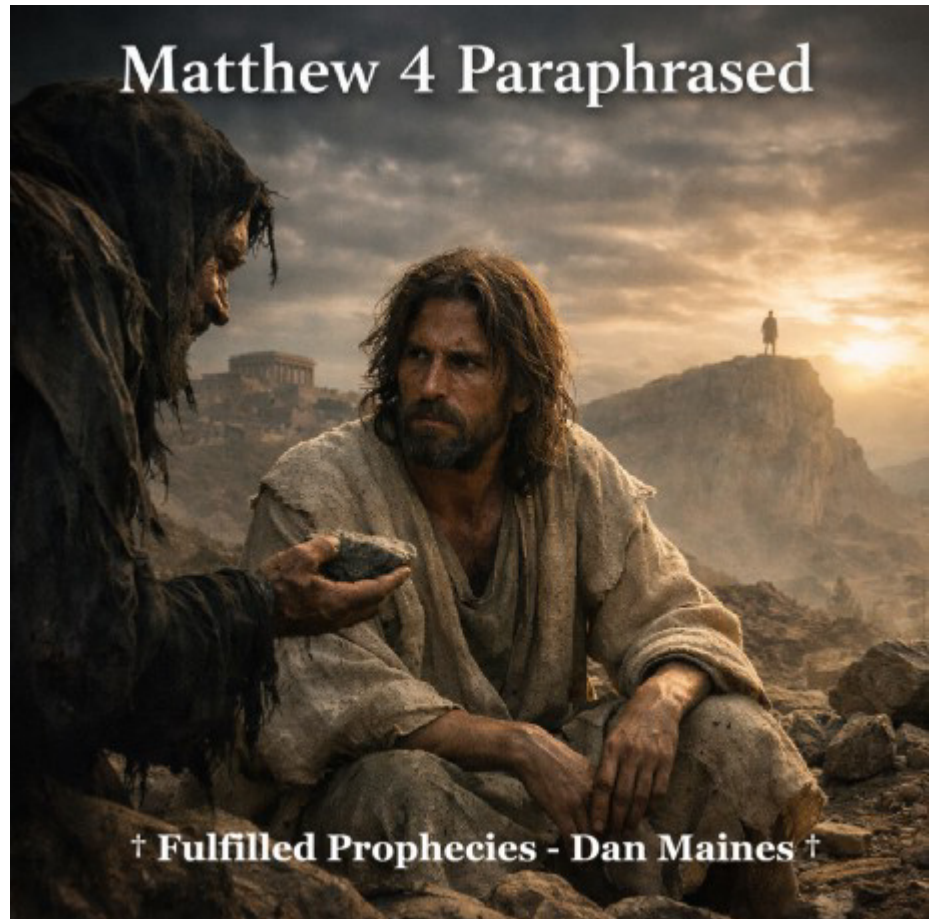
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Matthew 4 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Matthew 4 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Matthew 4 records the testing of Jesus, the beginning of His public ministry, and the calling of His first disciples.

† The temptation narrative shows Jesus succeeding where Israel failed in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2).

† Matthew also shows the kingdom message beginning in Galilee, fulfilling the prophets and preparing the generation that would witness the coming judgment and kingdom fulfillment

(Matthew 16:27-28).

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness so the devil could test Him.

† The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness just as Israel had been led into the wilderness after the Exodus (Deuteronomy 8:2).

† This testing shows Jesus as the faithful Son who succeeds where Israel failed (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15).

† The wilderness setting connects the story to the forty year testing of Israel.

Matthew 4:2

After fasting for forty days and forty nights, He became extremely hungry.

† The forty days mirror Israel's forty years of testing in the desert (Numbers 14:33-34).

† Moses and Elijah also fasted forty days during key covenant moments (Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8).

† Matthew presents Jesus as the true representative of Israel.

Matthew 4:3

The tempter came and said, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.

† Satan challenges Jesus to misuse His authority for personal relief rather than trusting the Father (Genesis 3:1-5).

† The same tactic of questioning God's word was used in Eden (Genesis 3:1).

† The temptation targets the identity declared at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:17).

Matthew 4:4

But Jesus answered, Man does not live on bread alone, but on

every word that comes from the mouth of God.

† Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, reminding Israel that their survival depended on God's word.

† This response shows complete submission to the Father's will.

† Scripture becomes the weapon used to defeat temptation (Psalm 119:11).

Matthew 4:5

Then the devil took Him to the holy city and placed Him on the highest point of the temple.

† The temple was the central place of Israel's worship and covenant identity (2 Chronicles 7:16).

† Satan moves the test from physical hunger to spiritual presumption.

† The location highlights the religious leadership that would later reject Jesus.

Matthew 4:6

He said, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, because it is written that God will command His angels to protect you and they will carry you so you won't strike your foot against a stone.

† Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12 but twists its meaning to encourage reckless testing of God.

† This shows that scripture can be misused when taken out of its proper context.

† Jesus refuses to manipulate God for proof or spectacle.

Matthew 4:7

Jesus said to him, It is also written, You shall not test the Lord your God.

† Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, referring to Israel testing God at Massah (Exodus 17:1-7).

† Instead of demanding signs, Jesus shows perfect obedience and trust.

† The contrast with Israel's unbelief becomes clear.

Matthew 4:8

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

† The offer represents earthly authority and political power (Daniel 7:14).

† Satan attempts to bypass the suffering that would lead to Christ's victory.

† The temptation appeals to immediate power rather than faithful obedience.

Matthew 4:9

He said to Him, I will give you all these things if you fall down and worship me.

† The demand for worship reveals the true nature of the temptation.

† Satan seeks the worship that belongs only to God (Isaiah 42:8).

† This parallels the idolatry that repeatedly trapped Israel.

Matthew 4:10

Then Jesus said, Go away Satan. It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.

† Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13, affirming that worship belongs to God alone.

† This final response ends the temptation with total submission to God's authority.

† Jesus demonstrates the faithful obedience that Israel failed to

maintain.

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil left Him, and angels came and began caring for Him.

† The departure of Satan shows the victory of Christ over temptation.

† The angels ministering to Jesus fulfill the promise of divine care (Psalm 91:11).

† This moment prepares the beginning of His public ministry.

Matthew 4:12

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee.

† John's imprisonment signals the transition from John's ministry to Jesus' ministry (Matthew 11:2).

† Galilee becomes the central region of Jesus' teaching and miracles.

† The shift fulfills prophetic expectations about the light appearing in Galilee.

Matthew 4:13

He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali.

† Capernaum became the base of Jesus' ministry throughout Galilee.

† This move fulfilled prophecy regarding the northern tribes of Israel.

† Matthew emphasizes that Jesus' movements fulfill the Scriptures.

Matthew 4:14

This happened so what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet

would be fulfilled.

† Matthew repeatedly shows that Jesus fulfills the prophets (Luke 24:44).

† The prophecy connects Jesus' ministry to Isaiah's promise of light.

† The fulfillment demonstrates God's plan unfolding in history.

Matthew 4:15

Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way by the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

† This region had long experienced oppression and darkness from foreign powers.

† Isaiah predicted that this same region would see the coming light (Isaiah 9:1-2).

† The gospel reaching Galilee shows the expansion of God's work beyond Jerusalem.

Matthew 4:16

The people sitting in darkness saw a great light, and those living in the shadow of death had light rise upon them.

† The light represents the revelation of God's kingdom through Christ (John 8:12).

† Darkness symbolizes spiritual blindness and covenant judgment (Isaiah 60:2).

† Jesus' ministry brings the promised restoration to Israel.

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began preaching and saying, Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near.

† This message matches the message John the Baptist preached (Matthew 3:2).

† The kingdom was not distant but arriving within that generation (Matthew 16:28).

† Repentance was necessary because the covenant transition was approaching.

Matthew 4:18

While walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew, casting a net into the sea, because they were fishermen.

† Jesus begins gathering the disciples who will carry the gospel message.

† Fishermen were common working people, showing that God often calls the humble (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

† Their ordinary lives were about to change dramatically.

Matthew 4:19

He said to them, Follow Me and I will make you fishers of people.

† The imagery of fishing for people comes from prophetic language about gathering Israel (Jeremiah 16:16).

† The disciples would gather people into the kingdom message.

† This calling represents the beginning of the apostolic mission.

Matthew 4:20

Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

† Their immediate response shows faith and trust in Jesus' authority.

† Leaving their livelihood demonstrates total commitment.

† This moment begins the formation of the apostolic witness.

Matthew 4:21

Going further He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with their father mending nets, and He called them.

† James and John would become key leaders among the apostles.

† Their family fishing business shows the everyday setting of Jesus' calling.

† The gospel movement began among ordinary people.

Matthew 4:22

Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.

† The call of Jesus demanded priority above family and occupation (Luke 14:26).

† The disciples' response illustrates radical devotion.

† This pattern would continue throughout Jesus' ministry.

Matthew 4:23

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

† Teaching in synagogues shows that the message first went to Israel (Romans 1:16).

† The miracles confirmed the authority of the kingdom message (Hebrews 2:3-4).

† Healing demonstrated the restoration promised in the prophets.

Matthew 4:24

News about Him spread through all Syria, and they brought to Him everyone suffering from diseases, pain, demon possession, seizures, and paralysis, and He healed them.

† The growing reputation of Jesus drew people from surrounding regions.

† These miracles showed authority over both physical illness and spiritual forces.

† The signs confirmed that the kingdom of God was present.

Matthew 4:25

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

† The expanding crowds show how widely the message spread.

† People from across the region came to hear the kingdom teaching.

† This growing following sets the stage for the Sermon on the Mount in the next chapter.

Historical References

† Justin Martyr wrote that Christ overcame the devil in the wilderness, reversing the failure of Adam and Israel.

† Irenaeus taught that Jesus recapitulated Israel's history and succeeded where Israel had failed.

† Eusebius recorded that Galilee became the early center of Christ's ministry and the gathering of His disciples.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Jesus shows that obedience to God's word is stronger than any temptation.

† Scripture remains the believer's defense against deception.

† The call to follow Christ still requires leaving behind anything that competes with His authority.

† The kingdom message that began in Galilee continues to shape the lives of believers today.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why was Jesus tempted in the wilderness?

A: To demonstrate His obedience and to succeed where Israel failed (Deuteronomy 8:2-3; Hebrews 4:15).

Q: Why does Jesus quote Deuteronomy during the temptations?

A: Those passages describe Israel's wilderness testing, showing Jesus as the faithful Son who fulfills Israel's role (Deuteronomy 6:13; Deuteronomy 8:3).

Q: What does fishers of people mean?

A: It refers to gathering people into the kingdom message through preaching and discipleship (Jeremiah 16:16; Matthew 28:19-20).

Q: Why did Jesus begin His ministry in Galilee?

A: It fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that light would rise in Galilee of the nations (Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:15-16).

Q: Why did Jesus fast for forty days?

A: The forty days connect to Israel's forty years in the wilderness and show Jesus as the faithful Son who endured the testing Israel failed (Deuteronomy 8:2; Numbers 14:33-34).

Q: Why did the devil tempt Jesus with the kingdoms of the world?

A: It was an attempt to offer power without obedience and suffering, but Jesus rejected it and remained faithful to the Father's will (Daniel 7:14; Deuteronomy 6:13).

Q: Why were the disciples fishermen?

A: Jesus often chose ordinary people so the power of the message would be clearly from God and not human ability (1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Matthew 4:18-22).

Q: Why did Jesus preach repentance when His ministry began?

A: Repentance was necessary because the kingdom of heaven was drawing near to that generation and the covenant transition was approaching (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 16:27-28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 4:1-25; Deuteronomy 6:13; Deuteronomy 8:2-3;
Isaiah 9:1-2; Jeremiah 16:16; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 16:27-28

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho; Irenaeus, Against
Heresies; Eusebius, Church History.

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