

**September 19, 2021**

**Matthew 4**

## **The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry**

The beginning of a new endeavor is often marked by celebration and fanfare. The new president takes office amid elaborate ceremony and celebrations that continue for many hours. A new business will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening sale. The wedding ceremony is followed by a joyous reception with friends and a honeymoon trip for the newly married couple.

Last week's lesson ended with John the Baptist baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River. It was an important event marking the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. God the Father and God the Spirit both "showed up," publicly affirming Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

In Matthew 4 you will learn about the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Was the beginning of this important ministry marked by fanfare and celebration? Read the following verses to find out.

**Matt. 4:1**        Where did the Spirit lead Jesus?

Why did the Spirit lead Him there?

Some people mistakenly believe that the Spirit of God will never lead us into difficulty, but that is not true. Jesus needed to face and overcome the devil's temptation in His flesh before He could begin preaching, teaching, and ministering to others. The same may be true for us, too.

**Matt. 4:2**        What did Jesus do in the wilderness?

**Matt. 4:3**        The tempter (the devil) challenged Jesus to prove He was the Son of God. What did he tell Him to do?

**Matt. 4:4**        How did Jesus answer?

Every time Jesus was tempted He quoted scripture. This time He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3. Have you memorized some scripture to use when facing temptation? If not, start today.

The devil tempted Jesus two more times (verses 5-11). He challenged Jesus to prove His identity by putting God to the test, and he offered Him all the world's power and wealth if He would worship him. Both times Jesus responded by quoting scripture.

**Matt. 4:12**        Where did Jesus go?

**Matt. 4:13**        In what city did He dwell?

**Capernaum** was Jesus' "home base" for most of His ministry. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2.

**Matt. 4:16**        What did Jesus bring to the people of that region?

**Matt. 4:17**        What message did Jesus preach?

- Matt. 4:18** Who did Jesus see by the Sea of Galilee?
- Matt. 4:19** What did He tell them to do?
- Matt. 4:20** How did they respond to Jesus' call?
- Matt. 4:21** Who else did He call?
- Matt. 4:22** What did they do?

Jesus began His ministry in Galilee, preached repentance, and called His first four disciples.

- Matt. 4:23** Notice the three activities that made up Jesus' early ministry: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, \_\_\_\_\_ in their synagogues, and \_\_\_\_\_ the Gospel of the kingdom, and \_\_\_\_\_ all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

**Teaching** is instruction: simply imparting facts and truths to those who are listening. Jesus did a great deal of teaching. **Preaching** refers to a herald making a proclamation or announcement. The message of Jesus' early preaching was the same as that of John the Baptist: "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" **Healing** involves meeting peoples' physical needs; we call it ministry.

- Matt. 4:24** Jesus' fame spread. What did people do?  
How did Jesus respond?

- Matt. 4:25** People came from many miles away to hear Jesus and to be healed by Him.

**Concluding Thoughts:** The beginning of Jesus' ministry was not marked by a ribbon cutting ceremony, a grand opening sale, or an extravagant party. His ministry began with hardship, deprivation, and temptation. He fulfilled Old Testament prophecy by settling in Capernaum, and He preached a hard message of repentance. Next He called His first disciples. Jesus' early ministry consisted of teaching, preaching, and healing (ministering to physical needs).

If you are a believer you have a ministry. You don't have to be a pastor or have the title of "Reverend" before your name. The word **minister** means to be a servant. If you are God's child, you, like Jesus, have a ministry.

What can we learn from this lesson? First, we should remember that serving the Lord involves hardship and temptation. Second, we can't face temptation in our own strength: we need God's power and we need His Word. Third, we should serve the Lord like Jesus did, through teaching, preaching (announcing the truth), and ministering to the physical needs of others.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 4:4**. Prepare yourself for temptation by memorizing God's Word. Teach, preach, and minister to those around you.