

Episode #717 Matthew 4 Part 4-Disciples and Miracles

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord left Nazareth and started living in Capernaum, which filled full a prophecy from Isaiah 9. He started heralding the same thing John did: that the government of the heavens was impending. Today, we consider Him calling His disciples.

III. The Lord Calls Four Disciples

- A. Verse 18. Sea of Galilee = part of Israel’s eastern boundary. Simon means “Heard,” and Peter means “Rock,” and was a name Jesus gave him (Luke 6:14). Andrew means “Manly.” Two of the most prominent disciples. This was a large net, probably a purse-net with weights all around it.
- B. Verse 19. Their new job would be to catch men in order to bring them into God’s kingdom. This catching is for the good of the men, not the fishers!
- C. Verse 20. This word for nets is generic, since they had more than one kind and left them all. These men showed they had the *metanoia* after-mind when they responded to His call. They had gone through John’s baptism, and they meant it.
- D. Verse 21. Two more disciples called
 1. James is *Iakobos* or Jacob, the “Heel-Grabber,” a deceiver, trickster, or supplanter. In Latin *Iakobus* was mispronounced in a certain accent as *Iakomus*, which was shortened to *Iames* and then *James*, which is how “Jacob” turned into “James.” But there is no “James” in the Bible, just Jacob and *Jacobos*. Our translators make it “James” when the Greek is *Jacobos*.
 2. John = *Ioannes*, the long form of *Jonah*, meaning “Jehovah is Gracious.”
 3. Their father is *Zebedee*, meaning “Generous.”
 4. They were readjusting their nets, when He called them to come after Him.
- E. Verse 22. They followed immediately, just like Peter and Andrew. They had no doubt been working for their father’s business. Now he is left with a business and without his two sons to help him. But God’s call was more important!

IV. Healing the Multitudes.

- A. Verse 23. The synagogues were the meeting places where everyone came together under the principle of complete equality. This was a community center, and included all religious sects, not just one of them. Some were responsible for keeping the order in the synagogue, but this did not make them officers. He proclaimed there the right message about God’s government. Then, to demonstrate the truth of it, He healed, which was like passing out samples. He did not pass over the difficult diseases!
- B. Verse 24. The report of Him was noised abroad.
 1. Syria is the Greek, whereas the Old Testament calls north of Israel “Aram.”
 2. The word for “torments,” *basanos*, meant to test metal with a touchstone, then a thorough and revealing test. As Rome became corrupted and questioned men through torture, it came to mean torture. The Bible uses it to mean both a thorough test and torture. Here it means painful ailments (testing strength?).
 3. Many were demonized. Seven times in Matthew, four in Mark, one in Luke, and one in John. This was a real phenomenon of the day and an attack of

Satan, yet the Lord was sufficient to meet it. God's true King faces enemy forces and defeats them over and over in Matthew.

4. Epileptics = literally moon-struck, as seizures were thought to correspond to moon cycles. It is controversial whether the Greeks knew anything of epilepsy
5. Paralytics = could mean weak on one side, perhaps producing trembling.
6. Those who were thus healed were then under a great responsibility and a new accountability for having experienced this.

C. Verse 25. Needless to say healing made Him popular. He was not rejected by the common people, but rather by the jealous leaders. Here "beyond Jordan" may refer to the east side, though it is the same phrase as in verse 15.

V. Conclusion: The Lord called four disciples, and they were ready and willing to answer His call. Are we as ready to drop everything and follow the Master? The Lord healed all who came to Him, yet all those He healed later died. Do we trust God with our health, and with our future life and death? Do we trust the great Healer, Who is also the Resurrection and the Life?