

Matthew chapter 4

Jesus respond to the devil with Scripture.

Swindoll writes:

I know of no other single practice in the Christian life that's more rewarding, practically speaking, than memorizing Scripture. That's right. No other single discipline is more useful and rewarding than this. No other single exercise pays greater spiritual dividends! Your *prayer life* will be strengthened. Your *witnessing* will be sharper and much more effective. Your *counseling* will be in demand. Your *attitudes* and *outlook* will begin to change. Your *mind* will become alert and observant. Your *confidence* and *assurance* will be enhanced. Your *faith* will be solidified.

God's Word is filled with exhortations to implant His truth in our hearts. David says that a young man can keep his life pure by treasuring God's Word in his heart (Psalm 37:31; 119:9–11). Solomon refers to this in Proverbs 4:4:

"Let your heart hold fast my words;
Keep my commandments and live."

The words *hold fast* come from a single Hebrew term, meaning "to grasp, seize, lay hold of." Scripture memory gives you a firm grasp of the Word—and allows the Word to get a firm grasp of *you*! Solomon also mentions writing the Word "on the tablet of your heart" (Proverbs 7:3) and having Scriptures kept within you so "they may be ready on your lips" (Proverbs 22:18).

Now, I know you've been challenged to do this before. But is it happening? Perhaps you have procrastinated because you have mental blocks against it. Maybe you tried, but you either did not see the value or could not get beyond the method that was demanded by some memory program—little cards, booklets, checkup techniques, hearers, etc. Perhaps that seemed elementary and insulted your intelligence. I understand.

Okay . . . forget the methods . . . but don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Take your Bible, turn to a passage that's been especially helpful . . . and commit that passage to memory—all on your own. Don't learn just isolated verses here and there. Bite off whole *chunks* of Scripture. That way you can get the flow of thought God had in mind.

Here are seven things I have found helpful:

1. Choose a time when your mind is free from outside distractions . . . perhaps soon after getting up in the morning.
2. Learn the reference by repeating it every time you say the verse(s). Numbers are more difficult to remember than words.
3. Read each verse through several times—both in a whisper and aloud. Hearing yourself say the words helps cement them into your mind.

4. Break the passage into its natural phrases. Learn the reference and then the first phrase. Then repeat the reference and first phrase as you go to the second phrase. Continue adding phrases one by one.

5. Learn a little bit *perfectly* rather than a great deal *poorly*. Do not go on to the next verse until you can say the previous one(s) perfectly, without a glance at your Bible.

6. Review the verse(s) immediately after you have gone through this process. Twenty to thirty minutes later, repeat what you've memorized. Before the day has ended, firmly fix the verse(s) in your mind by going over it fifteen to twenty times. (You can do this as you drive or do your job.)

7. Use the verse(s) orally as soon as possible. After all, the purpose of Scripture memory is a practical one, not academic. Use the verses in conversation, in correspondence, in teaching, in counseling, in everyday opportunities. Relate what you've learned to your daily situation. You'll be thrilled with the results.¹

Segments and titles:

These narratives show how His following started.

I see 4 narratives here.

4:1-11	The temptation of Jesus
4:12-17	Jesus begins to preach
4:18-22	Calling of the first disciples: Simon (called Peter) and his brother Andrew (vs 18-20), James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John (vs 20-22)
4:23-25	Jesus heals the sick

Verse by verse:

4:1-11	The temptation of Jesus
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Bible Knowledge Commentary:

(BKC [NT] p. 27)

Satan's Temptations of Eve and of Jesus		
Temptation	Genesis 3	Matthew 4
Appeal to physical appetite	You may eat of any tree (3:1).	You may eat by changing stones to bread (4:3).
Appeal to personal gain	You will not die (3:4).	You will not hurt Your foot (4:6).
Appeal to power or glory	You will be like God (3:5).	You will have all the world's kingdoms (4:8-9).

¹ Taken from *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* by Charles R. Swindoll. Copyright © 1983, 1994, 2007 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. Used by permission of Zondervan. www.zondervan.com
<https://insight.org/resources/daily-devotional/individual/memorizing-scripture2>

Matthew 4:1–11 (ESV)

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, *“It is written,*

“ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’

and

“ ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”

⁷ Jesus said to him, *“Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”*

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, *“Be gone, Satan! For it is written,*

“ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

- Notice in verse 1 Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.
- This was right after His baptism.
- In the previous chapter God, the Father pronounced His Sonship and that He is proud of him.
- He was led to be tempted.
- From the very beginning in verse 1 we see that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness “to be tempted by the devil.”
 - →this is interesting. We see the Holy Spirit purposefully allowing the devil to tempt Him.
 - We know that God doesn’t tempt (James 1:13), but that doesn’t mean that the Lord will not allow one to be tempted and even set up a situation for one to be tempted.

Heb 2:18 and 4:15 tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way. We have a high priest who has gone through the temptations that we are going through.

- Greek for tempted can also mean “test.”
- Satan had to ask God before tempting Job (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7).
- →I think this is part of Jesus’ development. He, being fully human, was developing through some trials and this was one of those trials.
- ESV SB: *The Holy Spirit guided Jesus in his earthly life, providing a pattern for Jesus’ followers to be empowered and led by the Holy Spirit (cf. notes on Gal. 5:16; 5:17; 5:18). The Greek for **tempted** (peirazō) can also mean “test.” While God clearly never tempts anyone to do evil, he does use circumstances to test a person’s character (e.g., Heb. 11:17).*²
- He is tempted by the devil: ESV SB: *Diabolos (Gk. “slanderer, accuser”) is here preceded by the definite article to indicate that this one who tempts Jesus is uniquely “the devil” (see also Matt. 4:5, 8, 11; 13:39; 25:41). Although the devil intends to thwart God’s plan and purposes, the Father uses his evil intention for the good purpose of strengthening Jesus in his messianic role.*³
- Moody: *With His baptism, the first of two prerequisites for Jesus beginning His ministry was over. The second involved His testing. At His baptism, God identified Jesus as His Son. In the first two temptations, the Devil attacks Him on precisely His divine Sonship.*⁴
- See 1 John 2:16
- Categories of temptation in Gen 3
 - Lust of the flesh
 - Lust of the eyes
 - Boastful pride of life
 - Every temptation we face is in one of these 3 categories
 - Jesus’ temptation was this way but He did not give in.⁵
- Jesus was hungry. The text is specific to say that (verse 2)
 - He was tempted after fasting for 40 days and 40 nights.
 - ESV SB: *Moses also fasted and prayed for 40 days and nights on two occasions (Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 11, 18, 25; 10:10; cf. Elijah in 1 Kings 19:8). Fasting was a means of focusing intently on prayer. Forty days is about the longest a human can fast without permanent bodily harm.*⁶
 - IVP BBC NT: *One of the most common recitations of God’s acts in the *Old Testament was that he “led” his people in the wilderness (see especially Is 63:14), where they*

² Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1825.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michael G. Vanlaningham, [“Matthew,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnic and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1459.

⁵ Dr Rydelnic; Open Line; 03.13.2021 and Jerrod Wilson White Horse Inn 09.19.2021

⁶ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1825.

* Indicates names and terms found in the glossary

were tested. Although the Old Testament only rarely mentions the devil, his activity as tempter (cf. Job 1–2) had come into focus much more by Jesus' day. A surprising feature here for most Jewish readers would not have been that the devil was providing temptation, but that he was doing it in person.⁷

- Moses also fasted forty day and nights; Jesus may appear here as a new Moses, the new lawgiver (see Mt 5:1–2). Israel also was in the wilderness forty years (see the introduction to this section).⁸
- →many times, we are tempted when we are weak
- →we must guard that weak point
- Fasting is a thing we do for God. We set ourselves apart for a purpose; however, in this case after He had been recharged, He was attacked.
- These first few verses also show that Jesus was following the Spirit's leading. He was opened to the Spirit's guidance and obedient to the Spirit.
- CSB SB: *The temptation of Christ highlights numerous parallels between Jesus and OT Israel. Deuteronomy 8:2–3 says that the Lord led Israel into the wilderness to be tested for forty years. Similarly, **Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested for forty days**. The three temptations Jesus faced parallel the tests Israel faced in the wilderness, and every Scripture that Jesus quoted in response to his temptations was drawn from God's message to the Israelites about their wilderness test (Dt 6–8). Israel failed its tests, but Jesus passed his and in doing so "fulfilled all righteousness" (see Mt 3:15). Thus he is qualified to create a new spiritual Israel. Several features of Matthew confirm Jesus's intention to gather a new people for God. He chose twelve disciples to parallel Israel's twelve tribes. This was a conscious effort to identify his followers as the new Israel. The fact that Jesus **was hungry** shows that he was truly human as well as divine.*⁹
- Notice verse 3: "If you are..." satan doesn't want to or just doesn't acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - "if" can also mean "since."
 - IVP BBC NT: *The ancients attributed this sort of feat to magicians, who claimed to be able to transform themselves into animals and to transform other substances, like*

⁷ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#), Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 53.

⁸ Ibid.

OT Old Testament

⁹ Charles L. Quarles, ["Matthew,"](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1503.

stones into bread. Many Jewish people were also hoping for a new exodus led by a new Moses—complete with new manna, or bread from heaven. The devil challenges or seeks to define Jesus’ sonship against God’s Word (3:17; cf. Gen 3:1); models of power in that culture included magicians and (as in 4:8) worldly rulers. The devil wants to conform the definition of Jesus’ divine role to contemporary expectations.¹⁰

- **Most suggest that he was tempted to exercise supernatural power rather than depend on God’s provision. Clues in the text suggest that the Spirit, who led Jesus into the wilderness, commanded this fast.** Thus, breaking the fast prematurely would have been an act of disobedience, preventing Jesus from fulfilling every act of righteousness (3:15). Jesus aimed to end his fast when the test was over and no sooner. God would signal the end by providing food. Matthew 4:11 shows that at fast’s end, angels came and “began to serve” Jesus. **The verb serve means “to serve as a table-waiter” and implies that the angels fed Jesus. During their wilderness wanderings, Israel failed to trust God to provide food and water. Jesus, the embodiment of the new Israel, had unwavering trust in God’s care. On Son of God, see note at 3:17.**¹¹
- Jesus responds with Scripture in verse 4. Jesus knows the Word of God.
 - Deut. 8:3
 - This also shows the power of God’s Word.
 - →As Jesus responded with Scripture, so should we.
 - We must also study and learn Scripture so that we can respond with Scripture when tempted. We must use Scripture as a guard for our life (Psalm 119:9-11).
- Verse 5 starts the second temptation: This temptation is more about testing the Lord.
- **ESV SB: The holy city is Jerusalem, and the pinnacle of the temple is probably the southeast corner of the temple area, the top of which was some 300 feet (91 m) above the floor of the Kidron Valley (cf. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 15.411–412). See The Temple Mount in the Time of Jesus.**¹²

¹⁰ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#), Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 53.

¹¹ Charles L. Quarles, [“Matthew,”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1503.

¹² Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1825.

- **NET:** The *highest point of the temple* probably refers to the point on the temple's southeast corner where it looms directly over a cliff some 450 ft (135 m) high. However, some have suggested the reference could be to the temple's high gate.¹³
- The devil wanted Him to attempt suicide which would make the Lord save Him.
 - → I wonder about this one: Did the devil want Him to try this with the hope that Jesus might actually do this and die? Did the devil think this might get Him out of the way? Is it possible the devil just wanted to make Him sin? If Jesus sinned, He wouldn't be able to pay the penalty for our sin.
 - What sin would this be? Probably testing the Lord (Deut 6:16).
 - Though, many think it would have been impossible for Jesus to sin because He is God.
- This passage also started in the wilderness. Now the devil supernaturally sends Him to the holy city. I think it is also possible that the devil didn't literally take Jesus to the highest point of the temple. It is possible that the devil made Jesus see this in a vision of some sort.
- Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-12 but leaves out the rest of the Psalm. He leaves out the second part of Psalm 91:11. He left out "guard you in all your ways..."
- Jesus responds with Scripture. He quotes Deut 6:16: *You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.*¹⁴
- Moody: *Either physically or in a vision, Jesus was taken to the temple probably because it symbolized God's intense care for His people (Ps 18:6; 48:9; 65:4), the very point of this temptation. Jesus responded with another reference to Deuteronomy (6:16), where Moses warned the people not to test God as they had when they sought to force Him to give them water (Ex 17:1-7). While God promises to protect His children, they must not coerce Him to do so, which would be tantamount to turning Him into their slave. Jesus' response does not indicate that this temptation was to dupe Jesus into a spectacular display so that people would forcibly make Him king and cause Him to bypass the cross.*¹⁵
- ESV SB: *The devil's quotation of Psalm 91 is a blatant misuse of Scripture in an effort to manipulate Jesus. Such a spectacular display as jumping from this great height unharmed would have gained him an enthusiastic following, but it would not have followed the*

¹³ Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Mt 4:5.

¹⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 4:7.

¹⁵ Michael G. Vanlaningham, "[Matthew](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1459.

*Father's messianic and redemptive plan of suffering and proclaiming the kingdom of heaven.*¹⁶

- Verses 8-11 are the final temptation of Jesus that is recorded.
 - →This doesn't mean that Jesus is not tempted anymore in His life, I am sure He was. But in this instance, He is tempted by satan himself, not sin and not the demons.
- This temptation is about power.
- Again, did the devil literally take Him to a high mountain or is this a vision.
- The devil shows Him the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
- Satan will give them to Jesus, if Jesus worships him.
- *Although Satan exercises some authority over the world (Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31), the **kingdoms of the world** belong to God, and he promised to give them to his Son (Ps 2:8).*¹⁷
- Once again, Jesus responds with Scripture: Deut 6:13
 - →we must understand the temptations we experience are from the devil and the demons. We also experience temptations from our sin nature. It behooves us to understand spiritual warfare. The devil and hell are nothing to joke about. Joking about the devil and hell minimizes the reality of its existence.
 - →Jesus was tempted by satan himself and resisted. We must pray that we can resist temptation. We must also pray that our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren can resist temptation.
 - →one other thing---- satan is real. This is why I don't like Halloween. Let's not give satan the glory that he wants and doesn't deserve.
- Swindoll
- *Sin will take you further than you want to go, it will keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.*
- The devil leaves Jesus, and the angels minister to Him. God takes care of Jesus.
 - Also another instance of angels in Jesus' life.
- Mark 1:12ff and Luke 4 have this account.

¹⁶ Crossway Bibles, [*The ESV Study Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1825.

¹⁷ Charles L. Quarles, "[Matthew](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1504.

- Ex 34:28 has Moses fasting with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights
- Matt 14:33; 26:63; Mark 3:11; 5:7; Luke 1:35; 4:41; John 1:34, 49; Acts 9:20¹⁸ other passages about the Son of God

4:12-17	Jesus begins to preach
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Matthew 4:12–17 (ESV)

Jesus Begins His Ministry

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

- ESV SB: *Jesus the Messiah Begins His Galilean Ministry.* The duration of Jesus’ ministry has traditionally been thought to have been three years: a year of obscurity, a year of popularity, and a year of increasing rejection. Matthew and the other Synoptic Gospels (Mark and Luke) largely omit discussing the first, obscure year, but it is recounted in John’s Gospel (cf. John 1–4).¹⁹
- Some time elapsed between these two sections. According to Luke 4:16-30 Jesus was chased out of Nazareth
- The news got to Jesus that John had been put in prison.
- This news has not yet been reported in Matthew.
- Jesus leaves Nazareth---Nazareth was where He grew up (2:23).
 - →Based off of the context I think He thought He was safer in Galilee. This is only a little bit north of Nazareth.

¹⁸New American Standard Bible : 1995 update. 1995 (Ge 1:1). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹⁹ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1826.

- So, here He is in Galilee.
- He is living in Capernaum by the sea in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali.
- Matthew likes to use Old Testament quotations, and this is no different. In this case, he is quoting from Isaiah 9:1-2 and Isa 42:7
 - →There are many prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament. This is one of the proofs of Jesus. No one could live their life to make sure all of these prophecies are fulfilled.
- The people in darkness have seen great light. The light is Jesus.
- Jesus begins to preach and He preaches the same message that John the Baptist was preaching in Matthew 3:2.
- Repent: turn from your sins
- Matt 14:3; Mark 1:14; Luke 3:20; John 3:24 are all about John being thrown in prison
- Matt 11:23 a curse against Capernaum's unbelief
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The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary 4:12–17

Foreshadowing the Preaching to Gentiles

4:12–13. Nazareth was a small agricultural village and suburb of the old Galilean capital, Sepphoris; Capernaum was a larger fishing town on the northwest edge of the Sea of Galilee. The trade routes brought Gentiles through those parts. Capernaum lay in the borders of Naphtali but not Zebulun; Matthew mentions the latter because they occur together in Isaiah 9:1, which he cites in 4:15.

4:14–16. Citing here Isaiah 9:1–2, Matthew undoubtedly knows the context: the light to which it refers is that of the Messiah (Is 9:6–7). (Matthew again is anticipating the evangelization of non-

Gentiles ***Gentile.** Anyone who is not Jewish. In ancient Jewish parlance, this was often the equivalent of “pagan.”

Messiah ***Messiah.** The rendering of a Hebrew term meaning “anointed one,” equivalent to the original sense of the Greek term translated “Christ.” In the Old Testament, different kinds of people were anointed, and some of the Dead Sea Scrolls mention two main anointed ones in the end time, a king and a priest. But the common expectation reflected in the biblical Psalms and Prophets was that one of David’s royal descendants would take the throne again when God reestablished his kingdom for Israel. Most people believed that God would somehow have to intervene to put down Roman rule so the Messiah’s kingdom could be secure; many seem to have thought this intervention would be accomplished through force of arms. Various messianic figures arose in first-century Palestine, expecting a miraculous intervention from God; all were crushed by the Romans. (Jesus was the only one claimed to have been resurrected; he was also one of the only messiahs claiming Davidic descent, proof of which became difficult for any claimants arising after A.D. 70.)

Jews by foreshadowing it in his narrative.) Many non-Jews in Galilee had been forcibly converted to Judaism in the second century B.C.; they had previously been aligned with Judea's Phoenician enemies (1 Macc 5:15). Subsequently, however, many Judeans settled in Galilee, and its inhabitants were primarily ethnically as well as religiously Jewish. More to the point, Galilee was surrounded on all sides (except its southern, Samaritan border) by Hellenistic city territories. Capernaum (like Sepphoris and Nazareth farther south) was situated along one of the major trade routes of Palestine, later called "the way of the sea." This was a caravan route from Damascus to Caesarea Maritima, which was on the Mediterranean coast.

²⁰

4:17. Jesus' message, like John the Baptist's (3:2), is summarized as repentance to be ready for the kingdom.

First-century Jewish hearers would have heard in this proclamation a warning of the imminent day of judgment.²¹

Hellenistic ***Hellenistic**. Although the commentary usually uses the term "Greek," "Hellenistic" is the more accurate technical term for the cultural fusion of classical Greek culture with Near Eastern cultures carried out in the eastern Mediterranean by Alexander the Great and his successors. "Hellenistic" Judaism is thus Judaism heavily influenced by Greek culture, i.e., "Hellenized."

²⁰Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 4:10-14). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

repentance **Repentance**. In the New Testament, this term does not merely mean "change of mind" (as some have gathered from the Greek term); it reflects the Old Testament and Jewish concept of "turning around" or "turning away" from sin. Jewish people were to repent whenever they sinned; the New Testament uses the term especially for the once-for-all turning a Gentile would undergo when converting to Judaism or any sinner would undergo when becoming a follower of Jesus.

kingdom ***Kingdom**. This term means "rule," "reign" or "authority" (not a king's people or land, as connotations of the English term could imply). Jewish people recognized that God rules the universe now, but they prayed for the day when he would rule the world unchallenged by idolatry and disobedience. The coming of this future aspect of God's reign was generally associated with the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Because Jesus came and will come again, Christians believe that the kingdom has been inaugurated but awaits consummation or completion. "Kingdom of heaven" is another way (Matthew's usual way) of saying "kingdom of God." "Heaven" was a standard Jewish way of saying "God" (as in Lk 15:21).

²¹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 4:17). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

4:18-22	Calling of the first disciples: Simon (called Peter) and his brother Andrew (vs 18-20), James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John (vs 20-22)
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Matthew 4:18–25 (ESV)

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁸ While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, *“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

- Jesus is walking by the Sea of Galilee.
- Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew are working .
- They were fishermen who were fishing.
- Jesus wants to make them fishers of men.
- They come right away. Matthew says “immediately.”
- They simply left their nets
 - → Had Jesus met them before? Were there others with the nets? We just can’t know. We do know the Holy Spirit was involved.
 - “Fishers of Men” nice metaphor.
- He saw two other brothers. The four disciples that follow Jesus this day are brothers.
- James and John (sons of Zebedee).
- They are working in the boat with their father mending the nets.
- They also follow Him immediately.
- John MacArthur mentions that this James is easy to distinguish in the N.T. because he is never mentioned apart from his brother John. He is killed in Acts 12 as a martyr by Herod.
- In Mark 1:16-20 we see that Zebedee had servants as well
- John 1:40-42 is also about this

- John 1:35-42 implies that these two brothers had already been following John and or Jesus for a while.

IVP BIBLE BACKGROUNDS COMMENTARY

Ancient writers often illustrated their teachings (here, 4:17) with narrative examples. See comment on Mark 1:14–20 for further details.

4:18. Most people in Jewish Palestine depended on salted fish, wheat and barley for sustenance; fish products like fish gravies were thus also common. The fish of the Sea of Galilee included large carp; the fish would be dried, salted or pickled to preserve them. Fishermen were central to the Galilean economy and made a good living by the standards of their culture, far better than the large numbers of peasants who worked the land through much of the Roman Empire. It is thought that the casting net had a narrow end pulled by the boat and a wide end sunk by leads (contrast the larger dragnet of 13:47); nets were probably made of rope or cords woven from flax, papyrus or hemp.

4:19–20. Disciples normally chose to become students of a particular rabbi, rather than a teacher calling his own disciples.

*4:21–22. Fishermen had more income than average people in Galilee, **so James and John left behind a good job.** More than that, however, they suddenly left behind their father and the family business; such abandonment could easily bring them dishonor in the community. (Both Jews and Greeks, however, had similar stories and would recognize this sudden departure as a sure sign of radical discipleship.)²²*

ESV Study Note:

Matt. 4:21 *A boat, dated from around or before the first century a.d. by radiocarbon analysis and associated pottery, was found in the Sea of Galilee south of Kibbutz Ginnosar in 1986 (see [Galilean Fishing Boat](#)). It is consistent with boat representations in mosaics from Migdal/Magdala (also on the Sea of Galilee). Approximately 26.5 feet long and 7.5 feet wide (8 by 2.3 m), it could hold about 15 people (including four rowers and a helmsman). It probably had both fore and aft decks and a central mast and sail, with positions for two sets of oars on both sides.*

narrative **Narrative.** Story form (applied to both true and fictitious stories), as opposed to other literary forms, like explanatory discourse.

Disciples ***Disciples.** Students of rabbis or philosophers, normally committed to memorizing and living according to their master’s teachings.

rabbi ***Rabbi.** Jewish teacher. Sometime after A.D. 70 the term became a technical one for those ordained in the rabbinic movement, which probably consisted primarily of Pharisaic scribes. (To accommodate customary usage this commentary sometimes applies the term to Jewish teachers of the law in general, although such common usage may have technically been later; it also applies the term to the teachings of Jewish legal experts collected in rabbinic literature.)

²²Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament (Mt 4:17-21)*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Matt. 4:22 left the boat and their father. They relinquished commitment to the family business and their livelihood to join Jesus' messianic mission.

4:23-25	Jesus heals the sick
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Matthew 4:23–25 (ESV)

Jesus Ministers to Great Crowds

²³ And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. ²⁴ So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵ And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

- Jesus was teaching
- He was teaching in their synagogues.
- Jesus was proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom
 - Matthew talks a lot about this idea of the “Kingdom of God.”
- Jesus was going from town to town in Galilee.
- He was healing every disease and sickness
 - → every? Could be hyperbole
- Jesus was becoming famous—news of Him spread throughout the area
- Verse 24: people brought others to Him to be healed.
- Notice the detail in verses 23-24:
 - Sick
 - Afflicted with diseases,
 - Every affliction
 - Verse 24: pains
 - Oppressed by demons
 - Seizures

- Paralytics
- This seems to separate demonic issues from seizures or other things
- He also healed the demon possessed.
- Large crowds are now following Him.
- They followed from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, beyond the Jordan.

IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

4:24. Because many Jewish people lived in Syria, Matthew presumably intends Syrian Jews here (Matthew would have eagerly mentioned Gentiles had they come). The presence of multitudes seeking relief at hot springs (like Hammath-Tiberias) in Galilee testifies to the vast numbers who sought healing in the first century; teachers reputed as healers (usually Gentile magicians) also drew great crowds.

Although some contemporary medical writers (such as the second-century A.D. Greek physician Aretaeus, but unlike the fifth-century B.C. Greek Hippocrates) thought epilepsy was due to demonic activity, Matthew here distinguishes the two.

4:25. The Decapolis, the “Ten Cities,” was a Gentile area that included a large Jewish population.

²³

ESV Study Notes:

Matt. 4:23 *The Galilee region had a population of about 300,000 in 200 or more villages and towns, with no major cities in the area. Jesus' ministry included **teaching** disciples and those already familiar with his message, **proclaiming** truth to those unfamiliar with the message, and **healing** physical, emotional, and spiritual infirmities. Healing of **every disease and every affliction** gives an amazing foretaste of the age to come, where there will be no more disease ([1 Cor. 15:42–43](#); [Phil. 3:21](#); [Rev. 21:4](#)). Jesus combined ministry that met people's physical needs with ministry to their minds and hearts (proclaiming **the gospel of the kingdom**)*

Matt. 4:24 *Syria. A Gentile region north of Galilee, between Damascus and the Mediterranean Sea.*

Matt. 4:25 *The **great crowds** that **followed** Jesus had responded in some sense to his teaching and healing ministry but had not yet become his disciples (cf. [5:1](#)). **Decapolis** (Gk. “ten cities”) is the Roman and generally Gentile district to the south and east of the Sea of Galilee. **Beyond the Jordan** commonly referred to the region of Perea, or more generally the territory east of the Jordan River.*

Gentiles ***Gentile**. Anyone who is not Jewish. In ancient Jewish parlance, this was often the equivalent of “pagan.”

²³Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Mt 4:24-25). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

