

## Matthew 4, Luke 4-5 – CFM Ep 188

### Matthew 4: Jesus fasts forty days, is tempted, hears of John's imprisonment, preaches, and chooses disciples, healing throughout the land.

1. Bryce discusses "six truths" associated with the temptations of Jesus in this podcast:
  - a. Being "full of the Holy Ghost" is a defense against the Adversary (Luke 4.1).
  - b. Jesus was "led by the Spirit" (Luke 4.1).
  - c. Jesus was "led up of the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be with God" ([Matthew 4.1 JST](#)).
  - d. Have communion with God.
  - e. Know the scriptures. Jesus demonstrates this throughout the temptations narrative.
  - f. Jesus returned in "the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (Luke 4.14). Having these things in our lives brings us the power of godliness.
2. Jesus goes to the wilderness being led up of the Spirit "to be tempted" (KJV) or "to be with God" (JST) (Matthew 4.1).
3. Jesus fasts forty days (Matthew 4.2). This is a number full of meaning: trial, life, mortality, suffering, pain, and being proven.<sup>1</sup>
4. The temptations (Matthew 4.3-11).<sup>2</sup>
  - a. The devil, the tempter, Satan (Matthew 4.1-11).<sup>3</sup>
  - b. Bread-Hunger (Matthew 4.3-4).
  - c. Proving God's love (Matthew 4.5-7).

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Farrar writes: "The number occurs again and again in Scripture, and always in connection with the facts of temptation or retribution. It is clearly a sacred and representative number, and independently of other associations, it was for forty days that Moses had stayed on Sinai, and Elijah in the wilderness." Farrar, [The Life of Christ](#), Cumorah Foundation, electronic manuscript, 2008, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> This incident is traditionally described as "the temptation of Jesus." But the English language cannot represent the ambivalence of the key Greek verb *peirazō* and its derivatives. Insofar as the devil is portrayed as trying to induce Jesus to act against the will of God, "tempt" is the right meaning, but the same verb frequently means to "test" with no pejorative connotation. Its other uses in Matthew are of human subjects who come to Jesus with hard questions hoping to trap him or expose him (16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35); the meaning is in each case pejorative, but the questions involved are not "temptations" to do wrong, but dialogue challenges from Jesus' enemies. Here the introduction to the pericope indicates that while the "testing/tempting" is to be carried out by the devil, the whole experience takes place under the guidance of the Spirit and therefore according to the purpose of God. Underlying it, as we shall see, is an OT passage which speaks of Israel's wilderness experiences similarly as a "test" (LXX *expeirazō*) designed by God "to find out what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments" (Deut 8:2; cf. 8:16). R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2007, p. 171, electronic version.

<sup>3</sup> The Devil is a complicated character once we look into history, the Old Testament, and the texts of the ancient world. Neil Forsyth did a great write up on this character called [That Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth](#), Princeton University Press, 1989. It is probably my favorite book on this subject. Forsyth divides his study into five main parts which he takes up successively: (1) ancient Near Eastern combat stories, (2) rebellion stories, (3) Jewish and Christian apocalyptic, (4) heresy in the early Patristic period, and (5) St. Augustine. These parts are subdivided into 25 continuously numbered chapters. R.T. France also works to explain the development of Satan in the texts of the Jewish people: "The figure of Satan as an individual spiritual enemy of God and his people is found only rarely in the Old Testament (1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1-2), but by the first century had developed (under a variety of names: Belial, Beliar, Mastema, Azazel, but most commonly Satan) into a standard feature of Jewish belief which the Christian church fully shared. Running through Jewish references to the devil is a tension between his total hostility to God and his people and his operation apparently within and subject to the ultimate sovereignty of God, a tension which Matthew here reflects in that the devil's intention to "tempt" Jesus to do wrong is subsumed under God's good purpose to "test" his Son." France, electronic version, p. 174.

- i. The “pinnacle of the temple” (Matthew 4.5).
  - 1. Greek: Τότε παραλαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἵσθησιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ. “At that time the Adversary takes up Jesus into the holy city, even sets him upon **the little wing** of the temple” (Matthew 4.5, my translation). This is probably the highest part of the temple’s structure.<sup>4</sup>
  - ii. “If you are the Son of God” (Matthew 4.6).<sup>5</sup>
  - iii. “All these things will I give thee!” (Matthew 4.9).<sup>6</sup>
    - 1. Frederic Farrar on Satan’s temptation: “A matter of half-a-crown, or ten groats...”<sup>7</sup>
- d. Power (Matthew 4.8-11).<sup>8</sup>
- e. Jesus quotes scripture to combat the Adversary.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It is therefore not very important to decide just which part of the actual Herodian temple was meant by Matthew’s term πτερύγιον - *pterygion*, “little wing,” which I have translated “high corner” (see p. 125, n. 5). Apart from the parallel in Luke (and subsequent Christian references to this passage) the word is not used elsewhere of a building feature, though there are rare uses of it in classical literature for a projecting piece of a coat of armor or of a rudder or other machinery. The context makes it clear only that it is a high part of the temple from which a fall might be expected to be fatal. ***This might either be a part of the sanctuary building itself (which was some fifty meters high) or perhaps of the temple’s outer portico, which on the east overhung the deep Kidron valley.*** For “the holy city” as a term for Jerusalem see 27:53; Isa 52:1; Dan 9:24; Rev 11:2; 21:2, etc. France, p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> “There is, of course, running through all of these temptations, **Satan’s insidious suggestion that Jesus was not the Son of God, the doubt implied in the tempter’s repeated use of the word if.** ‘If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.’ (Matt. 4:3.) ‘If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.’ (Matt. 4:6.) These, of course, foreshadowed that final, desperate temptation which would come three years later: ‘If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ (Matt. 27:40.) But Jesus patiently withstood that ploy also, knowing that in due time every knee would bow and every tongue confess.” Howard W. Hunter, [That We Might Have Joy](#), Deseret Book, 1994, emphasis added, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> “We need not concern ourselves with conjecture as to whether Satan could have made good his promise in the event of Christ’s doing him homage; certain it is Christ could have reached out, and have gathered to Himself the wealth and glory of the world had He willed so to do, and thereby have failed in His Messianic mission. This fact Satan knew full well. Many men have sold themselves to the devil for a kingdom and for less, aye, even for a few paltry pence.” Talmage, [Jesus the Christ](#), p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> “The kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them!” “There are some that will say,” says Bishop Andrewes, “that we are never tempted with kingdoms. It may be well, for it needs not be, when less will serve. It was Christ only that was thus tempted; in Him lay an heroic mind that could not be tempted with small matters. But with us it is nothing so, for we esteem more basely of ourselves. **We set our wares at a very easy price; he may buy us even daggercheap.** He need never carry us so high as the mount. *The pinnacle is high enough; yea, the lowest steeple in all the town would serve the turn.* Or let him but carry us to the leads and gutters of our own houses; nay, let us but stand in our windows or our doors, if he will give us so much as we can there see, he will tempt us thoroughly; we will accept it, and thank him too ... A matter of half-a-crown, or ten groats, a pair of shoes, or some such trifle, will bring us on our knees to the devil.” But Christ taught, “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Frederic W. Farrar, [The Life of Christ](#), p. 100-101.

<sup>8</sup> The irony here is simply that Satan is offering something he does not have the power to give to the one person who already has the thing being offered.

<sup>9</sup> **The most significant key to the understanding of this story is to be found in Jesus’ three scriptural quotations. All come from Deuteronomy 6-8**, the part of Moses’ address to the Israelites before their entry into Canaan in which he reminds them of their forty years of wilderness experiences. It has been a time of preparation and of proving the faithfulness of their God. He has deliberately put them through a time of privation as an educative process. They have been learning, or should have been learning, what it means to live in trusting obedience to

- i. R.T. France writes, “The story of the testing in the wilderness is thus an elaborate typological presentation of Jesus as himself the true Israel, the “Son of God” through whom God’s redemptive purpose for his people is now at last to reach its fulfillment.”<sup>10</sup>
5. Jesus hears of John’s incarceration (Matthew 4.12).
6. He goes to Capernaum (Matthew 4.13-22).<sup>11</sup>
  - a. “The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtalim” (Matthew 4.15).<sup>12</sup>
  - b. “The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matthew 4.16). In his use of Isaiah, Matthew is recontextualizing scripture.<sup>13</sup>
  - c. Jesus preaches (Matthew 4.17).
  - d. He finds Simon and Andrew, “follow me!” (Matthew 4.18-19).
  - e. They “straightway left their nets” (Matthew 4.20).
  - f. He finds James and John (Matthew 4.21).
7. Jesus’ fame spreads (Matthew 4.23-25).
  - a. He preaches in their synagogues (Matthew 4.23).
  - b. His fame spread throughout all Syria (Matthew 4.24).<sup>14</sup>

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God: “As a father disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you” (Deut. 8:5; for Israel as God’s son cf. Exod. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos 11:1-4). Among the lessons they should now have learned are not to depend on bread alone but rather on God’s word (8:3), not to put God to the test (6:16), and to make God the exclusive object of their worship and obedience (6:13). Now another “Son of God” is in the wilderness, this time for forty days rather than forty years, as a preparation for entering into his divine calling. There in the wilderness he, too, faces those same tests, and he has learned the lessons which Israel had so imperfectly grasped. R.T. France, [The Gospel of Matthew](#), Eerdmans, 2007, p. 173-174, electronic version, emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> France, p. 173.

<sup>11</sup> **Capernaum was an important settlement on the northwestern shore of the lake, and the presence there of a centurion (8:5) and a customs post (9:9) indicates that it was a local administrative center. The population in the first century was perhaps as high as ten thousand**, substantially bigger than Nazareth. While Capernaum had its resident Roman officials, it was a traditionally Jewish town, very different from the newly established Hellenistic city of Tiberias a little further down the western shore. While Luke and Josephus more correctly speak of the “Lake” of Galilee, Matthew, Mark, and John consistently refer to this inland freshwater lake as a “sea” (reflecting the OT name *yām-kinneret*, Num 34:11 etc.).” France, p. 183.

<sup>12</sup> In the traditional tribal allocation after the conquest the tribes of Zebulun and Naphthali shared the area between the Lake of Galilee and the territory of Asher along the Mediterranean coast. The lakeshore area originally belonged to Naphthali, while Nazareth was in Zebulun, but tribal areas had little actual relevance by NT times. Matthew combines the two tribes in order to echo Isaiah’s prophecy. France, p. 184.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew is quoting [Isaiah 9.1-2](#): Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

<sup>14</sup> **Throughout all Syria**: The Roman imperial province of Syria included not only the Syria (Aram) of the OT but also Palestine (Syria Palestina); the Herodian rulers and the prefect of Judea, as well as the cities of the Decapolis, were subject to the overall authority of the legate of Syria. Matthew’s “all Syria” here, while even less likely to be meant literally than “all Galilee” in v. 23, serves to indicate that Jesus’ reputation spread far beyond the area of his actual travels. For his reputation outside Palestine see Matthew 15.21-22. France, p. 193. For a charted list of the Roman governors of Syria from 23 BCE to 492 CE, see: [List of Roman governors of Syria](#). Accessed 12.12.22.

- c. Multitudes followed him from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan (Matthew 4.25).<sup>15</sup>

**Luke 4-5: Jesus fasts forty days, is tempted, comes to Nazareth and reads Isaiah 61 in church and is rejected. The Jews in Nazareth try and throw him off a cliff. He goes to Capernaum, heals Peter's mother-in-law, and preaches and heals throughout Galilee. He calls Peter, heals a leper and the man with palsy brought through the roof, calls Matthew to follow him, and preaches.**

1. Jesus fasts and is "tempted of the devil" (πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου). Satan is described as διάβολος – *diabolos*, the accuser. (Luke 4.1-13).
2. Nearly every temptation comes in one of these three forms. David O. McKay said, "Now, nearly every temptation that comes to you and me comes in one of those forms. **Classify them, and you will find that under one of those three nearly every given temptation** that makes you and me spotted, ever so little may be, **comes to us as** (1) a temptation of the appetite; (2) a yielding to the pride and fashion and vanity of those alienated from the things of God; or (3) a gratifying of the passion, or a desire for the riches of the world, or power among men."<sup>16</sup>
  - a. Bread-Hunger (Luke 4.2-4).
  - b. Power (Luke 4.5-8).
  - c. Proving God's love (Luke 4.9-13).
    - i. An appeal of Jesus' pride.<sup>17</sup>
3. Jesus goes to Nazareth and is rejected (Luke 4.16-30).
  - a. He quotes Isaiah 61 here in Luke 4.17-19.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew omits Samaria as a region of Jesus' influence. France explains, "While Matthew specifies Galilee as the area of Jesus' own travels (v. 23), the wider currency of his reputation (v. 24) results in people coming to him from the whole of Palestine and the immediately surrounding area... Galilee and the Decapolis cover the northern area, on both sides of the Jordan valley, while the south is represented by Judea on the west bank of the Jordan and Perea on the east bank. Jerusalem is included because of its importance as the main center of population, though it does not extend the geographical area. **The striking omission geographically is Samaria**: while Luke and John describe Jesus' activities in Samaria and the response of Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56; 17:11-19; John 4:4-42), **Matthew not only omits any such record but also specifically excludes Samaria from the area of the disciples' mission** (10:5-6); even though Jesus himself will from time to time move outside Jewish circles, his openness appears not to extend to Samaritans in Matthew's understanding." France, p. 194.

<sup>16</sup> David O. McKay, "[Unspotted from the World](#)," *Ensign*, August 2009.

<sup>17</sup> "Satan then tried Him in another way. He dared him-an appeal to His pride, to His vanity, quoted scripture to support his temptation, for remember the devil can find scripture for his purpose, and 'an evil soul producing holy witnesses is like a villain with a smiling cheek, a goodly apple rotten at the heart.'" David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1911, p. 58-59. See also: "[The Test of One](#)," *Ensign*, August 2007. for excerpts of this talk by David O. McKay.

<sup>18</sup> Joel Green explains, "Here we have an exemplar of the sort of message Jesus proclaimed in synagogues throughout his public ministry. Luke has tied 4:16-30 together with the preceding material, from 3:21 onward, by the common concern with the activity of the Spirit and the consequent identification of Jesus and the nature of his mission. The repeated interest in Jesus' sonship (3:21-22, 23-38; 4:1-13) has foregrounded the question, **As Son of God, what will Jesus do?** In 4:18-19, Jesus interprets his baptism as a Spirit anointing for his mission, then outlines the content of his mission as God's Son. Subsequent summaries of Jesus' ministry refer back to this account (7:21-22; Acts 10:38). As Luke has shaped his narrative, then, the ministry of Jesus in Nazareth at the outset of his public ministry is of central importance to the Gospel as a whole, and thus also to Luke-Acts. **It defines to a significant extent the nature of Jesus' ministry**, establishing a critical narrative need for Jesus to perform in

- i. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. Luke 4.17-20.<sup>19</sup>
- ii. Deliverance to the captives (Luke 4.18).<sup>20</sup>
- iii. "Is this not Joseph's son?" (Luke 4.22).<sup>21</sup>
- b. Jesus escapes his would-be assassins (Luke 4.29-30).
  - i. Perhaps His silence, perhaps the calm nobleness of His bearing, perhaps the dauntless innocence of His gaze overawed them. Apart from anything supernatural, there seems to have been in the presence of Jesus a spell of mystery and majesty which even His most ruthless and hardened enemies

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ways that grow out of and reflect this missionary program." Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, Eerdmans, 1997, p. 370 electronic version, emphasis added.

<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 61.1-3 reads, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

<sup>20</sup> "He read these verses, which describe His own mission. Among other things, His mission, He tells us, was to liberate the captives and to open their prison doors. **This part of His mission He did not fulfill while living in the flesh, so far as we have any account, but we have an account that He fulfilled it afterwards.** Peter tells us that He preached to the spirits in prison—those that Job speaks of when he says that they should be brought forth out of the pit and out of their prison. Jesus went and opened their prison doors; He led captivity captive; He brought joy to the many millions that were waiting in prison, for His coming, who were there because at one time they had rejected the Gospel. They belonged to the antediluvians, and when Noah preached the Gospel to them they rejected him; hence they had a long time to wait, but finally the joyful tidings came to their prison house. **Jesus went and preached the Gospel to them, and salvation was offered to them once more.** They had learned by sad experience what it meant to reject the Gospel." Anthon H. Lund, *Conference Report*, October 1900, p. 25, emphasis added.

<sup>21</sup> "They were truly impressed. Yet they asked, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' Mark's writings, too, indicate how impressed His own people were as Jesus spoke to them in their own country. **They marveled at His wisdom and His works. No doubt they had heard of His miracles.** (Mark 6:1-6.) Matthew says they were astonished at His 'wisdom and these mighty works' (Matthew 13:53-58). Yet all of this was discounted or dismissed by some because in their view, after all, 'Jesus was Joseph the carpenter's son.' **In His sermon in one synagogue, Jesus boldly declared His Lordship. He was rejected, and some of the people even tried to throw Him off the brow of a hill...** Familiarity got in the way of their recognizing Jesus' divinity. Instead of truly assessing Him, they used labels—'the carpenter's son'—to classify Him. Past proximity caused townsfolk and kinsmen alike to regard Him with indifference. In addition to the problems caused by familiarity and proximity, something else was present. Though subtle, this insight must not escape us. There was apparently no objection to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. However, **the Sermon at Capernaum (John 6) caused a violent reaction. Why? Because in the sermon at Capernaum, Jesus declared His Lordship! The more declarative He was, the more restive His audience and the more attrition among His followers. The more specific His message, the more difficult He was to follow.**" Elder Neal A. Maxwell, *Sermons Not Spoken*, Bookcraft, 1985, p. 41-43, emphasis added.

acknowledged, and before which they involuntarily bowed. It was to this that He owed His escape when the maddened Jews in the Temple took up stones to stone Him; it was this that made the bold and bigoted officers of the Sanhedrin unable to arrest Him as He taught in public during the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem; it was this that made the armed band of His enemies, at His mere look, fall before Him to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane. Suddenly, quietly, *He asserted His freedom, waved aside His captors, and overawing them by His simple glance, passed through their midst unharmed.* Similar events have occurred in history, and continue still to occur. ***There is something in defenseless and yet dauntless dignity that calms even the fury of a mob.*** They stood—stopped—inquired—were ashamed—fled—separated.<sup>22</sup>

4. Jesus goes to Capernaum and heals people (Luke 4.31-44).
  - a. Luke's first recorded miracle is the casting out of an "unclean devil" (Luke 4.33-36).
  - b. "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4.43).<sup>23</sup>
5. Jesus calls followers from all walks of life. Those whom Jesus calls come from various backgrounds: fishers, tax collectors, lepers, paralytics, and other people in need (like the man with a withered hand). His ministry is open to all, and the disciples who follow him are to gather

<sup>22</sup> Frederic Farrar, [The Life of Christ](#), Cumorah Foundation, 2008, p. 152, emphasis added.

<sup>23</sup> Καὶ ταῖς ἑτέραις πόλεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαί με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἀπεστάλμαι "Even to other cities **it is expedient** that I bring **the good news** of the Kingdom of God, since this *is the reason why* I am sent" (my translation). **The Kingdom of God:** Jesus' message concerns God's kingdom (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, *hē basileia tou theou*), a phrase that appears thirty-one times in Luke and six times in Acts. In addition, the single term βασιλεία appears with reference to the kingdom of God six more times in the Gospel. ***The kingdom's meaning in Luke is complex. It has both a present and a future element in it and at any point either emphasis or both ideas together can appear, depending on the context.*** The kingdom is the topic not only of Jesus' preaching but also of his disciples. The messages of the apostles, including Paul, include the message of the kingdom (Luke 8:1, 10; 9:2; 10:9; Acts 8:12; 28:23, 31; K. Schmidt, TDNT 1:583; Friedrich, TDNT 2:718). The carryover of this term into Acts shows a key point of continuity between Jesus' message and the apostolic preaching. Some passages emphasize the kingdom's nearness or its having come (Luke 10:9, 11; 11:20; 12:32; 16:16; 17:20–21; 23:42–43), while other texts clearly look to the total manifestation of that rule in the millennium and thereafter (21:31; 13:29). This "already–not yet" quality to the kingdom is like many other areas in NT theology, and one should not seek to remove either side of the tension. In the "already" period come the demonstration of Jesus' authority over evil, his ability to deal with sin, and his reign at the right hand of God (Luke 10:9; 11:20; Acts 2:30–36). In the "not yet" Period will come the total demonstration of that authority on earth and the fulfillment of all the promises made to Israel, as Acts 1:10–11 and 3:19–25 suggest. Bock, p. 1106-1107, electronic version, emphasis added.

From the [Bible Dictionary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#), we read the following: These terms are used in various combinations and with varying meanings. Generally speaking, the kingdom of God on the earth is the Church. It is a preparation for the greater kingdom—the celestial or kingdom of heaven. This is the manner in which these terms are used in D&C 65. However, kingdom of heaven is sometimes used in scripture to mean the Church (as in Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 13; and 25:1–13), meaning that the true church on the earth is the path to heaven and is the kingdom of heaven on earth.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on the earth but is at the present limited to an ecclesiastical kingdom. During the millennial era, the kingdom of God will be both political and ecclesiastical (see Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Rev. 11:15; JST Rev. 12:1–3, 7 [Appendix]; D&C 65) and will have worldwide jurisdiction in political realms when the Lord has made "a full end of all nations" (D&C 87:6).

even more people, like themselves, to him. The means that God uses to “catch” others include the disciples’ faithful walk with God, their message, and their ministry of love and compassion to all. Though these disciples come from various backgrounds, they all have one thing in common: They do not come because they deserve God’s gift; they come because they know that they need his grace. Peter, at first, thinks that his sin means that he can have nothing to do with Jesus. But Jesus, by his actions and teaching, shows that the realization that one is a sinner is fundamental to spiritual growth.<sup>24</sup>

6. Jesus calls Peter (Luke 5.1-9).
  - a. Jesus gets into Peter’s boat (Luke 5.3).<sup>25</sup>
  - b. Peter and his partners bring in a massive haul of fish (Luke 5.6-7).
  - c. “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” (Luke 5.8).
7. Jesus calls James and John (Luke 5.10-11).
8. He heals a leper,<sup>26</sup> telling him to keep it secret (Luke 5.12-15).<sup>27</sup>
9. He heals the man with palsy brought through the roof (Luke 5.18-26).

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<sup>24</sup> Bock, p. 1120.

<sup>25</sup> The boat is probably about twenty or thirty feet long, since later it will hold several men at once. Bock, p. 1135.

<sup>26</sup> **To have leprosy was to face ostracism**, which was commanded in Lev. 13:45–46 (also 2 Kings 7:3; Luke 17:12). To have leprosy and be excluded from normal society was difficult both socially and psychologically. **The ostracism was not cruel; it was necessary because the condition was contagious.** The disease’s association with ritual uncleanness also produced associations of the disease with sin. Godet (1875: 1.259) describes the overall effect of the disease as a form of “living death.” Leviticus 14 details what happens if and when the uncleanness passed, but **in the OT the priests were not expected to provide healing for a leper** (Bovon 1989: 239). Thus, for this man to approach Jesus was not only brave, it put the leper’s entire self-esteem at risk. Whatever hope that he might have about a return to normal life was wrapped up in Jesus’ power. The leper must have heard that Jesus was healing those in need. Bock, p. 1177.

<sup>27</sup> **The leper is to be silent.** Various reasons are suggested for Jesus’ command of silence (Plummer 1896: 149–50): 1. Jesus wants him to be silent until he is officially declared to be clean (Schürmann 1969: 277; Marshall 1978: 209; Wiefel 1988: 117). 2. Jesus wishes to prevent the leper from becoming proud. However, there is no hint of such a concern in the account. 3. Jesus wishes to prevent the priests from hearing about the healing early and thus stopping the leper’s return to society. However, up to this point in Luke’s Gospel, there is no hint of official opposition. 4. Jesus wishes to prevent excessive popular excitement as a result of his healing ministry (so Marshall 1978: 209, with view 1). This point is quite possible, as the following verse suggests. 5. It shows Jesus’ humility. This idea is not developed in relationship to miracles anywhere else. 6. Jesus wants to avoid having to offer himself to be ritually cleansed for touching a leper. This motive, too, seems unlikely. When Jesus did not follow tradition, he did not hide his actions. It is also probable that since Jesus is a prophet he has the freedom to touch these people, as the Elisha example suggests. **The most likely explanations are that the silence was appropriate until the leper went to the priest** (view 1) and that such silence also would prevent undue popular excitement over Jesus’ miraculous work (view 4). **The account vividly shows how Jesus downplays his miraculous work. Often he tries to restrict the spreading of a message about miracles** (Luke 4:35, 41; 8:56; Matt. 9:30; 12:16; Mark 1:34; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26; Plummer 1896: 150). Bock, p. 1183-1184, emphasis added. President Kimball gave the following commentary on texts like these that emphasize Jesus’ insistence on secrecy following a miracle: “I have been impressed at the number of times the Lord said, “Go thy way and tell no man.” And I have been led many times in my blessings—when I felt there was going to be special healing, and that they were such people as would go out and shout it from the housetops—to say, “And when you are healed, tell no man who laid his hands upon your head.” I think that takes away from me the temptation to want to be spectacular, or to want praise, or to want credit, and from them the urge to publish a sacred, intimate miracle. That relieves me. It leaves me more humble and I am sure then I am in a better position to call down the blessings of the Lord again.” Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 234.

- a. These friends of this man were great examples of being a true friend. Mark 2.3 tells us that this man was “borne of four.”
  - b. “Your sins are forgiven you!” (Luke 5.20).
  - c. Luke 5.22 Greek: **ἐπιγνούς** δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς **διαλογισμοὺς** αὐτῶν ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς τί **διαλογίζεσθε** ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν “And Jesus **fully knew** their **thoughts**, he answering said unto them, ‘Why do you **calculate** in your hearts?’” (My translation).<sup>28</sup> Matthew 9.4, speaking of the same account, renders this a bit differently. It reads (in Greek): καὶ **ἰδὼν** ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν ἵνα τί ὑμεῖς ἐνθυμεῖσθε **πονηρὰ** ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν “And Jesus, **seeing/knowing** their inner desires, said, ‘Why do you ponder **evil** in your hearts?’” (My translation). In Matthew, their inner thoughts are evil, while in Luke they are conveyed as reasoning out, or calculating.
  - d. C.S. Lewis spoke of the importance of not labeling Jesus as simply a “great moral teacher,” while ignoring his claim of being the Son of God.<sup>29</sup>
10. He calls Levi (Matthew) to follow him (Luke 5.27-28).
- a. Levi the tax collector.<sup>30</sup>
    - i. Levi is a τελώνης (Luke 5.27). Bock explains, “Levi is called a τελώνης (*telōnēs*), which is not a chief tax collector (ἀρχιτελώνης - *architelōnēs*) like Zacchaeus (19:2), but a lower-level tax collector who would have reported to someone like Zacchaeus.”<sup>31</sup>
    - ii. Is Levi the same person as Matthew?<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> The theme’s consistency in Luke suggests more than natural perception, as does the use of ἐπιγνούς (*epignous*), which means he “knew fully” their thoughts. Bock, p. 1205, electronic version.

<sup>29</sup> “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to .” C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Book II, Ch. 3, Para. 13, p. 55-56.

<sup>30</sup> “Publicans were tax collectors, representatives of an alien power which held the Jews in subjection, and as such they formed a hated, despised, and derided social group. No doubt it was particularly offensive to the Jews for one of their own race, such as Matthew, to accept such employment.” Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, Deseret Book, 2002, 1:181. See also the show notes from our previous podcast (Episode 187) for a more extensive explanation of the tax-farming system that existed in Jewish territories in Jesus’ day.

<sup>31</sup> Darrell Bock, *Luke 1.1-9:50*, Baker Academic, 1994, p. 1226 electronic version.

<sup>32</sup> Since at least the days of Origen in the third century, there has been debate whether Levi and Matthew are the same person (Plummer 1896: 158; Fitzmyer 1981: 590; the gnostic Heracleon [in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 4.9] and Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.62, distinguish Levi and Matthew). **Two factors cause many to equate these two names:** (1) the detailed agreement between Luke’s and Matthew’s accounts and (2) **the inclusion on the list of the Twelve of only one tax collector** (Matt. 10:3). Others argue that two figures are present. Pesch (1968a) suggests that the Levi story is used in Matthew’s Gospel but that the name Matthew is substituted for Levi, so that the story can be about one of the Twelve. This approach is not likely since many figures in the first century had double names. Godet (1875: 1.271) suggests that Levi was given the name Matthew by Jesus, while Hendriksen (1978: 302) argues that he had the double name all along. There is no way to answer this subquestion about the



11. Levi made a great feast (Luke 5.29-32).
  - a. “Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” (Luke 5.30).<sup>33</sup>
12. “Why do your followers eat?” (Luke 5.33-35).<sup>34</sup>
13. New wine and old bottles (Luke 5.36-39).
  - a. James E. Talmage: “In such wise did our Lord proclaim the newness and completeness of His gospel. It was in no sense a patching up of Judaism. He had not come to mend old and torn garments; the cloth He provided was new, and to sew it on the old would be but to tear afresh the threadbare fabric and leave a more unsightly rent than at first. Or to change the figure, new wine could not safely be entrusted to old bottles. The bottles here referred to were really bags, made of the skins of animals, and of course they deteriorated with age. Just as old leather splits or tears under even slight strain, so the old bottle-skins would burst from the pressure of fermenting juice, and the good wine would be lost. The gospel taught by Christ was a new revelation, superseding the past, and marking the fulfillment of the law; it was no mere addendum, nor was it a reenactment of past requirements; it embodied a new and an everlasting covenant. Attempts to patch the Judaistic robe of traditionalism with the new fabric of the

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name’s origin. However, there is no need to challenge the names used in the accounts. Jesus issues Levi a call to follow him. Other such calls occur in Luke 9:23, 59; 18:22. The account runs similar to 5:10–11, except for the mention of an additional promise. There, Peter receives a promise that he will share in Jesus’ mission of seeking people. In contrast, Jesus asks Levi simply to join his cause. But these are really the same request.” Bock, p. 1228, electronic version, emphasis added. James E. Talmage seems to equate Levi with Matthew. See: [Jesus the Christ](#), p. 98, 111.

<sup>33</sup> The issue is not the party, but who is invited to it. Luke speaks of a large company of tax collectors and others, identified as sinners by the Pharisees in 5:30. Luke lets the Pharisees make the full charge against Jesus and his disciples. Levi has gone to great trouble to bring Jesus to many who might not normally be expected to have contact with a religious dignitary. **The turnout is clearly not the moral upper crust of society. Nevertheless, Jesus reclines with them in meal fellowship.** In doing so, he is carrying out his ministry to the spiritually needy. At the same time, Jesus offends the separatism of the Pharisees, who would have never shared a meal with such rabble. Bock, p. 1231, emphasis added.

<sup>34</sup> **Fasting controversy:** To understand the controversy over fasting, one needs to appreciate the significance of fasting in first-century Judaism. Fasting had a rich heritage in Judaism and was a highly regarded act of worship. Fasts were tied to the Day of Atonement in the OT (Lev. 16:29). In addition, four daylong fasts were held to recall the destruction of Jerusalem (Zech. 7:3, 5; 8:19). Fasts were also used for penitence (1 Kings 21:27; Joel 1:14; 2:15–27; Isa. 58:1–9) and mourning (Esth. 4:3). **The Pharisees had developed fasting into a regular practice. Twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, they would fast and intercede for the nation** (Luke 18:12; *Didache* 8.1; SB 4:77–114; Behm, TDNT 4:924–35). John’s disciples fasted in imitation of the lifestyle of their mentor (Luke 7:33). In fact, Jesus fasted (Luke 4:2; 22:16, 18; Matt. 6:16–18), as did the early church (Acts 13:2–3; 9:9; 14:23). Clearly, for many in this period, fasting was a practice of the pious. Jesus could not be a man of God and ignore such practices, but he only rarely engaged in them. **Into this setting comes Jesus’ practice of open association with sinners, mixed with no apparent fasting (or at least a lack of frequent fasting).** Jesus in dealing with the issue does not let the question remain simply at fasting. He basically says that there is a time appropriate for fasting and that the present is not such a time for his disciples. However, there will be time for fasting (5:34–35). Jesus then presses on to the deeper issue through his short parables. **He notes that what is associated with him is different from both old and current Judaism** (5:36–39). In fact, his new movement cannot really mix with the old without the new movement being lost. New wine must have new wineskins to last. Finally, he notes that those attached to old wine will not like the taste of the new wine and will prefer the old. Thus, in response to the indirect attack on his practice, Jesus begins to assert his distance from current religious views of piety, rich as its heritage might be. Bock, p. 1259–1261, emphasis added.

covenant could result in nothing more sightly than a rending of the fabric. The new wine of the gospel could not be held in the old time-worn containers of Mosaic libations. Judaism would be belittled and Christianity perverted by any such incongruous association."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> James E. Talmage, [Jesus the Christ](#), p. 99-100.