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**C1425 – July 9, 2014 – Matthew 4:18-25**  
**The Authority Of The King**

We have seen the introduction of the forerunner of the King who set the stage for the coming of the King. When the King arrived at the Jordan He was presented to Israel in two ways. First, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. The kingdom to come is one of righteousness and He and John together were ministry partners in proclaiming the 'at hand' kingdom. This baptism was accompanied by Jesus' anointing by the Spirit setting Him apart for His ministry and the approval of the Father from heaven. Second, Jesus was tested to demonstrate His character. No matter what Satan tempted Jesus with He overcame such temptations by depending upon the Spirit of God working through the word of God. With the arrest of John the forerunner, Jesus took refuge in the Galilee in order to escape the antagonism of the leadership in Judea. In the Galilee His public ministry formally commences. In verse 13 brief mention is made of His ministry in His hometown of Nazareth which Luke reports was rejected. He then established His base of ministry in Capernaum, which is geographically located on the northern shores of the Lake of Galilee, in the region of the tribal land allotments of Zebulun and Naphtali. This was to fulfill the prophecy of Isa 9:1-2 by way of application. Isa 9 predicted that Gentile occupation of the Galilee would suddenly come to an end and the kingdom of heaven would come. The King's arrival into that region signified the preliminary work of establishing the coming kingdom. All that was necessary for the kingdom to come was for the nation Israel to respond positively to John and Jesus' message of repentance. His ministry base at Capernaum was strategically situated in the region of several trade routes so the message could easily travel throughout the land of Israel and even beyond to the Diaspora Jew and any Gentiles who might have interest. And so we see the establishment of the King's ministry base at Capernaum. From here the King will launch His ministry tonight.

In preparation for the King's first training session, in Matthew 4:18-22 we see the King calling His first four disciples. Why does Matthew record the call of the disciples? To demonstrate the authority of the King. The point of this section is to demonstrate the authority of the King. If Jesus is the King then He must have the authority of the King. How do we see His authority in this section? Through His commanding certain men to follow Him. Jesus is portrayed as the Master and in the ancient world the Master chose His disciples. How did they respond? By immediate obedience, verse 20, verse 22, you see the emphasis. So the short pericope of vv 18-22 shows the authority of the King over his disciples.

Now that I've mentioned the master-disciple relationship we want to get some background on the two sides to this relationship. The relationship is clear in Matt 5:1 at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. "When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. <sup>2</sup>He opened His mouth and began to" do what? To "teach." Alright, there's your relationship. Who or what are disciples? They are students, pupils, learners and that is what the Greek word for 'disciple' means, a learner, a student. And who or what is the master? He's the teacher, he's the authority and he instructs the disciple. So Jesus is establishing His authority as the master by choosing His students. Now is this the way it is commonly done today? No. If you want to sit under a master teacher then you just sign up for the class. But in the ancient world a master teacher would choose for himself his own students and he would call on them to follow him and if they accepted it was very costly. In order to be chosen the prospective students would show the master they wanted to sit under him. They would do this by showing interest in his teaching, following him around, listening to his public teaching, asking questions and inviting him to spend time with them. And if the master was convinced that the follower had enough interest to be dedicated to his teaching and that he could master the material then he would approach the student and invite him to become his student. So it was driven by the master and that is what you are seeing in 4:18-22. Jesus is approaching four of His followers and inviting them to become His disciples. If they were to accept His invitation they would be submitting to His authority and instruction but it would cost them because in both word and deed they would be dedicating themselves to obey Him.

Having explained the background is it likely that Jesus had never met these men? No. It's highly unlikely. In fact we know He had already met them and we know that these men already showed interest in Jesus' teaching. Which gospel writer tells us this? John. In John's gospel John the Baptist was standing at the Jordan with two of his disciples. They were two of John's students. John had his own disciples. They were committed to his teaching as the forerunner of the Messiah and as his students they understood that when the Messiah came they would believe in Him. So John was a great teacher but he was nothing compared to the Messiah. So when he pointed out the Messiah his disciples would depart from him and follow the Messiah. That was the plan and John's Gospel reports that as John was standing with two of his disciples he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." At that moment "the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." Now we're told that one of the two men standing there was Andrew; the other we're not told but we suspect it was John himself who at the time couldn't have been much more than 15-16 years old. He was the youngest of all the disciples and he lived a long time because He composed the Revelation about 60 years later. So Andrew and probably John were the two who followed Jesus when John pointed Him out as the Lamb of God. When they followed Him "Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" Why did they want to know where He was staying? So they could go listen to His teaching. They were expressing interest in Him being their master. They were showing Him they wanted to be His disciples. So "He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day." Now I'm just trying to show the dynamics of how a master-disciple relationship was established and how Jesus already knew Andrew and one other follower, probably John. Then John says in his gospel that Andrew went and "found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter)." So there are three; Andrew, Peter and probably John who met Jesus near the Jordan. He hasn't invited any of them to be His disciples yet but He was acquainted with them. The next day he purposed to go into the Galilee, and he found Philip and Philip found Nathaniel and again, we've found the Messiah, He comes out of Nazareth. And Nathaniel says, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth." Well, come and see. And my point is what? Jesus is not inviting

these men to be His disciples out of the clear blue. He already knew these men, these men had already expressed an interest in His teaching, they wanted to be His disciples but the choice was solely up to Jesus. He was the Master and He had the authority to invite whoever He wanted to be His student. So the way Jesus and His group of disciples formed was in the normal way that master-disciple relationships formed in that day; by the students expressing diligent interest in a master and then being authoritatively called into the master-disciple relationship.

Now in that light we look at verse 18. **Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was 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."** How does the teacher choose His disciples? With authority. He has the authority to pick who He wants to pick. Now at the point of the invitation, of course, they have the choice to accept or reject but the choice to invite was solely up to the master and we already said that Jesus knew they had interest in His ministry. Would you say that these men were already believers in Him? Of course. These men were clearly believers from the previous information we have seen. They had been disciples of John and had identified with the at hand kingdom message saying they would believe in the One coming after Him. And what do you notice that is interesting about the profession these men were in and the profession Jesus is calling them to? What was their profession? **They were fishermen.** What profession was Jesus calling them to? **Fishers of men.** So Jesus uses a metaphor that would have resonated with them. Did these men know about fishing? These men were professional fishermen. Now just as an aside but what's the typical view of these men? They were poor fishermen, the dregs of society. I don't think that's the picture at all. If you look at all the gospels the picture emerges that they were partners in a very large fishing business because they had boats, plural; nets, plural; hired servants, plural. And they were making a lot of money. What was likely the most lucrative industry in all the Galilee? The fishing industry; excepting perhaps tax collecting. Why was fishing so lucrative? Because that's what people ate. Jews rarely ate lamb, except at Passover. The people ate fish and the fish came out of the Sea of Galilee. It was eaten fresh around the Galilee; it would be dried or salted and shipped to Jerusalem.<sup>i</sup> These men were the HEB of the day and they were wealthy businessmen, they had a successful fishing business (Lk 5:10). So what is

Jesus challenging them to do? Get trained in a new profession. But if you're rich and successful in one profession is it a challenge to go back to school and get trained for a new profession? You bet it is. This was an immense challenge.

Were their connections though, between their current profession and the new profession they would be in training for? Jesus seemed to think so. The guys were fishermen; they were being called to be fishers of men. What do you have to be able to do to catch fish? You have to know where to fish, you have to know when to fish, you have to know how to catch certain fish, you have to know the behaviors and movements of fish, you have to know water temperatures, etc...There's a lot to know about fish and a lot of skills to learn to fish effectively. That's why people get guides to take them fishing. It's not easy. And these men had the skills. But what I'm pointing up here is that by Jesus calling them to become fishers of men do you think there might be some connections between fishing for fish and fishing for men? Vamosh says, "There are many links between their daily work and the new task Jesus brought them. A skilled fisherman had to know that for different types of fish, different nets needed to be used. He understood that lack of teamwork could lose him his catch, and lack of patience could leave his nets empty. Choice of the right fishing grounds and sensitivity to nuances of wind, depth and temperature had to be second nature to him in order to bring in the catch."<sup>ii</sup> What then was Jesus calling them to? To learn the skills necessary to catch men so that it becomes second nature to them, just like catching fish. What did it take to become skilled at catching fish? Time and training. What will it take to become skilled at catching men? Time and training. There's no other way. It doesn't happen overnight. But, of course, they do have an advantage in that the skills they had to catch fish could be employed in a similar manner to catch men. But they still needed to be trained. What then is the Sermon on the Mount? In part, at least it is training the disciples to catch men. Jesus was the master fisher of men and He's training them to become like Himself, the master, a student is not greater than his master.

What was their response to the challenge? Verse 20. **Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.** What's the emphasis? On the immediacy of their response. They literally dropped their nets and **followed Him.** What did this mean? Did it mean they dropped their careers and left their families and started ministry? Often pastors take this too far and use it to evoke an

emotive response out of their audience, trying to prompt people to follow the first disciples, drop everything at that moment and go into the ministry. You want to be wary of that. Is that really what this is saying? You might conclude that if you only looked at Matthew but if you look at all the passages in the Gospels what's the picture that emerges? In Luke 4:38-39 we find the scene where Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law at their house in Capernaum. This same scene is recorded as happening later in Matthew 8:14-17. Luke 5:1-11 then recounts how Peter was fishing all night and cleaning his fishing nets the next morning when Jesus came to him and challenged him to take Him out on the boat and put his nets down in the deep water. All these events are clearly after Jesus' call to discipleship recorded in Matthew 4. So the picture emerges that they did immediately leave their nets and follow Him but not to enter permanent ministry. Rather they left for a training session. The disciples were not yet equipped to minister. They needed to be trained to minister. To minister effectively takes serious training and serious training takes time. The Sermon on the Mount is one such training session but their training is going to last several years. So in reality, Matt 4:20 means they immediately left for a training session. At a later time they returned to their fishing business. It's possible, and this is something of a speculation, but it's possible that one further reason Jesus established His ministry base in Capernaum by the Lake of Galilee was because it was here that several of His disciples lived and worked. They could therefore continue their fishing businesses to support their families while they were in training. Of course the goal was that when they were fully-equipped to be fishers of men they would enter into permanent ministry and give up the fishing industry. This training, however, was not complete even after the crucifixion and resurrection because Peter is seen then in John 21:3 going fishing. I would suggest that their training was not totally complete until Acts 6. The Helper had come and by this time the apostles appointed the first deacons so they could be fully devoted "to prayer and to the ministry of the word." That means they were done fishing, their training for the next vocation was complete. It had taken over four years but now they had begun their new profession.

Now I'd just like to make clear that they were being trained to become what? **Fishers of men.** In other words, trained to be able to catch men. What do you mean catch men? These men fished in the Lake of Galilee and they used nets to catch fish and the goal was to catch as many fish as possible, gather



them out of the waters and export them as food in the Galilee and Judea along the trade routes. So their goal as fishers of men is to learn to catch as many men as possible and gather them for training in the kingdom to send them out for further ministry. Is this a salvific purpose? It seems to me that it is. And again, this happens primarily in the book of Acts after they are well-trained. But the goal of Jesus' ministry is to teach the disciples how to bring people to salvation and then to make disciples of those who are saved. So I'm thinking in terms of salvation and training and the kingdom. Why is it important to see the salvation aspect of their training right here in the **fishers of men** expression? Because we're about to be looking at the Sermon on the Mount and the question is, how are we going to interpret the Sermon on the Mount? There are five popular approaches and one of them that it is gaining in popularity denies that salvation is in view at all. It's called the discipleship-ethic view or sometimes the believers-ethic view.<sup>iii</sup> In this view the Sermon is designed to train believers how to live in order to have rewards in the kingdom. Its adherents take the Sermon over and apply it directly to the Church so that this sermon is for us. I have problems with that. I think that confuses the kingdom with the church (which is not revealed until Matt 16). Jesus is still offering the kingdom to Israel so the way I see the sermon is Jesus is training His disciples how to live in order to have rewards in the kingdom but He's also including training on how to be fishers of men in preparation for the kingdom. So the salvation element is present in the Sermon on the Mount and I'm just bringing this up now because I'm looking ahead and preparing you for that sermon by linking it to this narrative. Jesus in the Sermon is not only training believers how to live in order to have rewards but He's training believers how to evangelize Jews. It's not one or the other, it's both and this is critical to the discourse or else you will be tempted to bring it over to the Church and then you are putting the Church under the Law of Moses because I think the Sermon definitely gives the true intent of the Law of Moses.

So we see in verse 20 the call to discipleship is the call to become a catcher of men. And what was their response? Immediate obedience. They wanted to be His students and to be His students they had to display immediate obedience to His authority. Now in verse 21, **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.** If we look at Luke, all these men were in the fishing business together. And so

they were along the shores of the Lake of Galilee too. Here they were **mending their nets** so no fish would escape, a critical procedure, nets with holes don't work so well. And what did Jesus do? **He called them** to be His disciples. Again, did Jesus already know these men? Yes. These men were already familiar with Jesus and His teaching. They showed an interest in Jesus and being His disciples. They were already believers. And what was their response to His call? Immediate obedience. **Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.** Pentecost says, "The demonstrated authority of Christ took precedence over the authority of the father and the demands of a lucrative business. The fishermen forsook all to follow Him."<sup>iv</sup> Presumably they were giving up something of the profitability of their business in order to attend their first private training session along the shores of the Lake of Galilee. However, as Glasscock says, "At his summoning, they did leave their work and spent time with Him but then returned to their fishing."<sup>v</sup> It is evident nonetheless that they put a priority on their training. When their master called, they followed without delay.

So how many disciples has Jesus now chosen? Four. We don't have the Twelve yet, only four. What do you notice about three of these? We have Peter, Andrew, James and John. Three will become His closest disciples. Peter, James and John eventually make up Jesus' inner circle. Is it wrong for a teacher to have an inner circle of students? Students who get most of His attention? Obviously not. Jesus eventually had an inner circle of three, a middle circle of twelve, an outer circle of the seventy and the fringe element of the crowds. There were varying degrees of His intimacy with those groups and it was the innermost circle that enjoyed the closest intimacy. That's just the way it is in ministry and I accept that model in my ministry. If you don't show interest I'm not going to come chase you down. Peter, James and John showed the most interest; thus they were His closest disciples. Now what did these three eventually enjoy that everyone else didn't enjoy? It was these three who would witness the transfiguration, it was these three who saw some of Christ's miracles not observed by others. In the end, James would become the first martyr from among the twelve (Acts 12:2). John would become the last living from among the twelve living almost to AD100 when he composed the Revelation. Peter would be the one to open the doors of kingdom citizenship to Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles in the wake of the crucifixion and consequent postponement of the kingdom during the interadvent age.<sup>vi</sup> These men composed the inner circle.



Now we come to verse 23 and we see Jesus' ministry and the kind of following that resulted. It's a three-fold ministry. Verse 23, **Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.** And what happened along the trade routes that spawned forth out of the Galilee? Verse 24, **The news about Him spread...** That was a key area for rapid travel of news reports. And how would you describe the influence of His ministry? Very widespread. It's going even into **all Syria.** What kind of area is Syria? Jew or Gentile? Gentile! Jesus is attracting a large amount of followers from among the Jews but His influence is spreading even to Gentiles. So what's the key to verses 23, 24 and 25? That initially Jesus' ministry was very successful and very influential. Jesus is becoming immensely popular. Was it predicted that the King would rule over Jew and Gentile in the coming kingdom? Yes, it was. The Gentiles would come to the Jewish King for blessing. And here we see that so this is in line with the kingdom program. Does His popularity continue to grow? That's the question of the following chapters and the parables of Matt 13, the parable of the four soils is depicting the four responses of Jews chronologically as the King offered the kingdom; it started out great, it ended sour.

Now let's take a look at what He did that prompted all the news reports. First, observe that **Jesus was going throughout all Galilee.** In other words, He wasn't just in Capernaum. Capernaum was His ministry base but from that base He travelled all over the **Galilee.** Remember, the Galilee was the northern region around the Lake of Galilee. And what was He doing **throughout all Galilee?** Three things signified by three participles; **teaching, proclaiming and healing.** Who was He teaching, proclaiming to and healing in verse 23? Jews only. The news starts among the Jews. How do we know that? First, where was He teaching? **in their synagogues.** Whose synagogues? The Jews. Now this is the first mention of a synagogue in the NT so where did the synagogue come from? They probably developed in the absence of the Temple during the Babylonian exile. By this time every city that had a sufficient Jewish population had a synagogue. Jesus is now going around to these synagogues. So simply from the concept of a synagogue Jesus is clearly targeting who in His ministry? Jews. Now what did the Jews do in the synagogue? Instruct. It was the place of instruction. They had a liturgy

that accompanied but the chief thing was the instruction? What did they read and instruct from? From the OT; the Law. But whose interpretations were given as authoritative? The scribes and the Pharisees. So they read from the word of God, but the important thing at this point is that the scribes and Pharisees gave the official rabbinic interpretations of the word. Now how could Jesus go into various synagogues in the Galilee and be allowed to speak? It was common if someone was known to be a learned man to be allowed to speak. So it is not strange with Jesus' popularity in Capernaum that He was permitted to teach in other synagogues throughout the Galilee.<sup>vii</sup> However, what would be different about His teaching than what the people were accustomed to hearing? The interpretation of the Law. In the Sermon on the Mount eight times Jesus is going to say, "You have heard it said...but I say to you." And what Jesus is doing there is contrasting the official rabbinic interpretation of the Law with His interpretation of the Law. So His instruction is going to differ and the people are going to be impacted by this. So the first part of His ministry is teaching and I'm trying to emphasize that the teaching is to the Jews.

What's the second part of His ministry? **Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.** The Greek word **proclaiming** is *κηρυσσω* and means "preaching." He's **preaching the gospel of the kingdom.** What do we mean by **gospel**? "Good news." Is He preaching the good news of the death and resurrection? No, that hasn't occurred yet. What's the content of the good news He is preaching? The **kingdom.** What about the kingdom. That it's "at hand." So **the gospel of the kingdom** is that the **kingdom** is "at hand." How was it "at hand?" In the sense that the King was there proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom. All that needed to happen for the kingdom to come is for the nation to repent. So he's going throughout all Galilee and preaching the good news that the kingdom is at hand. Is that a Jewish message? That is a very Jewish message. The kingdom was promised in the covenants of Abraham and David. So Pentecost says, "Christ recognizes His mission as Messiah to proclaim the good news that God had honored His covenant promises and had sent Messiah to the nation." It is entirely Jewish.

What's the third part of His ministry? **And healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.** Note first, is all disease and sickness related to demons? Surely you've heard people claim that all disease and sickness are demon related. Here's a verse I want to share with

you that does not relate it to demons. There is disease and sickness simply because of our Fall in Adam. Second, what was the Messiah to be capable of doing? **Healing**. Why? Two reasons? First, to show that He had kingdom authority. Isa 35 predicted that the kingdom was to be free of diseases and sickness. If Jesus could heal from every variety of disease and sickness then Jesus must have kingdom authority. So the first reason Jesus did miracles was to show that He was the King and as the King He had kingdom authority. Second, to authenticate His teaching and preaching as from God. Jesus was teaching something different than the scribes and Pharisees. How were the people to know that His teaching was true? By signs, miracles and wonders granted to Him. Such healings would authenticate that His explanation of the Law was the true explanation and the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees was false. The people had a choice to make. Would they continue to sit under the yoke of the scribes and Pharisees or would they place themselves under the yoke of the Messiah? Third, what people is He specifically healing in verse 23? Jews only. It says at the end of the verse he was healing **the people**. The Greek word used for **people** here is *λαος* and specifically refers to Jews in contrast to *εθνος* which would have referred to Gentiles. So Matthew is emphasizing Jesus' healing ministry among the Jews.

In conclusion, the three-fold ministry of Jesus occurred in the Jewish region of Galilee: He taught in the Jewish synagogues, He preached the Jewish message of the kingdom and He was authenticated by Jewish healings. Together these evidences show that Jesus' ministry was a ministry to the Jews. He was their King and He was fully capable of bringing in the kingdom.

In verses 24-25 we see the result of the King's ministry. **The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.** There are two results here. In both, however, they share the same emphasis. What is the emphasis? Jesus' rise in popularity. In verse 24 the results are the spreading of news to Gentiles. The text says that **the news about His** miracles in particular had **spread throughout all Syria**. Toussaint says, "The phrase "into all Syria (*εις ολην*

*την Συριαν*) in verse twenty-four stands in sharp contrast to “in all Galilee” (*εν ολη τη Γαλιλαια*) in verse twenty-three.”<sup>viii</sup> The one is predominantly Jewish; the other predominantly Gentile. Jesus’ fame was spreading beyond Israel. Was the kingdom to contain both Jews and Gentiles? In other words, was this to be expected? Zechariah said that the Gentiles would come to the King in the kingdom for blessing. Thus the phrase **all Syria** continues the development of Matthews’s theme that Gentiles were responding positively to the Jewish King. This was all in keeping with preparation for the kingdom.

Before we leave verse 24 take note of the many realms of Jesus’ healing ministry; **illness, various diseases, pains, demoniacs, epileptics and paralytics**. We will be looking more intently at Jesus’ miracles after the Sermon on the Mount but it is worth noting at this time that Jesus **healed them** all. There was no realm of the entire created order that Jesus did not have authority over. These problems stemmed from living in a fallen world. The fact that Jesus was able to heal them demonstrated that He was the King of the kingdom to come. Carson says, “. . . both Scripture and Jewish tradition take sickness as resulting directly or indirectly from living in a fallen world . . . . The Messianic Age would end such grief (Isa. 11:1–5; 35:5–6). Therefore Jesus’ miracles, dealing with every kind of ailment, not only herald the kingdom but show that God has pledged himself to deal with sin at a basic level (cf. 1:21; 8:17).”<sup>ix</sup>

Verse 25 catalogues another result of the King’s ministry. If verse 24 showed how popular Jesus became among Gentiles then verse 25 shows how popular Jesus became among Jews, for the places listed here are predominantly Jewish. Here we see **Large crowds followed Him from Galilee**, the region He was ministering, **and also the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan**. While the **Galilee** did contain Jews and Gentiles it was predominantly Jewish. **Jerusalem and Judea** are well-known to be Jewish areas. The **Decapolis**, what is the **Decapolis**? Just from the word, any of you that know a little Latin, can you tell me what this word means? Ten-cities. So the **Decapolis** region contained ten cities. The region is mainly on the east and southeast side of the Sea of Galilee, on the east side of the Jordan River, but one city was on the west of the Jordan, Bethshean. And those of you who go to Israel next year will be privileged to tour the spectacular archaeological remains of Bethshean. Another notable city among the ten cities of the **Decapolis** is Pella because a number of Hebrew

Christians fled to Pella when the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem in AD70. They followed Jesus' command to flee Judea and Jerusalem. At the time of these healings the **Decapolis** was probably predominantly Gentile.<sup>x</sup> Finally, the region known as **beyond the Jordan** was west of the Jordan River.

What's Matthew's point? Christ traveled throughout Galilee teaching and preaching and authenticating His word by the miracles that He performed among the Jews. As a result, multitudes were attracted to Him, not only in the Jewish areas of the Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond the Jordan but also in the Gentile areas of Syria and the Decapolis. Thus as Pentecost said, "We see the widening influence of Jesus as a result of His words and His work." The popularity of Jesus' early ministry sets the stage for us to get a taste of Jesus' teaching in the following Sermon on the Mount.

In conclusion then, Jesus has chosen His first four disciples. All of them had been baptized by John and were his disciples but promised to believe in the Messiah when He arrived. When John pointed Him out they followed Him and spent time with Him in Judea. Later they returned to the Galilee while Jesus continued to privately minister to people like Nicodemus in Judea. When John was arrested Jesus moved His ministry base to Capernaum, where His public ministry began. Jesus then sought out men who had diligently sought out His instruction. All four of them were fishermen by trade and not by accident. Their skills as fishermen would be aptly suited to rise to the challenge of becoming fishers of men. His call to discipleship challenged them to enter His training in order to become master fishers of men such as Himself. The training would require absolute obedience and submission to His authority. Forsaking all they followed Him. Subsequently He took them on ministry trips throughout the Galilee. His ministry was three-fold; teaching the Law in Jewish synagogues, preaching the gospel of the Jewish kingdom and healing Jews of every kind of diseases and weaknesses. The effects were widespread. The news traveled north to Syria among the Gentiles who brought those who suffered in every realm and Jesus healed them all, heralding the kingdom and showing that He was able to remove the effects of sin. This was a fore view of Gentiles partaking in the kingdom to come. Large crowds also followed Him from the east in the Decapolis region, the south in Jerusalem and Judea and the west beyond the Jordan. The news spread to every point of the compass. The King had arrived

and His fame was spreading throughout the world from the tiny district of Galilee. The groundwork for Jesus' first discourse has been laid. The discourse will give us a sample of Jesus' training of His disciples to follow Him in both word and deed, that they might become 'fishers of men.'

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<sup>i</sup> Pentecost, *Dispensational Problems in the Gospel of Matthew*, DTS class lectures, 1988.

<sup>ii</sup> Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Daily Life at the Time of Jesus*, p 62.

<sup>iii</sup> See Jerry Hullinger's article *Is There a Dispensational Approach to the Sermon on the Mount* at <http://1024project.com/2014/02/17/is-there-a-dispensational-approach-to-the-sermon-on-the-mount/> or see John A. Martin's article *Christ, the Fulfillment of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount* in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, pp 248-263.

<sup>iv</sup> Pentecost, *Words and Works*, p 143-44.

<sup>v</sup> Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 93.

<sup>vi</sup> Glasscock, *Matthew*, p 94.

<sup>vii</sup> Paul also had access to speak in synagogues throughout Rome as demonstrated in the Book of Acts.

<sup>viii</sup> Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 85.

<sup>ix</sup> Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Mt 4:21). Galaxie Software.

<sup>x</sup> Easton's Bible Dictionary, entry on *Decapolis*

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