

The People Which Sat in Darkness

Matthew 4:12 – 25

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~ We were able to put Satan behind us in our last report from our Spiritual Safari. If you haven't read it, I highly suggest you go back and do so. The temptation – or testing – of the Lord Jesus is over now. To briefly recapitulate those things that are clearly taught in the life of our Lord, we first saw Him born as a King and introduced to us as a King. Satan was treated as a person who interacted with the Lord Jesus. Isaiah says Satan is a man. There is a lot of confusion as to exactly who and what the devil is today. Satan made such a subtle insinuation when he said, "...if Thou be the Son of God....turn these stones into bread." The test was to see if Jesus would prove Himself in a way that was not God's way. Jesus wasn't tempted to commit a crime. I don't even think that would be a legitimate temptation for the Lord Jesus. Satan wasn't asking Jesus to turn water into wine, either. No, the temptation was to do something good, actually; as bread is the staff of life for mankind. It would have been a very good thing for Jesus to make bread and feed the world, right? There were a whole lot of stones laying around. The inherent evil and ultimate test was to get Jesus to act outside of the will of His Father for His life.

Remember, we saw how all of Jesus answers to the devil came directly from the Word of God. The Sword of the Spirit was used every single time to meet the enemy of God; and the enemy of man, for that matter. The Lord Jesus said each time, "it is written." I wish more Christians were a little more well-versed at using their swords. Most Christians can't even pick up the sword of the Spirit of God without hurting themselves. They mishandle it until someone takes it away from them and runs it right through their heart. That is our weapon, friends; and it's very effective when used correctly.

When higher criticism originated in Germany and leveled its attack against the Bible their hypothesis aimed both barrels directly towards the Book of Deuteronomy. Most atheists exclusively quote Deuteronomy around this forum on which I teach. They always do so to say God condones slavery and genocide and rape – and all of that abjectly ignorant drivel. Of course, that makes them liars. The devil hates Deuteronomy specifically because the Lord Jesus used it against him. Satan, in essence, tried to get Jesus to become a religious ruler by stupendous miracle rather than by offering his genuine credentials in the manner that God had prescribed – on the cross. The way of the devil would have gone right past the cross, too. Most of what passes for Christianity today is really Satan-anity - or something like that - as it leaves out the cross of Christ altogether.

The so-called end-day prophets and miracle workers of today have all but led the church completely astray and into totality of darkness in apostasy. It can be very

dangerous getting mixed up with a church today. Don't misunderstand me, I believe in miracles and healing and all of that - but I do NOT believe in miracle healers. If I am sick I am going directly to the Great Physician; not some intern. I'm going to the specialist, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for teaching, wisdom, judgment and discernment. So, as it turns out, the Lord Jesus would not become a religious leader the way the devil wanted Him to.

Remember the devil came back at Jesus quoting Scripture also saying, "...He will give His angels charge concerning Thee and they shall bear You up...." (If Jesus had jumped from the temple pinnacle). Except, Satan wasn't quite accurate in his recitation. Satan can quote Scripture for his own purpose – or I should say MISQUOTE Scripture; and, as such, he was wrong. That also, by de facto, made the devil a liar. Satan leaves out a very important phrase from Psalm ninety-one at verses eleven and twelve..."to keep Thee in all Thy ways." Satan leaves out the important parts of Scripture in an attempt to get YOU to ignore doing things God's way. That's his method. Always has been.

Friends, it is just not always God's will to work something in your life - or NOT do something in your life. Other times it is miraculous. This idea that we can force God and His Word to do or mean something other than what it does treats the Lord like our servant. What fools we can be – without even trying! God isn't working for you, my beloved. You don't command God – HE commands YOU! I've noticed that those claiming things and commanding things never seem to keep His commands. They must not love Him very much? God is sovereign; we just so happen to be the creatures – His subjects. Do you yield to the will of God? Honestly? That may not be pleasant for you to answer to yourself - but it's the will of God that is important – not YOU!

Here we run into a serious question as Satan offered the Lord Jesus the kingdoms of the world. The question is: did Satan have the kingdoms of the world to offer? Friends, the Lord Jesus never challenged one time whether the devil could make good on his end of that arrangement. You better turn that over several times in you thinking before you continue reading – because it gets worse from here. Our safari assumes that the devil had the kingdoms to give because Jesus didn't challenge it or even answer that. This puts a little different light on the trouble seen around us today, doesn't it? We are getting to some terrible, terrible times very quickly. Satan is running every society and every institution thereof – and he's running them straight into the ground. We're so afraid of how America's government will turn out in the end and how the world, in general, turns out in the end times; but what we're really afraid of is Satan! Let's remember who our enemy is because the devil is the one behind all the confusion and chaos in the streets – and in the church - today. He is a spiritual enemy who wants to become God; Satan just wanted Jesus to "fall down and worship him." That's all; so simple....

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he withdrew from that area and departed into Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

~ If you have a good Bible with a map in the back then you can see Jesus moving His headquarters from the southern region to the northern area. We aren't given any real details here and we should note the Gospels do not attempt to draw any parallels with each other. They are not carbon copies – they are eyewitness accounts. Any attempt to harmonize the four Gospels is a colossal mistake; particularly trying to incorporate John, the disciple the Lord Jesus loved, in with the others. It just doesn't pan out. There is a very definite audience target and a very specific personal application within the human family for each one of us within each one of the Gospels. None are meant to be a biography of the Lord Jesus, either. Nobody could give that account; although some have tried – and they've failed miserably. What we are reading here is to the religious element; primarily, the nation Israel. As we move along, Jesus takes off to Capernaum and, as far as we can tell, He never leaves there until He travels to Jerusalem to be crucified. I also noticed that He never went to Capernaum after His resurrection. He had already pronounced a judgment on Capernaum because this is the place that had sought so many of His miracles; and, indeed, Jesus says, "Woe unto thee, Capernaum!" We need to note the reason for all this activity - and only Matthew will give us that reason....

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah (Isaiah chapter nine at verse one and two and also in the forty-second chapter at verses six and seven) Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16 The people whom sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

~ We could spend quite a bit of time dealing with this section of Scripture, but won't. However, the serious student of Scripture will find it profitable to investigate the condition of the land at the time the Lord Jesus was there being raised as a boy. This is called the Gentile country and many from the Roman Empire had come into that area. We are talking about an extremely wicked region and a very worldly society. They had marvelous resorts all along the Sea of Galilee. The people in that area may have been near Jerusalem, but they were VERY far from God. Christ goes into Capernaum and NOT Jerusalem to establish His headquarters. A great light breaks now upon them. The very presence of the Lord Jesus created a responsibility for the people of Capernaum; one for which they will be judged later....

17 From that time Jesus began to preach right where John the Baptist left off, and to say, Repent; turn around; come to Me: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

~ Modern theologians have so overly-complicated that which is so profoundly simple. This earth is to be Heaven for an earthly people; but that means the NEW earth and the NEW Heaven – not today in this world as it is. The curse of sin will have to be removed before earth could ever be Heaven – or recreated – or whatever it is God is going to do. He hasn't told me those plans – except judgment by fire; and He hasn't told you otherwise, either. They will go into eternity right here as physically as you read my reports and I type them. The church has a Heavenly hope, as we have seen before. The Old Testament hope of an earthly hope is a marvelous hope, indeed....

18 And Jesus, the Person of the King, of course, when walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

~ We will find at least three calls in the Gospels that the Lord Jesus made to these men. Jesus first met them in Jerusalem. John tells us that. This is the second call. They're going to go back to fishing for fish before the third calling to apostleship. Mark and Luke will both provide all the necessary details of that account. This is the wonder of it all, friends. Jesus called men like this; maybe He can use ME for something. Maybe He can use YOU for something? Christ is wonderful. It's wonderful that He doesn't call perfect men. Whatever talent you have – if you will turn it over to Him - He will use it. You may not have a talent – but He can use you for His mighty purpose anyways. Naturally, we don't all do the same thing because the body of Christ has many members. We're not all the tongue, for example. Members in the body of Christ all do very different things and perform very different specific functions....

20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

~ Throughout the course of the Gospel accounts we're going to get much better acquainted with each of these men who just up and left the family businesses and everything else to follow Jesus. We see Him now in the north – teaching in their synagogue; preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom! It is at hand, friends. Christ is the Person of the King here and we are to accept and receive Him. There were thousands that Jesus healed at this time. We're not talking about a few isolated cases of some unclear and mysterious something going on in a back alley here. His miracles were never questioned because there were WAY too many healings for it to be anything but legitimate; there were too many healed people walking around town....

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

~ Decapolis were ten cities on the east side of the Jordan River. The multitudes, we see, are coming up from Jerusalem and Judaea and from BEYOND Jordan. That means a long, long ways off. Our Spiritual Safari ends here today; but in our next report we are going to hear the Sermon on the Mount. This will be the first of three major discourses we have come to in the Book of Matthew in the Bible. The Mystery Parables will come after that at chapter nineteen; and then chapter twenty-four and twenty-five contain the Olivet Discourse. The Sermon on the Mount is the manifesto of the King. The Mystery Parables will give us the direction the Kingdom of Heaven is moving AFTER His rejection; and then the Olivet Discourse is entirely eschatological and looks completely to the future as Christ rules and reigns on this earth. It's pretty important to understand these things properly, correctly and completely, friends. New truths and new relationships with the Lord Jesus are what we're attempting to forge as we follow Him; vitally connected to discourse and sound doctrine. We are going to get critical details on how to proceed in our expedition in our next report. It will be imperative that you read it extremely carefully ~

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