

# Matthew

**Bible Study**

**Part 1**

**"For I did not come to call the righteous,  
but sinners, to repentance." (9:13)**

*Made for Gardendale church of Christ*

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## Index

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
1		5	Intro and Genealogy	1:1-17	
2		7	Genealogy (Continued)	1:17-25	
3		9	Herod Attempts to Kill Jesus	2	
4		11	Jesus is Baptized	3	
5		13	Jesus is Tempted	4	
6		15	Sermon on the Mount	5:1-20	
7		17	Righteousness in Personal Dealings	5:21-48	
8		19	Seeking God's Reward	6:1-18	
9		21	Serve God, Not Wealth	6:19-34	
10		23	Ask, Seek, Knock	7:1-12	
11		25	Two Ways	7:13-27	
12		27	The Miracles	8	
13		30	Jesus' Authority	9	
14		33	The Apostles	10:1-15	
15		35	Predicted Persecution	10:16-42	
16		37	John Sends Messengers	11:1-19	
17		39	Know the Father, Know the Son	11:20-30	
18		41	Doing Good on the Sabbath	12:1-27	
19		43	The Pharisees' Accusation	12:22-37	
20		45	The Sign of Jonah	12:38-20	
21		47	The Sower	13:1-23	
22		50	The Wheat and the Tares	13:24-30	
23		53	The Dragnet	13:31-58	

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# *The Book of Matthew*

## Introduction

### Lesson 1

This class utilizes a topic-based outline, which shows an alternating pattern of lengths of narrative followed by a discourse.

<u>Outline: Narrative &amp; Discourse</u>
Narrative: The Messiah Introduced (1-4)
Discourse: Righteousness (5-7)
Narrative: The Messiah's Authority (8-9)
Discourse: Mission and Martyrdom (10)
Narrative: The Messiah is Accused and Doubted (11-12)
Discourse: Parables about the Kingdom (13:1-52)
Narrative: Jesus Is the Christ (13:53-17)
Discourse: Life and Discipline in the Kingdom (18)
Narrative: Teaching Towards Jerusalem (19-23)
Discourse: The Fall of Jerusalem and Coming of the Son of man (24-25)
Narrative: The Climactic Fulfillment of Jesus' Mission (26-28)

### Attributes of Matthew's Gospel:

It is organized into a **narrative, discourse pattern**. There is a common identifier for them:

"when Jesus had finished... (these words, parables, instruction)"

Here are the markers: (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1)

There are **five discourses**. Think about them as large and significant groupings of Jesus' teachings. This likely would have resonated with Jews because the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) contained a large and significant body of identity and law for Israel. Thus, five discourses may signify Jesus role as the "New Moses" (Deut. 18:15) for Israel.

**"Fulfill"**- Jesus' work and life in relation to Scripture/prophecies. Matthew's gospel is filled with instances of how Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy and Scripture. The Jews searched the Scriptures for life, and God through Matthew is revealing how they point to Jesus.

**"Kingdom of heaven"**- "of heaven" is unique to Matthew's gospel. There

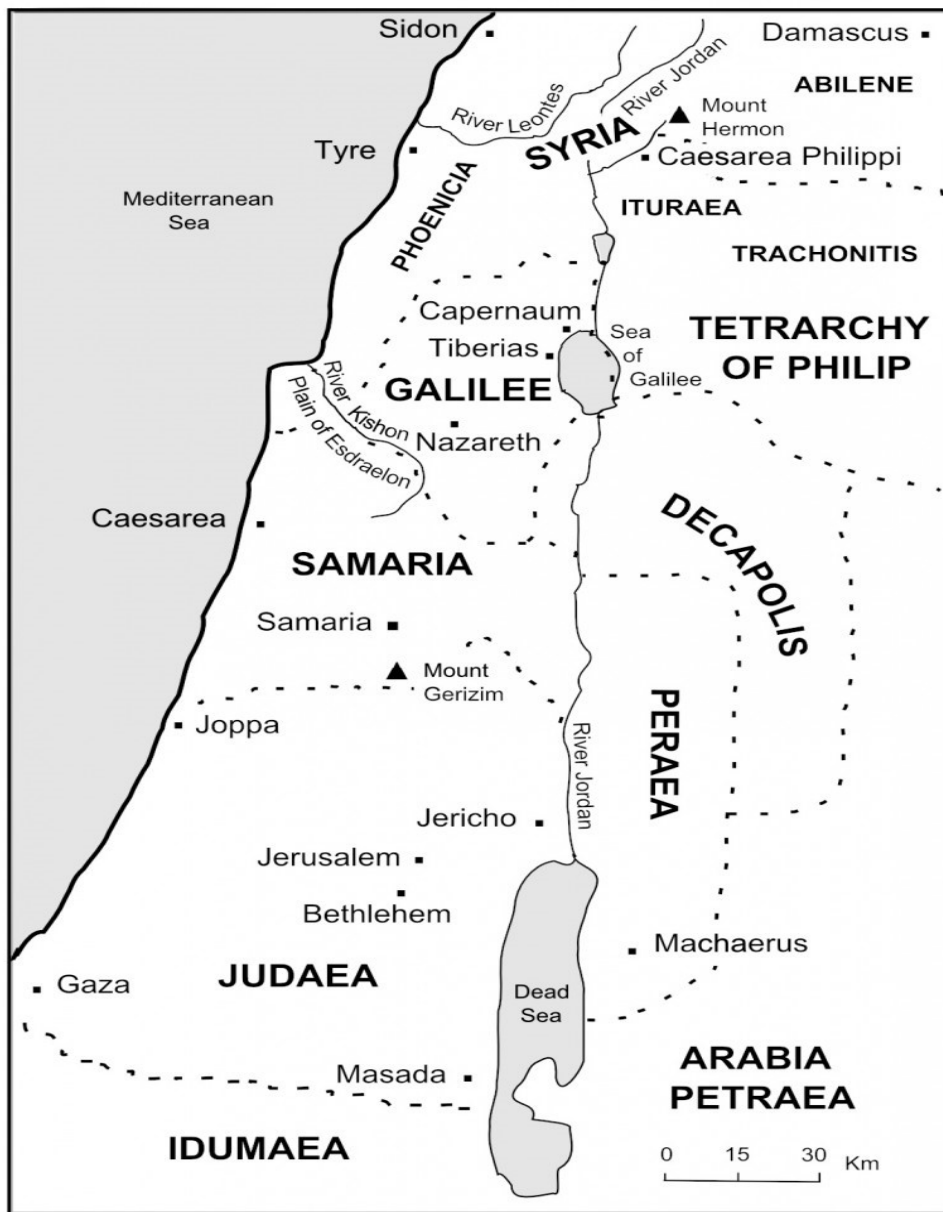
seems to be a lot of emphasis on how the Jews weren't prepared for that type of a kingdom.

The book also highlights that **unlikely candidates** (Gentiles, tax collectors, prostitutes; see 8:5–13, 28–34; 15:21–28) were getting ready for the kingdom. There were many Jews that would forfeit their opportunity to take part and so their place would be given to another (See 8:10-12, 21:43).

The intent of this study is to focus on the points that God made through Matthew, not to combine every detail with Mark, Luke, and John. Each book individually has significant points and messages to consider. Though Jesus has many powerful one-liners, there are also broad lessons seen through considering larger sections of the book. While we spend more time breaking down sections in these lessons, try to put the lessons back into the larger contexts.

Please share any suggestions, questions, comments, or feedback.

-Nathan Jones



**Narrative: The Messiah is Introduced (Chapters 1-4)**

Matthew starts with a genealogy. It is arranged and sculpted to show Jesus' rightful place and role as the Messiah. It is organized to show times of significant change in Israel's history, thus pointing to its most significant yet: the Messiah has come. Its purpose goes beyond simply recording history, as it does not show every single person involved in Jesus' lineage. Some ancestors are included and some are excluded, thus challenging pre-conceived notions about whom God blesses and favors. What kind of people make up the legacy of bringing forth the Messiah? What kind of people can God include in His plan and promises? Who will receive His blessings?

**The Genealogy**

1. Read Gen. 22:18, Acts 3:25-26, Mat. 3:9; what is the significance of beginning the genealogy with Abraham?
2. Why would Joseph (v.16) be part of Jesus' genealogy if he was not responsible for Jesus' conception?
3. Which kings were left out of the genealogy? (v.8; Use a list of kings of Judah for comparison) Do genealogies have to list every single ancestor to be valid?
4. Your Bible may have a footnote for the Greek wording of Asa and Amon as "Asaph" and "Amos." These names were likely variations, purposefully used to remind the audience of another person. What connection would Asaph and Amos have with Jesus? (Luke 24:44)

5. Who would the Jews consider to be the most significant individuals in the genealogy? Are they all framed in a positive light?

6. Not including Mary, how many women are mentioned in the genealogy?

(Hint: Look for the "by" statements:  
the father of \_\_\_\_ **by** \_\_\_\_")

7. What was their nationality/background? How would their heritage and situations read to a Jewish audience?

8. What was the point of including such women (and excluding the others) in the genealogy?

**The Genealogy (Continued)**

1. What are the three groupings of generations? (v.17)
2. What significant changes occurred from grouping to grouping?
3. What implication may thus be made for this upcoming fourth generation for God's people?

**Jesus' Birth (vs.18-25)**

4. Why did Joseph want to send Mary away? Why secretly?
5. An angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Why might Joseph be afraid?
6. The name *Jesus* means "Jehovah saves" and the name *Immanuel* means "God with us." How can these ideas find fruition in Jesus?

7. Is marriage made legitimate through sexual intimacy? What in the text would speak to this question?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why might Joseph have chosen to keep Mary as a virgin, since she was his wife?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Matthew references Isaiah 7:14-16. Compare that language with Isaiah 8:3-8. Is Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in Isaiah's day or Jesus' day?



**Herod Attempts to Kill Jesus**

1. Were the wise men from the east Jewish? If not, why would they be interested in finding the newly born king of the Jews?
2. Did Herod have ulterior motives behind wanting to see the prophesied king?
3. Thought Question: Should Herod have feared Jesus' reign?
4. The scribes and chief priests quoted Micah 5:2 as evidence of where the Messiah would be born. There are further Messianic prophecies in Micah 4. In what days would they occur?
5. Why did the wise men bring such lavish gifts to Jesus? Is a baby worthy of gifts as well as worship?
6. Did the wise men return to Herod? Why or why not?
7. How did God intervene to save Jesus from Herod?

8. Another prophecy is fulfilled in v.15 (from Hosea 11:1). Reading through that section of Hosea, does it sound like Jesus? If not, then how does Jesus fulfill it?
  
9. Why did Herod decide on the age two years and under?
  
10. Why did Joseph and Mary return from Egypt?
  
11. Why was it safe for Joseph and Mary to go to Galilee?
  
12. ***“He shall be called a Nazarene”*** (v.23). Notice the plural noun in ***“spoken through the prophets.”*** You don’t find this as a single quotation in the Old Testament. Rather, this is the fulfillment of many prophecies that have been spoken. Many think that ***Nazarene*** is a play on the Hebrew word for branch, ***nezer***. Consider the language of the branch in Isaiah 11. He will stem from Jesse (David’s lineage).

Research: What other passages state or describe the Messiah being in David’s lineage?

13. ***“Rachel wept for her children.”*** Her tomb was near Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16-20). Continue reading from the passage in Jeremiah 31:15 and see how God responds. Despite Herod’s gruesome act, what consolation would God bring?

**Jesus Is Baptized**

1. What was the core message of John the Baptist? (v.2)
2. What was the core purpose behind this message? (v.3)
3. What is the depiction of his appearance and lifestyle? (v.4) What other prophet was described in a similar way? (2 Kings 1:8)
4. What was the response to John's message?
5. Summarize the points that John made when he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees respond.
6. How do verses 11-12 contrast the roles of John and Jesus?

7. Why did John feel that it was unfitting for him to baptize Jesus? (vs.14-15) Was it normal for someone like Jesus to seek his baptism?
  
8. How did Jesus respond to John?
  
9. What occurred when Jesus was baptized? Considering the occurrences, what inferences could be made about Jesus?

**Jesus Is Tempted**

1. Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness?
2. What recent event in Chapter 3 may have provoked Satan to reframe and challenge Jesus' sonship and kingship?
3. What significant events in Israel's history involved testing and a period of "forty"? Why might Jesus have fasted during this time?
4. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3; read it within the context of Deuteronomy 8:1-3. How did the context relate to Jesus' situation?
5. Satan quoted from Psalm 91. Is there a promise in the psalm about God's divine protection? If so, then what did he twist about the text?
6. Read Exodus 17:1-7 and then the context of Jesus' quotation (Deut. 6:16). Israel lacked the faith that God would provide. Satan tempted Jesus to test God's promise by jumping from the temple. How would jumping "test" the Lord?
7. How could Satan's offering of the kingdoms of the world have tempted Jesus?

Jesus Begins His Ministry (12-25)

8. What event prompted Jesus to leave Nazareth? (v.12)
  
9. How were people “in darkness”? What was the great light that dawned on them? (vs.12-14)
  
10. Continue reading beyond the quotation in Isaiah 9. What was foretold to happen when the light shined on them? (Isa 9:3-7)
  
11. How did Jesus relate Simon and Andrew’s occupation to discipleship? (vs.18-19)
  
12. **“Follow me.”** What did those whom Jesus called have to give up? (vs.20-22)
  
13. What accompanies Jesus’ teachings? (vs.23-24)
  
14. Where did the news of Jesus spread? (vs.24-25)
  
15. How did people respond to the ministry? (v.25)
  
16. Thought Question: Jesus again quoted Deuteronomy 6 as a rebuttal for worshipping Satan. How did Jesus fulfill that chapter’s expectations for righteous servitude?

**Discourse: Righteousness (Chapters: 5-7)**

Chapters 5-7 contain Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. *"It is safe to say that the Sermon on the Mount is the best known, least understood, and least practiced of all the teachings of Jesus."*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus spoke in a way to prepare and challenge his listeners to be righteous as a citizen of God's kingdom. In doing so, He would break down false teachings of the day — ***"you have heard it said"*** — that would hinder such righteousness. Jesus taught that ascribing to the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees would cause you to miss the kingdom of heaven. He would go on to warn against feigned, hypocritical service that would find no reward with God.

Jesus is also a very practical teacher. Beyond simply stating what is wrong or wicked, He would give examples and opportunities of what is true and righteous. Here is a sample of important questions answered in the sermon:

What does true righteousness look like?	What kind of service does God expect?
How should I pray? Will God take care of me?	How does Jesus fit into all of this?
Will God reward me for putting Him first?	How can I enter the kingdom?

This class has six lessons for these chapters, and yet there are single verses that can be sermons in and of themselves. It is important to connect Jesus' points together to see His flow of thought.

**Sermon on the Mount**

1. What other occasion did God's law come forth from a mountain? (Exodus 19-32)
2. Could Israel come near God giving the law in Exodus? (Exodus 24:1-2, Hebrews 12:18-21)  
Can they come near to God now?
3. Consider the beatitudes (vs.3-12). Would you describe these qualities as physical or spiritual?
4. In what way will kingdom citizens inherit the earth? (Hint: see Psalm 2:8, Colossians 1:12-20)
5. *Blessed* means happy, or well off, similar to its use in Psalm 1:1. Considering question 3, why might Jesus have clarified the way to find happiness in His kingdom?

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Earnhart, *Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution* (Digital Edition)

6. Did Jesus teach that the nature and work of the kingdom ought to be secretive and elusive? (vs.14-16)
  
7. What will make the representatives of this kingdom stand out to others? (v.16)
  
8. When a kingdom citizen stands out to others, who should end up receiving the glory?
  
9. What was Jesus going to do to the Law? (v.17)
  
10. Jesus would be accused of not keeping the Law of Moses. Did Jesus teach His followers not to keep Moses' law, or that some parts were unimportant? (v.19) Why would Jesus need to clarify this for kingdom citizens?
  
11. Nothing would pass away from the Law until "***all things are fulfilled***" (NKJV) or "***all is accomplished***" (NASB). What events would fulfill all things? (Luke 24:44-49)
  
12. From Jesus' statement in v.18, can we infer that a time would come where the Law would be done away with?
  
13. Were the Pharisees and scribes actually righteous? (Briefly reference Matt. 23:13-33) Why might Jesus have indicated that their righteousness was insufficient for the kingdom of heaven?



### Righteousness in Personal Dealings

1. Based on what we considered in question 7 of the previous lesson (in 5:21-48), did Jesus' sermon introduce new laws, or did it explain the intent of the law?
2. What was the false teaching about '***You shall not murder***'? How did Jesus address it? (vs.21-26)
3. Do the standards of Jesus' kingdom appear to be more or less restrictive than what people were taught about murder?
4. What was the false teaching about '***You shall not commit adultery***'? How did Jesus address it? (vs.27-32)
5. Additionally, how does the command '***Whoever sends his wife away is to give her a certificate of divorce***' fit into that discussion? (Note: longer discussions about divorce would be more appropriately held in chapter 19. Use the context and infer the point of mentioning the command.)
6. What was the false teaching about '***You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord***' (Lev.19:12; Deut. 23:23)? How did Jesus address it? (vs.33-37)
7. What was the false teaching about '***An eye for eye, and tooth for tooth***'? (Deut. 19:15-21) How did Jesus address it? (vs.38-42)

8. In verse 43, Jesus simply recited what men have taught: a command of God (Lev. 19:18) twisted by man's teaching (*'hate your enemy'*). Some taught that the use of the word *neighbor* excluded some people, especially your enemies (Luke 10:25-29). How did Jesus show that teaching to be false? (vs.44-48)

9. How could Jesus' audience be better than the tax collectors?

10. To what standard are we to be held? (v.48)

## **Seeking God's Reward**

1. How can we distinguish the displaying of righteousness in 6:1 with the display of good works in 5:16? In other words, what makes this situation a warning, unlike the other being a command?
  
2. What kind of giving will God reward? What kind will He not reward? (vs.2-4)
  
3. What kind of praying will God reward? What kind will He not reward? (vs.5-6)
  
4. Did Jesus condemn public prayer? Can you think of some instances in the New Testament that would deny such a conclusion?
  
5. What will not validate our prayers before God? (vs.7-8)
  
6. Do we use vain or empty phrases in our prayers? Do we pray things because it “sounds better,” but not necessarily because we mean it? [In responding, please take care to show gentleness and every consideration (Titus 3:2) for those who pray publicly.]
  
7. Contextually, why did Jesus give an example of such a simple prayer as in verses 9-13?

8. In what manner did Jesus indicate we should address God in prayer? (v.9)
  
9. Jesus indicated that His followers should be praying for the coming of the kingdom. Has the kingdom come (Colossians 1:13, Revelation 12:10-11)? If so, can we still pray for God's will concerning the kingdom?
  
10. Should people in our modern society feel obligated to pray for verse 11? Why or why not?
  
11. What is the difference in debt **forgiveness** and debt **fulfillment**?
  
12. How did Jesus connect the obligation to forgive debt with praying? (vs.12-15)
  
13. The kind of fasting considered in this context is that of a spiritual service before God. What kind of fasting will God reward? Additionally, do people violate Jesus' teaching on this today?
  
14. What is a common thread throughout this section?
  
15. How does this common thread connect to what Jesus previously said in chapter 5?

**Serve God, Not Wealth**

1. Why did Jesus say to store up treasure in heaven and not on earth? (vs.19-21)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What connection may be made between the heart (v.21) and the condition of one's eyes? (vs.22-23)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Jesus said there are two choices: service of God or service of wealth. Why are these two opposed to each other?

**Do Not Worry—God Will Provide (vs.25-34)**

4. Jesus started this section by saying, ***“For this reason I say to you.”*** What reason was He referring to? How does that reason connect with this section?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is the answer to Jesus' question in verse 25?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What examples in nature did Jesus use to convey God's providence? (vs.26-30)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Jesus argued that a common field flower is clothed more beautifully than King Solomon at the height of his splendor and glory. Why is this important for a believer to consider? (v.30)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why do you think Jesus mentioned that the Gentiles also seek the things in verse 31?

9. What did Jesus argue is the first priority in life? (v.33)
  
10. Thought question: If God knows what we need, should we still pray for such things? If so, why?
  
11. What troubles (v.34) may distract us from seeking the kingdom first?
  
12. What is a common thread throughout this section?
  
13. How does it connect to what Jesus previously said in 6:1-18?

**Ask, Seek, Knock**

1. With a focus on righteousness, one can become more concerned about others' faults over his own. How did Jesus deal with this issue? (vs.1-6)
  
2. One may read verse 1 and conclude all instances of judgment are forbidden. How would Jesus' words in verse 5 contradict that conclusion?
  
3. What connections regarding severity of judgment can be made with 6:14-15 and 7:1-2?
  
4. How is it possible for one to have a log in his eye and seemingly not notice it? What is the point of Jesus' example?
  
5. Consider the reaction of the dogs and pigs in verse 6. A dog cannot be made to appreciate holiness, nor can a pig be made to respect the value of pearls. What lessons regarding discretion in teaching can be drawn from this analogy?

6. Is Jesus teaching in verse 6 that we should not give people opportunities to hear and obey the gospel? Is there a verse in this section that can answer that question?
  
7. In Jesus' sermon thus far, what are some examples of good gifts to seek from God? (v.11)
  
8. When you think of the Law and prophets, do you think of verse 12? How can verse 12 represent the Law and prophets?
  
9. If we ask and seek after spiritual things, will we receive them?
  
10. What analogy does Jesus use to assure us that we can receive what we ask God for?



**Two Ways**

1. How are the gates and ways described differently in verses 13-14? Why might they be described in such a manner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What did Jesus warn about false prophets? (vs.15-23)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Contextually, how do false prophets relate to the way that leads to destruction?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What good fruits (vs.16-20) were in consideration? Also consider 3:7-10 in your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. On what basis may one enter the kingdom of heaven? (v.21)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In verse 22, how will the people doing these works in Jesus' name end up being condemned (v.23) by Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What connection can be made with verses 19 and 23?

8. What determines whether one has acted wisely or foolish towards Jesus' teachings? (7:24ff)

9. What does the foundation represent?

10. What does the house represent?

11. What does the rain and floods represent?

12. How may one thus stand before the judgment of God?

13. What distinguished Jesus from the scribes? (vs.28-29)

## Narrative: Jesus' Authority (Chapters 8-9)

Introduction:

In this larger section, ten specific signs and wonders are performed as well as the instances in which multitudes of people were healed by Him (8:16, 9:35). We considered Jesus' authority in His teaching, but here we will see His authority exercised over the natural and spiritual world. There are connections to be made between Jesus' sermon in chapters 5-7 and what plays out here, as well as in the rest of the book. This section will introduce the theme of unlikely candidates for the kingdom.

Additionally, there may be some details mentioned that are intended to be reminiscent of Moses:

***“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen; to him you shall listen.”*** (Deuteronomy 18:15)

It may very well be that these ten specific wonders are intentionally linked to the number and nature of the ten plagues with Moses. The power in such a point would be to argue that Jesus is now God's chosen leader, and that we must listen to Him.<sup>2</sup>

### The Miracles

#### The Leper (vs.1-5)

1. Note the language used in regards to Jesus ***“coming down the mountain”*** and compare it with Exodus 19:14. What happened after both of these men came down from the mountain?
2. What all did Jesus restore to the leprous man? (Leviticus 13:45-46)
3. Jesus said this act would serve as a “testimony” for them—“them” presumably being the priests. What would this man's healing be a testimony of?
4. Jesus' decision to touch a leper is very surprising. Leviticus 5:3-6 condemns even the unknowing touching of human uncleanness, and then describes the guilt and atonement that would follow doing so. How could Jesus' action be guiltless? (v.17)

The Centurion's Servant (vs.5-13)

5. Compare Matthew 8:8 with Exodus 8:10.
  
6. What was so great about the Centurion's faith?
  
7. What contrasts can be made with the faith of this Gentile and those of Israel? (vs.10-12)

Peter's Mother-in-law (vs.14-17)

8. How did Jesus heal Peter's mother-in-law? (v.15)
  
9. What did Jesus do to cast out the spirits? (v.16)
  
10. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53 regarding the healing of diseases, sicknesses, and infirmities. Thus, what implications can be made about who Jesus is?
  
11. How did Jesus "weed out" potential disciples? (8:18-22)
  
12. ***"Let me first go bury my father"*** may be a polite request for a delay. Whatever the case, Jesus' response is shocking<sup>2</sup>. Why would Jesus give such a strong response?

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<sup>2</sup> NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible

Jesus Calms the Storm (vs.23-27)

13. The disciples at the sea came to Jesus and asked Him to save them. Why then did He rebuke their lack of faith? (v.18)
  
14. How did Jesus calm the sea?
  
15. Did the great violence of the demon-possessed men deter Jesus from traveling that way? (8:28) How did that area's people react to His work there?

**Jesus' Authority**

1. In 9:2-8, which work did Jesus perform that required more authority: healing a paralytic man or forgiving sin?
2. Did Matthew hide how people may have viewed him and other tax collectors? How did Jesus decide to interact with such people? (9:10-13)
3. How does God's desire for compassion contrast with the Pharisees?
4. In the section about fasting (9:14-17), John's disciples ask why Jesus' disciples did not fast. Is this a fair question? Does Jesus excuse their lack of fasting?
5. Did it seem that Jesus **immediately** responded to the request of the blind men? (9:27-31) What inference may we draw from the timing and location of their healing?
6. Was the faith of the woman, the synagogue official, and the blind men misplaced? (9:18-31)
7. What are the two very different reactions to Jesus' powerful demonstrations? (9:32-34)



The Plagues	Jesus' Miracles
Water turned to blood: <i>“Blood was all throughout the land of Egypt”</i>	Contrast: Jesus removed the flow of blood from a woman
The frogs: they came up from the water, and invaded the lives of the Egyptians.	<p>Contrast: When Jesus healed the two demon possessed men, he sent the demons and swine into the water.</p> <p>Similarity: After the plague, Pharoah asks Moses and the people to go. After the miracle, the people ask Jesus to go.</p>
Boils	
Hail	
Darkness	
Death of the firstborn	



**Discourse: Mission and Martyrdom (10)**

**The Apostles**

**Overview:**

In this section, Jesus continues His ministry in the region of Galilee. Chapter 10 gives us the first use of the term *apostle*, the full roster of the twelve listed, and Jesus' first set of instructions regarding their ministry. Be sure to make note of the manner in which the apostles were to carry out their commission.

**Theme(s) covered in this section:**

**Fulfillment of Prophecy**

- 1) In verse 2, we see the first use of the word *apostle*. Using a Greek dictionary or other resource, define the word *apostle* and explain the way(s) in which your definition(s) applies to the twelve.
  
- 2) What did Jesus grant the twelve in verse 1?
  
- 3) What was the purpose for using these powers? Compare what we know from Mark 16:20 and Heb. 2:3-4.
  
- 4) To whom were the twelve and why? (v.5-6)

***\*Theme Question\****

- 5) Why would the message of verse 7 be appealing to a Jewish audience?

- 6) What could be some good reasons why Matthew provided his audience with a list of the apostles?
  
- 7) What was shown by these men not taking provisions for their journey? (v.8-10)
  
- 8) In verse 11, Jesus tells the apostles to inquire who is worthy. Why is this important?
  
- 9) What is the “peace” mentioned in verses 12 and 13?
  
- 10) What is signified by the shaking of dust from the feet of the apostles? (v.14) (Compare Mark 6:11, Acts 13:51, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Jn. 9-11.)
  
- 11) What is meant by Jesus’ statement at the end of verse 15? Explain your conclusion.

## Predicted Persecution

### **Overview:**

In this section, we read the remainder of Jesus' instructions to the twelve before their departure. Faith in God and reverence for God are major topics for the remainder of this chapter. He closes His remarks to His disciples with a statement of their importance as a means of encouragement.

### **Theme(s) covered in this section:**

Fulfillment of Prophecy

Defining the Kingdom's Citizens

#### *\*Theme Question\**

- 1) What were the twelve told to be like in verses 16-17? What does it mean?
- 2) What persecutions were the twelve told to expect in verses 17-26?
- 3) When will the events Jesus describes in verses 17-23 take place?
- 4) How will the apostles answer these people?

#### *\*Theme Question\**

- 5) What do the persecutions endured by these men reflect about them? (v.24-25)

- 6) Are the apostles being warned of these things to frighten them or to encourage them? (v.19, 22, 26)
  
- 7) What is the promised reward for enduring to the end? (v.22)
  
- 8) Considering verses 27-33, what message is being communicated to the twelve?
  
- 9) Are we to fear anything more than God? (v.28)
  
- 10) What encouragement could the apostles take from the sparrow analogy?
  
- 11) **Thought Question:** Jesus said in verse 34 that He came to bring a sword rather than peace. Thinking in spiritual terms, is division always a bad thing?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 12) In verse 35, Christ quoted Micah 7:6. Compare Micah 7:6-7 with the context of verses 34-38 and explain how the two passages align.
  
- 13) Is anything to be placed in importance before Christ?
  
- 14) What is significant about what Jesus told his apostles in verses 40-42? (Think back to question 1 of the previous lesson.)

**Narrative: The Messiah Is Accused and Doubted (11-12)**

**John Sends Messengers**

**Overview:**

In the first nineteen verses of chapter 11, we see the return of John the Baptist into the story of Christ. He asks a very important question regarding Jesus' identity answered by Jesus in a meaningful way. We are also given an "insider" perspective of John the Baptist from Jesus Himself which provides deeper insight into John's identity and his importance. The section closes with an accusation of sorts against certain members of Christ's audience.

**Theme(s) covered in this section:**

**Fulfillment of Prophecy**

- 1) What was Jesus doing while the twelve were traveling and teaching? (v.1)

***\*Theme Question\****

- 2) In verse 3, we read John the Baptist's question to Jesus regarding His identity. What is Christ's answer and what is noteworthy about the manner in which Jesus responds?
- 3) **Thought Question:** Consider Matt. 3:13-15. Given John the Baptist's knowledge of Christ, why would he be asking this question, and why is it important to us to know this story?
- 4) In verses 7-10, Jesus asked His audience a series of rhetorical questions regarding the reasons they sought out John the Baptist. What is the purpose of asking these questions?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 5) In verses 10 and 14, two references to prophecy were made regarding John the Baptist. What prophecies are being referenced?
- 6) Why was it important for Jesus to link John with prophecy?
- 7) What did Jesus mean when He said ***“the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than”*** John the Baptist?
- 8) What was the “violence” against the kingdom? (v.12)

***\*Theme Question\****

- 9) Examine verses 13-14. What was Jesus telling His audience about the message of the old law and Himself?
- 10) Explain the analogy of the children in verses 16-17. How did this apply to Jesus’ audience? (v. 16-19)
- 11) Who was Jesus likely referring to when He used the word *they*? (v.18-19)
- 12) For what reason would “they” have said these things about John the Baptist and Jesus? (v.18-19)
- 13) What does the phrase ***“But wisdom is justified by her children”*** mean? (v.19) At whom was the phrase directed?

**Know the Father, Know the Son**

**Overview:**

Jesus transitions in the second half of chapter 11 from the subject of John the Baptist and issues a pronouncement of judgment against certain cities of Galilee. He also provides us with the path to salvation at the end of the chapter.

**Theme(s) covered in this section:**

Defining the Citizens of the Kingdom

True Knowledge of God

- 1) Why did Jesus speak against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum? (v.20)
  
- 2) What is revealed to us in scripture about the cities Christ compared to the Galilean cities? (Readings to consider: Joel 3, Amos 1, Isaiah 23, Genesis 19, Ezekiel 16.)
  
- 3) Why use these particular cities as a comparison and to what end?
  
- 4) What did Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum receive that Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom did not? (v.21 and 23)
  
- 5) In verses 22 and 24, Jesus used language similar to that used in chapter 10 verse 15 regarding the judgment of the Galilean cities. What point was Jesus making with these sayings?

- 6) In verses 25-26, Jesus spoke a brief prayer before again addressing His audience. What did He mean when He said God hid “*these things from the wise*”?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 7) Why would God wish to reveal His wisdom to “babes” rather than to the wise? What does that say about who can enter the kingdom? (v.12)

***\*Theme Question\****

- 8) What is significant about Jesus’ statement in verse 26 with regard to what our attitude should be?

- 9) What things had been delivered to Jesus by the Father? (v.27) What did that statement say about Christ?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 10) Explain what Jesus meant by his use of the word *know(s)* in the context of verse 27?

- 11) Who else can know the Father?

- 12) What was Jesus promising rest from in verses 28-30

- 13) Considering your answers to the previous questions, what is the overall point of verses 25-30?



## Doing Good on the Sabbath

### Overview:

The first half of chapter twelve covers a great deal of interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees, most of which is regarding their flawed interpretation of the laws relating to the Sabbath. Jesus defeats their arguments by using known examples from the Old Testament and rebukes them by citing one of the Prophets. Note the way that Jesus exemplifies being wise as a serpent but harmless as a dove by responding in a calm, but ingenious way to the charges from His adversaries.

### Theme(s) covered in this section:

Fulfillment of Prophecy

True Knowledge of God

- 1) In verse 2, the Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of violating the law concerning the Sabbath because they plucked heads of grain. Were His disciples guilty of actually committing a violation? (Consider Ex. 20:8, 34:21, and Deut. 23:25.)
- 2) Examine Christ's answer to the Pharisees. What examples did Jesus use to refute the accusations against His disciples?
- 3) What did these examples have in common and why were the similarities important to Christ's argument?
- 4) Why did Jesus point out "*one greater than the temple*" was before them?

### *\*Theme Question\**

- 5) Explain the significance of the quote from Hosea 6 in verse 7. What was Christ telling the Pharisees?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 6) Consider Hosea 6:6 and the end of Matthew 11. Compare those passages to 12:1-8. What is clearly missing in the Pharisees that is the root of their spiritual shortcomings?
- 7) In verses 9-14, the Pharisees continue their contentions around the Sabbath. What do they ask Jesus in verse 10 and why?
- 8) Consider Jesus' answer. Summarize and explain His meaning.
- 9) Note that Jesus didn't respond by saying "***it is lawful to 'heal' on the Sabbath.***" He gave a broad answer about "doing good" on the Sabbath. By answering this way, what has Jesus prevented the Pharisees from doing?
- 10) If Jesus had been committing sin and violating the Sabbath, would He have been able to heal the man's hand? What did His success signify to the Pharisees?
- 11) For what reason did the Pharisees seek to destroy Jesus? (v.14)

***\*Theme Question\****

- 12) Why did Jesus ask the multitudes not to make Him known? (v.16-17)

***\*Theme Question\****

- 13) In what ways did Jesus' actions fulfill Isaiah's prophecy? (v.15-21)
- 14) **Thought Question** - Considering the words of Isaiah, why would so many Jews reject Christ and Christianity? (v.18-21, Is. 42:1-4)

## The Pharisees' Terrible Accusation

### **Overview:**

As we continue through chapter 12, we see Jesus having a lengthy exchange with the Pharisees in which He responds to a very serious and foolish accusation against Him. In Jesus' response we see Him reveal the character flaws of the Pharisees and insight into the heart of man.

### **Theme(s) covered in this section:**

#### Fulfillment of Prophecy

- 1) What miracle did Jesus perform in verse 22?

#### *\*Theme Question\**

- 2) Why would the multitude ask if Jesus was the "Son of David" after witnessing this miracle? Consider Is. 9:6-7, Jer. 33:14-18, Mal. 3:1-4
- 3) What accusation did the Pharisees make against Jesus in verse 24?
- 4) Why would they make such an accusation?
- 5) Examine Jesus' response in verses 25-37. What was His point in verses 25 and 26?
- 6) In verse 27, who were the "sons" Jesus was talking about?

- 7) How would the “sons” be the judges of the Pharisees? (vs.27-28)
  
- 8) Examine verse 29 to answer the following:
  - A. What is the house?
  - B. Who is the one entering?
  - C. Considering your answers to A and B, what is the point Christ is making in this context?
  
- 9) Considering the previous accusation, what purpose did Jesus’ statement in verse 30 serve?
  
- 10) Continuing His response to the Pharisees, Jesus made an “absolute” statement in verse 31-32. Thinking again about the accusation, explain Jesus’ important message.
  
- 11) Knowing that ***“a tree is known by its fruit,”*** what was Jesus saying about the Pharisees and their hearts? (vs.34-35)
  
- 12) Notice the use of the word *make* in verse 33 (KJV, NKJV, ASV, YLT). What was Jesus telling His audience?
  
- 13) What level of importance do words hold according to verses 36-37?
  
- 14) How do verses 36-37 apply to us today?

## The Sign of Jonah

### **Overview:**

Closing out chapter 12, the Pharisees continue their conversation with Jesus by asking what appears to be, on the surface, and innocent question; however, Jesus knows their intent and responds accordingly. We also see a further illustration of the principle Jesus taught in chapter 10 verses 32 through 39 in the last verses of chapter 12.

### **Theme(s) covered in this section:**

#### Defining the Citizens of the Kingdom

- 1) What did the scribes and Pharisees ask for in verse 38?
  
- 2) Is legitimately seeking evidence or proof wrong?
  
- 3) Judging by Jesus' response to them in verse 39, were the Pharisees really seeking proof?
  
- 4) Why not just provide a sign?
  
- 5) In verses 39-40, Jesus associated the "sign of Jonah" with the sign to be given to that generation. List ways in which the stories of Jonah and Jesus are similar.
  
- 6) Examine verse 41 and consider your answers to the previous question. Why is it significant that Jesus gave the comparison of Himself and Jonah while speaking to that group of people?

Easier Question: Some Gentiles repented at the preaching of Jonah. What does that say about these Jews that heard the preaching of Jesus?

- 7) How will Nineveh and the queen of the South condemn (judge) the generation that Jesus was speaking to?
  
- 8) Compared to these gentiles, what was Jesus saying about the condition/motives of “this generation” (the scribes and Pharisees)?
  
- 9) In verse 43-45, Christ compared the state of a possessed man with the generation He was addressing. In your own words, summarize the comparison and the meaning of this passage?
  
- 10) What did Jesus mean by the statements in verses 48 – 50?

*\*Theme Question\**

- 11) Who has fellowship with Christ in His kingdom according to verse 50?
  
- 12) **Thought Question:** Think back to chapter 10:34-38. What can we learn today from verses 48-50 regarding earthly relationships vs. spiritual ones?
  
- 13) **Thought Question:** Consider chapter 6:25-33 with chapter 12:49-50. Do you think that family could/should be included with the things added to us when we seek the kingdom?

**Discourse: Parables about the Kingdom (13:1-52)**

**The Sower**

**Overview:**

In chapter 13, we see the first of Jesus' parables which provide us with multiple descriptions of the kingdom of God as well as the kingdom citizen. The first half of the chapter uses the illustration of a sower spreading seed to define both the nature of those who spread the Word as well as the nature of those who hear it. In this lesson, we will begin by examining verses 10-17 to first understand why Jesus spoke to the people in parables before studying the parable of the sower and its explanation.

**Theme(s) covered in this section:**

Fulfillment of Prophecy

Defining the Citizens of the Kingdom

Defining the Kingdom

- 1) Looking at verses 10-17, to whom was Jesus speaking when He said it had been given to *“know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”* in verse 11?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 2) What is the meaning of verse 12 considering the statement made in the previous verse?

- 3) Why did Jesus speak to the people in parables according to verse 13?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 4) Verse 13 begins with *therefore* (KJV, NKJV, ASV) which points back to verse 12. Explain how the parables would be received by those who “have” and those who do “not

have.” (Consider Matt. 11:25-26 before answering.)

***\*Theme Question\****

5) How had the people fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9-10?

***\*Theme Question\****

6) What was it that “prophets and righteous men” had desired to see and hear?

7) How was Jesus’ statement in verses 16-17 an encouragement for the disciples?

8) Given the context of verses 1-9 and 18-23, what is the seed?

9) In verses 4 and 19, Jesus mentions individuals who hear but do not understand. Was He referring to someone literally being incapable of comprehending or was He speaking of a different issue? (Compare chapter 7:7-9)

10) What specific persecutions and tribulations cause the individual in verses 5-6 and 20-21 to stumble?

11) What kind of individual is described in verses 7 and 22?



12) Explain what the phrases “choking the Word” and “becoming unfruitful” mean in verse 22. What can we say about the faith and belief of the individual discussed?

13) **Thought Question:** The individual in verses 20-21 suffered specifically for the Word and failed the test. Could the individual in verse 22 suffer or be persecuted as well for things other than the Word or his faith? Explain your answer. (Hint: Examine the list of trials that Paul faced in 2 Cor. 11:22-28.)

*\*Theme Question\**

14) What is the “fruit” in verse 23 and what type of individual bears it?

*\*Theme Question\**

15) **Thought Question:** In this parable, who is the sower from verse 3? (Consider your answer to the previous question.)

16) **Thought Question:** What can we as Christians learn from the sower regarding where we sow the seed?

## The Wheat and the Tares

### Overview:

In the second half of chapter 13, we have several illustrations of the kingdom—those of whom it is comprised and how it works and grows. In this lesson, we will focus specifically on the parable of the tares, in which we see Jesus’ explanation of why the disciples have false brethren intermingled with the true—a problem prevalent in the first century church addressed by the apostles and one that still persists today.

### Theme(s) covered in this section:

Defining the Citizens of the Kingdom

Defining the Kingdom

- 1) In verse 24, we are given the subject of this parable, which is the kingdom of heaven. To further establish the context, define the following using verse 38.

Who is the sower?

Who is the enemy?

Who are the good seeds?

Who are the tares?

Who are the servants?

### *\*Theme Question\**

- 2) What is the kingdom of heaven?
- 3) Given that Jesus was describing the kingdom with this analogy, what group(s) of people was Jesus referring to as “sons of the kingdom” and “sons of the wicked one”?

- 4) Considering your answers to the previous questions, who are the tares in the parable and are they recognized?
- 5) How was the enemy able to sow the tares in verse 25, and what is significant about it?

***\*Theme Question\****

- 6) Can we as Christians today prevent tares from being sown in the kingdom?
- 7) Why were the servants not allowed to gather the tares in verses 28-30?
- 8) Who did Jesus say will separate the wheat from the tares, and why are they able to do so when the servants could not?
- 9) What does the barn in verse 30 represent in Jesus' parable?
- 10) **Thought Question:** In verses 38, Jesus said ***“the field is the world,”*** which would suggest that the harvest being described is of the whole world; however, in verses 41-42 we see the specific context of the kingdom given. How are we able to reconcile these statements?

11) **Thought Question:** Even though the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual kingdom, the enemy is able to cause damage to it. Where and how is the enemy able to accomplish this?

12) **Bonus Question:** Why are tares the perfect analogy for false brethren? (Hint: you may need to research tares via encyclopedia or online, or ask your local farmer.)

## The Dragnet

### Overview:

In the final lesson on chapter 3, we will cover the remaining analogies that Jesus provided to describe the kingdom and the citizens thereof. The theme of the parable of the tares is carried through and expanded upon in the remaining parables. At the conclusion of the chapter, we see Jesus return to His own country.

### Theme(s) covered in this section:

Fulfillment of Prophecy

Defining the Citizens of the Kingdom

Defining the Kingdom

- 1) In verses 31-33, Jesus described the kingdom of heaven in two parables. In what way are they similar?

#### *\*Theme Question\**

- 2) The parable of the mustard seed depicts the growth of a seed into a tree. What does the imagery given say about the kingdom?
- 3) How does the description of the kingdom in the parable of the mustard seed align with God's *modus operandi* (method of operation) of using the small and weak to fulfill His goals? (Consider 2 Cor. 12:9, Matt. 5:3-10, James 4:10, Micah 5:2, Judges 6-8, 1 Sam 17, etc.)

*\*Theme Question\**

- 4) How does the growth of the kingdom in verse 33 differ from that shown in verse 31-32, and what does it tell us about the spread of the kingdom in the world?

*\*Theme Question\**

- 5) What prophecy is being fulfilled in verses 34-35? (Hint: authorship of this passage is attributed to Asaph.)
- 6) How does verse 44 compare with verses 45-46? In what ways are individuals' stories similar and how are they different?

*\*Theme Question\**

- 7) What is the overall message of verses 44-46 as it pertains to one's attitude toward the kingdom?

*\*Theme Question\**

- 8) What is the meaning of the parable told in verses 47-50? Compare this passage to the parable of the wheat and the tares.
- 9) **Thought Question:** Why would Jesus repeat the same message regarding the kingdom using a different analogy? Consider the question He asked in verse 51.
- 10) In verse 51, Jesus' disciples affirm that they understood the things He spoke to them. Examine His response in verse 52. Who were the scribes in His statement?

11) What is the meaning of Jesus' analogy regarding the householder in verse 52?

12) Why were the people of Christ's own country offended by Him? (vs.52-57)

13) What was the meaning of Jesus' statement in verse 57?

14) Did Jesus do many works in His country according to verse 58? Why or why not?