

A detailed Renaissance-style painting of the Nativity scene. The infant Jesus lies in a manger of straw, surrounded by the Virgin Mary and the infant John the Baptist. Several kings kneel in adoration, offering gifts. The scene is set in a stable with a stone building in the background. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

# **MATTHEW**

**THE KING HAS COME**



© 2013 **Three Strand Church Network**. Permissions: You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Three Strand Church

---

*“But all this has taken place  
that the Scriptures of the prophets  
might be fulfilled.”  
Matthew 26:56a*

---

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS | BOOK ONE (Matthew 1-7)

---

## How to Use this Study Guide

### Introduction

- What is A Gospel?
- What is THE Gospel of Matthew?
- Who is Matthew?
- Why is Matthew writing?
- What are important themes in Matthew?
- Who is Jesus in Matthew's Gospel?

### The *Incarnation* of the King (Advent)

1. The Family of the King (HOPE) | 1.1-17
2. The "Father" of the King (LOVE) | 1.18-25
3. The Worship of the King (JOY) | 2.1-12
4. The Arrival of the King (PEACE) | 2.13-23

### The *Preparation* of the King

5. Groundwork (John the Baptist) | 3.1-12
6. Anointing (Jesus Baptism) | 3.13-17
7. Worthiness (Temptation of Jesus) | 4.1-11
8. The Kingdom of God is at Hand | 4.12-25

### The *Message* of the King (Sermon on the Mount)

9. Changed Character | 5.1-12
10. Preserving and Proclaiming the Kingdom | 5.13-16
11. Kingdom of Law | 5:17-20

12. Rewriting the Law - Anger | 5:21-26
13. Rewriting the Law - Lust | 5:27-30
14. Rewriting the Law - Divorce | 5:31-37
15. Rewriting the Law - Enemies | 5:38-48
16. Secret Service | 6.1-4; 16-18
17. Calling for the King | 6.5-15; 7.7-11
18. Kingdom of Security | 6.19-34
19. Citizen Judgment | 7.1-6; 12
20. Kingdom Admission | 7.13-23
21. Authority of the King | 7.24-29

## **Prayer Pages**

---

# **APPENDICES**

---

Appendix 1: History before Matthew

Appendix 2: Messianic Prophecies

Appendix 3: Map of Jesus' Ministry

Appendix 4: Gospel Comparison Chart

---

## HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

---

The material in this guide is intended to supplement the sermons preached on Sunday mornings. These booklets are prepared months in advance of the actual sermon series. As a result, as the Spirit leads, a preacher's sermon may diverge from the ideas presented on a given week. Please be sure to listen to the sermon *before* using this study guide so as to use it properly.

The study guide is designed to be used by individuals, families, and groups. Before you begin to read, pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to see what He is teaching you in the Bible, and that He will give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.

Next, read the given Biblical text. Then read it again. Take notes. Underline your Bible. Write down questions. Once you have spent time in God's Word, then work through the study and write out answers to the questions. Resist any temptation to skip over the personal questions. Though these questions are sometimes the most penetrating and difficult, they are designed to help you think seriously about how these truths apply to your life.

After you have spent time in the text on your own, it is important for you to share with others who are wrestling with the same text. The Bible is meant to be read and studied in community. So take the time to do it on your own first, and then consider gathering with others to discuss what you have learned.

Each section of this guide is organized to help individuals and groups go **D.E.E.P.** into gospel truth:

- **D- DISCUSS SERMON:** A key verse and a summary to help the group discuss the biblical text, answer basic questions, and review the sermon.



- **E- EXCHANGE VIEWS:** A general discussion question encouraging individuals to share their first reactions to the text or sermon. Often, this will inspire deeper examination into the text in a particular direction.
- **E –EXAMINE TEXT:** A series of questions related to the biblical text and the sermon. These questions are designed to help the group dig deeper into what the text actually says and, together, determine what it might mean.
- **P- PERSONALIZE TRUTH:** One or two questions to help apply the text to your personal life and experience.

---

## HOW TO DOWNLOAD PAST SERMONS

---

Should you miss a sermon, there are several ways to listen, read, or watch sermons from this series. Please visit our network website and click on SERMONS at [www.3strand.org](http://www.3strand.org). In addition to the sermon you are looking for, you will also find past sermon series preached at various 3Strand Network Churches.

---

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE WITH YOUR FAMILY

---

The Bible teaches us that parents, not pastors, are responsible for the biblical and spiritual training of their kids. As you are studying and learning, you need to teach your kids, share with them how God is challenging you, and impart to them a passion for Christ, His Word, and His Way (See Deuteronomy 6.4-9). Parents, we encourage you to spend the week preparing your family, especially the older children, for the public gathering and the sermon on Sunday. Here are some specific ways to prepare your family for worship:

**Family preparation should always include reading of the passage that will be preached on Sunday.** As you read, remember that the intent is not to teach them everything about the passage. Not only do you want to expose them to the Word of God, you also want to demonstrate its importance in your lives.

**Family preparation should always include an age-appropriate discussion about the text.** Following the reading, begin an age-appropriate discussion using the booklet as a guide. Ask probing questions that fit their specific maturity as they look forward to sitting under the preached Word on Sunday.

**Family preparation should always include prayer.** This should be done as a family and individually. First, pray to understand the text. Then, pray for the needs of your own family, for the church, and for our city. Individually read and pray with each of your children throughout the week and try to dialogue with them as individuals about the passage.

This is a simple way for parents to begin shepherding their family. Your efforts, not your expertise, will set an example for your children, will make the church gathering more meaningful, and will help your family feel more cared for.



---

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE WITH A GROUP

---

The best way to use this guide is with a small group. As smaller expressions of our larger church body, small groups are where Christians can strive to learn together, love together, serve together, and go on mission together. Tim Keller has suggested that, *“The Primary Goal for the fellowship group is to develop a Christian community where Jesus Christ is experienced in his presence and power.”* In other words, these groups are intended to be more than a group to “hang out with” and more than a typical bible study.

### What should you expect as part of a small group?

- A welcoming atmosphere for strugglers and real sinners (Christ is for real sinners!) “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mt. 9:13; “If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” 1 Jn. 2:1
- A family learning to live out of the Gospel “As you have received Christ Jesus, so live in Him....” Col. 2:6 “I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge...” Eph. 3:17-19; “Let us love one another, for love comes from God...He sent His one and only Son” 1 Jn. 4:7,9
- A safe place to share your struggles, confess your sins, and expect to be pointed to Jesus. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” Rom. 8:1; “Confess your sins to one another....” James 5:16
- A family learning to celebrate grace! “Rejoice with those who rejoice...” Rom. 12:15
- A place to be quick to listen and sympathize with another's struggles, and respond with compassion and prayer, and if you can, practical help to meet the need. Avoid superficial, pat answers that don't

address and encourage the heart. “Be devoted to one another...” Rom. 12:10; “Everybody should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry...” James 1:19; “Pray for each other...” James 5:16; “Honor one another above yourselves...” Rom. 12:10b; “mourn with those who mourn...” Rom.12:15

- A place to worship God by enjoying one another and God's good gifts (new people, food, art, etc.) “Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate....” Luke 15

As you can see, the Gospel is never static, but moves us into grateful action. As we hear and believe the Gospel again and again, the love of Christ working within our hearts energizes us to practical works of love. We begin to ask, “What does loving my neighbor really look like?” This means that we will also want to avoid anything in our group that does not have this goal of Gospel motivation and love.

### **What should you not expect in a small group?**

- A lengthy teaching monologue or lecture by one person.
- An overly- academic group of theological debaters who don't address matters/struggles of the heart, and how the Gospel applies to them (see I Cor.13:1).
- An affinity group to make you happy (Although sweet fellowship in Christ should occur and will bring joy!).
- A place to have your every need met (Although as we serve one another in love, many of your true needs will be met, prayed for, and clarified).



**MATTHEW**  
THE KING HAS COME

# INTRODUCTION

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW | CHAPTERS 1-7

---

### WHAT IS A GOSPEL?

---

The book of Matthew is known as A GOSPEL—a type of literature. Unlike epistles to churches like Corinthians, letters to individuals like Timothy, or apocalyptic visions like Revelation, gospels deal primarily with the events surrounding the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Gospels are more than a biography, more than a character sketch, more than a narration of miraculous events; they give us proclamations about Jesus and instructions for response to Jesus.

The term gospel, literally *evangel-ion* means “good news”. Historically, heralds would walk into towns and proclaim news of events that had occurred which changed the listener's condition or situation. The gospels are by nature evangelistic. The gospel of Matthew contains all kinds of moral, ethical, and theological teachings of Jesus. But these are not THE gospel—they are the results of the gospel. Christianity is not the explanation of a way of life, but the proclamation of one man's life. The gospel is primarily a declaration that God has done something to change everything.

### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW?

---

The last verses of Matthew's Gospel are:

*“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Often called “The Great Commission”, these last verses give us a summary of all that Matthew wants to accomplish with book. Namely, Matthew writes FIRST to declare who Jesus is and, SECOND to call us to respond to that declaration. Said another way, Jesus has received Lordship by what He has done, therefore, we must obey.

Matthew was one of Jesus’ disciples who followed him throughout his ministry on earth. It is important to understand that, Matthew did not sit and take notes as Jesus was preaching and teaching. On the contrary, the book of Matthew was written 20-30 years after Jesus ascended to heaven. Even though Matthew is the first book that appears in the New Testament, it was written after the Apostle Paul had completed all of his missionary journeys and had written all of his 13 letters.

As the church grew, Matthew’s gospel was likely composed as Christians began to experience its first great Roman persecution. Churches were being planted and eyewitnesses to Jesus life, including the 12 apostles, were being murdered. Moved by the Holy Spirit, men like Matthew began to write down the story of Jesus in order to:

- 1) Preserve the one story for the church.
- 2) Teach the one story in the church.
- 3) Spread the one story beyond the church.

But, if there is only one Jesus and one story, why did God give us four gospels accounts? Each of the gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record the story of Jesus. Though the essential details of the stories are the same, God used the personalities and the experiences of each gospel writer to reach a different audience in a different way—similar to different news stations reporting the same story. Each writer is a different person giving us a unique portrait of the same Jesus (See Appendix 4 for a more in-depth comparison of the four gospel accounts).

Matthew’s gospel is, therefore, the inspired retelling of Jesus’ story, told from a particular disciple, with a particular point of view, in order to proclaim a particular truth about Jesus’ life.

---

## WHO IS MATTHEW?

---

Early church father Papias (AD 60-130) spoke of Matthew arranging the “oracles” about Jesus. Though Papias credited Matthew’s work as “*the first gospel*”, scholars agree that Mark’s gospel is most likely the first completed gospel followed by Matthew, Luke, and then John.

Matthew, also known as Levi, wrote with the experience and authority of being one of the original 12 disciples called by Jesus personally. The account of his calling can be found in Matthew 9, Mark 2, and Luke 5. Matthew is a rather obscure disciple; outside of Peter, John, and Judas, most of the disciples were. Other than the record of Jesus’ call to follow, Matthew is not mentioned outside of lists of the 12. The only reason we speak of Matthew more than we do Bartholomew, Philip, or Thaddeus is because they didn’t write books. But even the gospel headed by his name is, in fact, anonymous; it is attributed to him by early church fathers.

All we know about Matthew before he followed Jesus was that he was a tax collector. Like every government, Rome collected taxes. There are property taxes, poll taxes, and customs taxes. They had a unique system to collect taxes. They had what would be called a “farm system” for their customs taxes. Various collectors, usually men of great wealth, would bid for different geographic districts. Some had better trade routes than others. Bidding meant estimating how much one might collect from a particular district then paying Rome in advance. Winning a district meant you then had authority, backed by Roman soldiers, to collect taxes from anyone in that district. As collecting taxes benefited them personally, tax collectors became corrupt extortionists. The Jews considered tax collectors THE example of a “sinner”, and the Romans viewed them no better than brothel keepers.

As a tax collector, Matthew would have been despised by everyone—he was the 1% that actually did rob others of life to make a life for himself. He possessed the ambition to abuse, the authority to extort, and the power to imprison. This man was hated. Jewish Matthew also went by the name Levi. This has led some to believe that he was a member of the Levitical tribe, meaning, he was supposed to be pastor. Having abandoned this service, he chose instead to pursue a more lucrative career serving a King

who was not Jesus. He was a devoted servant of *King Herod Antipas*, sitting at a booth daily in Jesus' hometown of Capernaum in Galilee. In order to serve as a tax collector, Matthew would have been well-educated, extremely wealthy, highly organized, and very greedy. This not only helps us to see why he was qualified to write such an amazing piece of literature, we also see the incredible power of Jesus to transform anyone. Much like Paul who went from Murderer to Martyr, Matthew went from being Money collector to Martyr—run through with a sword after evangelizing in Ethiopia.

The Gospel of Matthew is proof of Matthew's heart transformation. One record of his conversion is recorded in Luke chapter 5. As Jesus was walking through the city, he called to Matthew who was sitting in a tax booth. Matthew immediately got up and left everything. He left behind wealth. He left behind position. He left behind power. He left behind security. Matthew left everything because His meeting with Jesus changed everything. Following a homeless and penniless Galilean peasant for three years wasn't the best career move. But serving the one and only King, the promised Savior, the Son of God was the right one. And the first thing he does is throw a big expensive party for Jesus and invite every sinner he knew to attend (Luke 5). Matthew's actions exemplify the Great Commission he later wrote. Having believed who Jesus is, he wants more than anything for others to believe. He knows that if Jesus can save a corrupt, greedy, unwanted, tax collector who is despised more than thieves and prostitutes—he can save anyone. He is a disciple already trying to make disciples. And while everyone confused as to why Jesus would ever pick a sinner like a tax collector to be a disciple. Jesus only saves those he knows are sick, broken, and empty. All of Matthew's experiences, all of his education, all of his rebellion, all of his extortion, all of his years devoted to building his own kingdom were designed by God to one day advance His Kingdom.

And Matthew never wants his readers to forget who he was—because that only makes much more of who Jesus is. We should not despair over a broken past so much that we hide it; especially if God has redeemed it so as to bless others like he did with Matthew. It is noteworthy that, in Matthew chapter 10, where he gives a list of the disciples—he is the only gospel writer to add that he was a tax collector. He wants us to remember

how Jesus took this unknown tax collector and transformed him to one of our greatest teachers. Little more is known about Matthew as he was more concerned his readers knew more about Jesus than knowing more about him. Church history teaches Matthew was martyred evangelizing in Ethiopia with a spear or sword.

---

## WHY IS MATTHEW WRITING?

---

While there is some scholarly debate, Matthew was almost certainly written after Mark's gospel [Approx. 55 AD] and likely before the Roman occupation of Jerusalem and the subsequent destruction of the temple in 70 AD. According to early church father Irenaeus, Matthew composed his gospel while Paul and Peter were still living. Traditional dating is in the late 50s or early 60s.

Matthew was likely writing from the church, and for the church, in Antioch, Syria. Antioch was an influential church and missionary hub regularly sending key leaders, such as Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13), out to evangelize people and places unreached by the gospel. The church in Antioch was a mix of Jewish and Gentile Christians making up the two major intended audiences and purposes for writing.

### **First, Matthew wrote to defend the identity of Jesus.**

He wanted to prove that Jesus was the promised King, the Messiah. Matthew wrote as a Jew to reach Jews by arguing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah Israel had expected. The phrase "...*this was to fulfill*" appears in the gospel 16 times. Jesus' conscious fulfillment of Prophecy is a key aspect of Matthew's portrait. It can be argued that Matthew's primary and deliberate purpose is to demonstrate how Christ' fulfills all of the Old Testament Prophecies: *At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled"* (Matthew 26.55-56). This gospel is Matthew's effort to establish the authority of Jesus, and thus fulfill the first half of the Great Commission.



## **Second, Matthew wrote to reteach the teaching of Jesus.**

He wanted to record not only what Jesus did, but all that Jesus said. Matthew wrote as a Christian to teach Christians. Matthew was largely responsible for producing the first collection and first handbook of the teachings of Jesus. More than any other gospel, 60% of this book is Jesus' direct teaching. It is the only book organized around five great blocks of teaching each marked with, "*When he finished saying these things*". It is the only book that possesses the complete teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the only book that gives us teaching about church discipline. Like a good teacher, Matthew also organizes his gospel so that it is easy to memorize. The book of Matthew would have served as the first theological textbook for the church, to instruct the people of God concerning the person and work of Jesus. This is Matthew's effort to give the church Jesus' teaching, and thus fulfill the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Great Commission.

For any church committed to living out the Great Commission's directive to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach people what Jesus commanded, Matthew's gospel is invaluable. In addition to the cross and the resurrection, the church must be intimately familiar with an accurate and robust account of Jesus teaching. Matthew's gospel provides this for the early church, and is essential for church today.

---

## **WHAT ARE IMPORTANT THEMES IN MATTHEW?**

---

Matthew's gospel has several characteristics that distinguish it from the other gospel accounts. While Matthew includes 90% of the events [what Jesus did] found in Mark's gospel, nearly all the material unique to Matthew (when compared to Luke and Mark) focuses almost exclusively on Jesus' teaching [what Jesus said]. A full 60% of the book is comprised of the teaching words of Jesus. Matthew's account of who Jesus is and what he taught was so influential nearly the entire first century of Christianity and the church was characterized exclusively by what was found in this gospel. Some of the themes emphasized in Matthew in contrast to the other gospels include:

- 1. THE PROMISE:** As has been stated, one of Matthew's primary purposes is to establish Jesus as the coming Messiah. From the beginning, we see that Matthew intends to identify Jesus as the fulfillment of all of God's messianic promises to Abraham, Moses, David, and all the other prophets for over 2,000 years. Jesus is the promised Prophet, Priest, King, Messiah, and Savior. He is proof that God's Word is trustworthy.
- 2. THE KINGDOM:** Throughout Matthew, Jesus speaks about the coming Kingdom which is "at hand". The Kingdom of God he refers to is the renewal of all creation under God's ruling power through Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus lives and teaches kingdom values which extend to all relationships, attitudes, and practices. In essence, he presents what Kingdom-life will be like one day. He also explains how to enter that Kingdom, namely, through repentance and faith in God's Lordship. Upon entrance, he promises we will experience new birth leading to a new heart aligned with God's. The world becomes properly understood only when viewed through the Kingdom.
- 3. THE RELIGIOUS:** As Jesus hints towards salvation for the Gentiles (irreligious), the Sermon on the Mount, which extends over three chapters, is largely a condemnation of the religious self-righteous who believe they can save themselves. Jesus' "rewriting" of the law not only reveals God's standard to be impossibly high, it reveals how neither legalism nor moralism can save us, or help us know God, any more than hedonism or pagan spirituality.
- 4. THE CHURCH:** The gospel of Matthew is the only gospel to mention the church explicitly (16.18; 18.7). In Matthew exclusively, Jesus declares His intention to build His church, His expectation that disputes should be settled by the church (discipline), as well as his declaration of the church's mission to make disciples and grow the church.
- 5. THE LAST DAYS:** Matthew contains the most apocalyptic material outside the book of Revelation. Due to the growing persecution of the church, there may have been a growing interest in the "last days" which resulted in Matthew's lengthy treatment. Hebrews 1:1-2 says God previously spoke to His people through prophets but in the last days He speaks only through His Son. Jesus is THE living word of God to the world. Jesus prophesying is most evident in his eschatological

proclamations about the end times. Matthew 24 is one of the most complete apocalyptic discourses in Scripture. Chapter 25 continues with multiple end time's parables about final judgment.

---

## WHO IS JESUS IN MATTHEW?

---

Though all of the gospels give us an accurate picture of our Savior, each of the gospel writers provide a unique lens through which to view that picture. Matthew's gospel is no exception and emphasizes the following:

- **Jesus is a Savior:** Jesus' conscious fulfillment of Prophecy is a key aspect of Matthew's portrait. As stated earlier, one of Matthew's primary purposes is to demonstrate how Christ fulfills all of the Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 26.56) in order to help Jews recognize Him as the Messiah. Additionally, the first words of Matthew's gospel identify Jesus as Son of David AND Son of Abraham. Jesus is not only the promised Messiah who will save His people; He is the promised Seed that will heal the Gentile world.
- **Jesus is a Teacher:** The gospel includes five major discourses or sermons of Jesus' teachings, each paired with preceding narrative of Jesus' life. Matthew is all about the Kingdom of God with the narratives serving to answer the question of the King's identity, while the discourses unpack implications and instructions necessary for citizens of the Kingdom. Matthew was largely responsible for producing the first collection and first handbook of the teachings of Jesus.
- **Jesus is a Preacher:** Similar to Jesus as a teacher, Matthew is the one gospel that includes the only complete sermon of Jesus in recorded history. The Sermon on the Mount extends over three chapters [5-7]. Jesus preaching was characterized by descriptions of the Kingdom of God and the responsibilities of citizen subjects of the King. Moreover, Jesus ministry is described as preaching (Matthew 4.17; 11.1,5).
- **Jesus is a King:** More than anything, Matthew writes to prove the royalty of Jesus. Jesus is King. Matthew gives us a picture of a child born to be King. This begins with the genealogy showing a royal blood

line, and the wise men coming to give honor, continues through the sermon on the mount with authoritative statements about the law like, “But I say to you”, and ends with the triumphal entry, the accepting of the title of King given by Pontius Pilate, and the Great Commission given after having received all authority (28.18). Jesus is revealed as a particular kind of King:

- ❖ **Jesus is the promised King.** That means he is the promised son to Adam and Eve that crushes Satan. He is the promised seed to Abraham who will heal the whole world. He is the promised prophet to Moses who will lead us from slavery to sin. He is the promised priest in Zechariah who will forgive all sin in one day. And He is the promised King who will bring all things under His rule.
- ❖ **Jesus is a missionary King.** The King not only dwells with us, not only provides for us, not only protect us, but our King sends us. He has commanded us to go into the world to proclaim. We are not running into the world telling people what they ought to do (or not do); rather, we are declaring what God has done. We are not charged to proclaim that man should “love your neighbor, forgive your enemy, or give to the poor.” Those are the results of our proclamation that in Christ, God has loved us, God has forgiven us, and God has blessed us.
- ❖ **Jesus is a commanding King.** Through his words, but more so through his gospel-centered life, Matthew teaches us that we are citizens of a different and greater Kingdom. More than citizens, we are ambassadors who have been given a ministry. And though our ministry begins with proclaiming to all people, of all nations, all stations of life, all cultures, and all contexts who Jesus is and what He had done, it doesn't end there. If we are truly His disciples committed to making disciples, we will also teach others to observe all that Jesus commanded—including the Great Commission.

In other words, we are studying Matthew not because it is the easiest, but because we want to be obedient to what Jesus said. Matthew is a teacher, teaching us that Jesus is a teacher, teaching us to be teachers.



**MATTHEW**  
INCARNATION OF THE KING

# MATTHEW 1-2

---

## WEEKS 1-4 | THE ADVENT OF THE KING

---

The first four weeks of our study of Matthew titled The Incarnation of the King, took us through the season of Advent. The word Advent comes from the Latin word “Adventus” which simply means “coming” or “arrival.” But when we use the word Advent, we are referring to the long-awaited arrival of Jesus Christ, who entered our world as a crying infant 2,000 years ago. Followers of Jesus have celebrated His miraculous birth for centuries during the season of Advent, which traditionally begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup> .

Since the 4th Century, Christians have been celebrating Advent to intentionally place their focus on the implications of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When we celebrate Advent, we're reliving all of the same yearning for the coming of the Messiah that our fathers in the faith experienced before us. We look back and remember the people of the Old Testament as they waited for the Savior that God had promised.

Advent reminds us that God became an infant by sending His Son, Jesus, to the world to live the perfect life that we could not. Ultimately, Jesus came to redeem His people by dying on a cross, as our substitute, for our sin, so that the wrath of God would be completely satisfied, and we would be fully accepted. Jesus came and was born ultimately to go to a cross and die in the place of His people. Advent also reminds us that one day, Jesus will return to the earth, not to suffer for sins again, but to bring us home to the Father and destroy His enemies.

### **Week 2: The Genealogy of the King (HOPE) | 1.1-17**

---

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (V.1)

---

Jesus' genealogy teaches us that the brokenness of our own family history or our own personal story CANNOT and DID NOT disrupt God's plan;

rather, it magnifies it. The sin we have committed, or those committed against us, does not surprise God and He is bigger than it all. He may not desire it, but he has ordained it. He does not work despite sin and brokenness, but through it, in order to accomplish his kingdom purposes.

### **Week 3: The “Father” of the King (LOVE) | 1.18-25**

---

*And her husband being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But...(1.19)*

---

Jesus has a heavenly father and an earthly father who both help shape who Jesus is. How Joseph treats Mary, his bride, becomes a picture of how Jesus will treat the church, his future bride. Joseph not only loves like Jesus, but Jesus loves like Joseph. He is a better Joseph to a worse bride (US). Joseph saved his bride from the “appearance” of sin—Jesus actually saved his people from THEIR sin.

### **Week 4: The Worship of the King (JOY) | 2.1-12**

---

*When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house...they fell down and worshiped him. (V.10-11)*

---

The one true King of the universe is born into a dark world ruled by men who think they are kings. And when men’s kingdoms are confronted with the one true King there are only two responses—reverence for God’s rule and self-denial OR rejection of God’s rule and self-destruction. Men from the East come and worship “toddler Jesus” joyfully, humbly, and tangibly.

### **Week 5: The Arrival of the King (PEACE) | 2.13-23**

---

*Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem...(V.16).*

---

Herod, the “Jewish” King has a very different response. The man who has spent years ruthlessly defending his throne is troubled by the news of a little Jewish baby. All that he has built for himself, his wealth, his power, his fame, and his comfortable life are all suddenly threatened by genuine royalty. If there is a true King, he cannot do whatever he wants with his life—AND he is accountable for what he has done living in another’s kingdom.



**MATTHEW**  
PREPARATION OF THE KING



# MATTHEW 3.1-12

## WEEK 5 | GROUNDWORK FOR THE KING (THE BAPTIST)

*"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry." (V.11)*

The Old Testament closes with the prophet Malachi saying before the "Great and awesome day of the Lord" he will send a messenger, in the spirit of Elijah, who will prepare the way for the coming King. Through fulfilled prophecies, angelic messengers, and Jesus' own words, John the Baptist is identified as the man who will lay the groundwork for the Messiah's ministry. Preaching in the wilderness and baptizing sinners in the Jordan River, John's message to diverse crowds was bold, simple, and universal: "Repent", turn from sin to God. Why? Because the King of Heaven is coming and with Him comes judgment for all and salvation for those who confess sin and humble themselves before the King. The messenger is not as important as who the message is about. John is a great man and a good preacher but he is not the Savior-King. He tells people of their need for the Father's mercy, identifies Jesus as the one savior, and foretells of the Holy Spirit who will empower sinners to repent.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Why was John's baptism controversial compared to the common Jewish religious practices? How is it different from 'Christian' baptism?
3. The Pharisees and Sadducees presumed their religious heritage and position made them worthy. How have you tried to justify yourself?
4. Read **Ezekiel 36:25-27**. What do we learn about our spiritual condition and ability to obey the Lord? How should God changing our hearts, and empowering us with Spirit, change how we live?
5. Repentance is not something we achieve; it is something we receive as a gift. Where has God granted you repentance? Where in your life do you still need to repent or continue to bear fruit?

# MATTHEW 3.13-17

## WEEK 6 | ANOINTING OF THE KING (BAPTISM)

*"...and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (V.17)*

Sinless Jesus was the one person in history who had no need for repentance. Yet, His first step in beginning public ministry is a baptism from John. The man most qualified to stand above the crowd calling for repentance was instead down in the Jordan River identifying himself with unclean sinners. In shameless solidarity with his people, Jesus shows them their need for salvation and his plan to "fulfill all righteousness" by bearing their sin. Much like the Creation narrative in the beginning of Genesis, the Trinity is seen in what amounts to a "new beginning". The heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus, and God the Father speaks. In the "first" beginning the triune God said "Let us make man." As this gospel begins, the message is "Let us save man". When the Father speaks He is declaring His Son's anointing as the Savior-King who has been appointed for all eternity to bring redemption for His fallen children.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. When Jesus came to be baptized, John's initial reaction is reluctance. Why? What caused John to change his reaction and consent?
3. What does Jesus' participation in public baptism teach us about the significance of this sacrament in the Christian life? Have you been baptized? Why or why not?
4. Read **Romans 3:23-26**. Discuss how Jesus is both "just" and the "justifier". How does this relate to His baptism account in Matthew?
5. God's is fully satisfied in His perfect Son. For sinful people who have placed faith in Christ, God counts them as righteous as Jesus. How should this truth lead Christians to avoid both pride and despair?

# MATTHEW 4.1-11

## WEEK 7 | WORTHINESS OF THE KING (TEMPTATION)

*Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.' "* (V.10)

Why does God allow temptation? How much easier it would be not to sin if there were no temptation to do it! While God never gives us a clear answer to that question, we can see how temptation is used for His glory in the temptation of Jesus. As Satan approaches, Jesus is hungry, tired, and weak. He is at His most vulnerable. Satan stalks his target perfectly, waiting for the moment that he might be victorious. In Jesus, he faces a foe much greater than any he had ever encountered before. Even at His weakest, Jesus was still willing to stand up to the prodding of the evil one. Satan's temptations are designed for one purpose: *to pull you away from God and to get you to trust in something else*. In the case of Jesus' temptation, it was to convince Jesus that He did not need the Trinity to be God. Unlike Adam, the father of mankind, who downplayed the importance of his relationship with God, Jesus trusted God. In this, He showed His worthiness to be King. Temptation shows us our weakness and need for a savior; Jesus' response to temptation shows that He is the savior.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What were the three temptations that Satan put before Jesus? What did these three challenges represent?
3. How did Jesus refute the advances of Satan? What must we do to be able to follow this example?
4. Read **Hebrews 4.14-16**. How does the very real humanity of Jesus affect how you read His temptation? What does it do for us today?
5. Satan chose to approach Jesus when He was at His most vulnerable. What areas of weakness exist in your life? How can you shore up these areas to help build a fortress against sin?

# MATTHEW 4.12-25

## WEEK 8 | THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND

*From that time Jesus began to preach saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (v.17)*

As Jesus goes out to establish His kingdom, He does not assemble a collection of the best and the brightest. He moves to the middle of nowhere, recruits a few fishermen, and tells people they need to change. What Jesus is doing is making it clear that the Kingdom that He has come to set up is not a Kingdom that seeks to impress and overwhelm, but one that aims to bring people into God's rhythm for His creation. His rhythm is more concerned with heart change (repentance) than it is with outward appearance. It is more interested in people (fishers of men) than it is in possessions. It is focused toward service and compassion (miracles/healing) than it is with power. In all of this, the Kingdom that Jesus is introducing to us looks nothing like any institution we have ever seen before. He is introducing us to the kind of Kingdom that exists in the presence of the King: *on earth as it is in heaven*.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What was the area like that Jesus chose to minister in? How did the people walking in darkness see a great light?
3. Jesus approaches some fisherman and tells them: *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*. What does this tell us about how Jesus intends to use us?
4. Jesus gives another fishing analogy in **Matthew 13.47-50**. How does this parable of the kingdom help put limits on our role as fishers of men? How does it create urgency?
5. If you are a Christian, God has called you to follow Him on His mission. What can you do where you are to advance the Kingdom of God?



**MATTHEW**  
MESSAGE OF THE KING

# MATTHEW 5.1-12

## WEEK 9 | KINGDOM CHARACTER

*Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them. (V.1-2)*

Jesus has declared that a new Kingdom is coming, and now He goes about giving us the rules that govern this new domain. He begins by showing us the character of the Kingdom in relation to the world. In the Beatitudes, He takes eight situations that would be deemed cursed, and He reveals that these traits are in fact blessed. He does not just mean that there will be a blessing in the future, a jewel in your heavenly crown, but that having an appropriate view of yourself, others and God will cause you to live entirely differently than those who follow the world. He promises it will make us more human. The character of the Kingdom is the image of God that we were intended to live out when God created the world. This is not just a moral lesson on how to be better; it is a picture of who He created us to be, flowing out of who He is.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Which of the attitudes on the list surprised you? Which of these attitudes do you struggle with most?
3. Jesus says: *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.* Does this mean we will experience nothing but hardship on this earth? How can we determine if the good we experience is of the flesh or of God?
4. Read **2 Corinthians 12.9-10**. How does God turn weakness into strength? Where have you seen this in your life?
5. How can we grow these Beatitudes in our life? What are the necessary ingredients for sanctification (maturity in Christ)?

# MATTHEW 5.13-16

## WEEK 10 | PRESERVING & PROCLAIMING THE KINGDOM

*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (V.16)*

There are two parts to the Kingdom on this earth: preserving and proclaiming. Jesus describes these two missions as salt and light. As salt, the people of Jesus must live in and amongst a dying world, doing what they can to connect it to the purposes set forth from creation. Jesus uses the life of His people in community to bring His shalom (peace) into a world that tends toward destruction. His people are preserving the world through daily influence. They must also proclaim a different end. The people of Jesus live for a completely different purpose than others. His people are a light in a dark world, bringing the counter-cultural message of the gospel to a world that needs saving. The people of the Kingdom must love the world enough to be a part of it, but they must love Jesus enough to risk their place in the world so that He might be made known. He is both the giver of salt and the source of light for His people.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What does it mean to be salt? How does this look in your life?
3. What does it mean to be light? How can we magnify our light?
4. Read **1 Peter 2.9-12**. Where does this light and saltiness in us come from? Do these verses call us to more relevance or distinctiveness?
5. What circumstances has God placed you in where you are the salt? How can you use this to reveal the glory of God?

# MATTHEW 5.17-20

## WEEK 11 | KINGDOM OF LAW

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them (V. 17).*

Despite distinctions, there exists great continuity and harmony between the teaching and work of Jesus and the Old Testament (The Law and Prophets). In light of the New Testament, it is often tempting to dismiss much of the OT as antiquated or obsolete. It is important to recognize that the religion of the OT is the foundation for faith of NT Christianity. Jesus says He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophecies. In doing so, Jesus connects the Old and New Testaments together as part of one story preaching the one Gospel. In other words, the OT saints were led by the same Spirit we are, toward faith in the same Savior we have. By His sinless life and substitutionary death, Jesus fulfills both the ceremonial and moral laws becoming the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Because we know God more fully in Jesus, the NT Christian's personal holiness should exceed that of one who only had the OT as a guide.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How could an ignorant contempt for the Old Testament lead to unfaithfulness in an individual or a church?
3. Jesus says, "Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commands and teaches other to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven" What does this teach us about the kingdom of heaven?
4. Read **Exodus 20.1-17**. Assuming Jesus fulfilled the law, discuss how Christians are supposed to understand and apply the Ten Commandments today?
5. With knowledge of the cross we understand greater of the cost of our redemption. How should this lead to deeper personal holiness?



# MATTHEW 5.21-26

## WEEK 12 | REWRITING THE LAW (ANGER)

---

*But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...(V.22a)*

---

The Scribes and Pharisees have abused the Law and twisted Scripture to their own ends. By making a “god” out of their traditions, and their own narrow interpretations, the Scribes and Pharisees have emptied the law of all its meaning. While they appear “Holy” by their strict devotion to the Law, internally their hearts are as rebellious as ever. Jesus confronts their superficial obedience, revealing it to be insufficient to meet the God's infinitely high standard. Jesus' sermon effectively rewrites the Law, beginning with the most obvious Commandment “Thou Shall not Kill”. Jesus teaches that God not only does not want us to murder, He does not want us to hold on to any anger. On the surface, this appears to contradict passages where the Bible allows, even commands, us to be angry. Jesus did not come to cancel or correct the Old Testament Commandment, rather, He intends to amplify the Law in order to bring everyone, even the “law-abiding” religious, under its condemnation and lead them to the cross.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What is anger? What does it mean to be “angry” with your brother?
3. According to this text, what is the relationship between our reconciliation with people and our worship of God?
4. Read **Ephesians 4.26**. How do we resolve the apparent contradiction between Paul and Jesus? When does anger become sinful?
5. Are you currently bitter, resentful, or holding on to any anger? In what ways do you see that your anger, or your refusal to forgive, hindering your relationship with God? What do you need todo?

# MATTHEW 5.27-30

## WEEK 13 | REWRITING THE LAW (LUST)

*But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart (V.28)*

Sexual sin has been destroying marriages, families, careers, and churches for centuries. The Jews of Jesus' day wrongly believed they are righteous because they had not broken the letter of the law with their bodies. Jesus tells them that they have broken it with their minds. Jesus knew that men would try and play games with "the rules" and, being our Creator, He knew that the most powerful sex organ in the body was a person's mind. Through lust, our culture has taken what is an amazing gift intended to bless and making into an awful god that controls. Professor Peter Kreeft has said, "Sex is the effective religion of our culture." Modern technology has birthed a culture more besieged with sexual perversion than ever. Unrestrained lust that leads to sexual misconduct is literally a button click away. iPhones and laptops are the new pimps and a "virtual prostitute" is only a Google search away. The need for radical warfare against the temptation to lust, through the bombardment of sexual imagery, is urgent.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What does Jesus mean by "lustful intent" or "heart" adultery?
3. Read **Romans 1.22-32**. Unnatural passions include ALL sexual expression outside of the parameters that God expressly describes in Scripture. What is God's standard for sexual relationships? Why is important to use this definition when discussing sexual sin?
4. Jesus' solution for dealing with sexual sin sounds somewhat radical. How can you use this passage to help someone struggling with lust?
5. How do men and women differ in their struggle with lust? What steps have you taken to protect you, or your family, from this kind of sin?

# MATTHEW 5.31-37

## WEEK 14 | REWRITING THE LAW (DIVORCE)

*But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery (V.32a).*

We understand the Bible to teach that marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman and that God designed and ordained the marriage relationship to be permanent (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-6). In this text, Jesus condemns “any reason divorces” where men are twisting the law in order to pursue sin. He does, however, affirm sexual immorality as an acceptable reason for divorce. In other words, divorce in itself is not sin. What is sinful are those actions which cause a LAWFUL divorce or those actions which are the result of an UNLAWFUL one. To “divorce” one’s spouse without biblical grounds does not, in God’s eyes, dissolve the one-flesh covenant relationship. To marry another, therefore, is to commit adultery and to cause the new partner to commit adultery as well. Jesus could have easily been addressing our own culture where one can literally marry who they want, divorce who they want, or remarry who they want at any time for any reason. Jesus has much to say about divorce because marriage has much to say about Jesus.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. According to the Bible, what is the purpose of marriage?
3. Read **Exodus 21.10-11; Deut. 24:1-4; Matt.19:8; 1Corinth. 7.10-24.** What are the biblically acceptable reasons for divorce?
4. Consider how you would respond to a friend who says the following:
  - “Love has gone out of the marriage, it is better to divorce.”
  - “It is better for the kids to divorce than to have fighting parents.”
  - “God led me to this divorce.”
  - “A loving God would not want someone to stay in this situation.”
  - “I know it’s wrong, but God is forgiving.”

# MATTHEW 5.38-48

## WEEK 15 | REWRITING THE LAW (ENEMIES)

*But I say to you, 'Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also (V. 39)*

“An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” was written to protect lawbreakers from excessive punishment—to ensure justice and protect against vengeance. Jesus here “rewrites” the law by encouraging His disciples to go beyond justice to mercy. Anyone who has ever been hurt by anyone would have difficulty hearing this. It is easy for men to demand punishment when an evil is committed against them. It is incredibly difficult to forgive those who have hurt or defrauded you. Men’s kingdoms are characterized by crushing their enemies; God’s Kingdom is characterized by blessing His enemies. By grace, Jesus Christ forgave us when we were hostile enemies. As C.S. Lewis wrote: **To be Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you**” We rebelled against God. We robbed God of His glory. We dishonored Him. We hurt Him. And yet, He allowed himself to be harmed, hit, and defrauded by his enemies. He humbled himself to the glory of God that we might be changed and do the same.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Why does the Law declare, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”? How is this commonly misunderstood or misapplied?
3. In what ways does God show love for his enemies even though they refuse to love him? How does this guide how we love our enemies?
4. Read **Romans 12.19-20**. How does believing that God is just, and that there is a Day of Judgment coming, help us to withhold vengeance?
5. Who is YOUR enemy—the most difficult person to love right now? Do you find it more difficult to love your neighbor or your enemy; to love the sinfully “righteous” or the sinfully “unrighteous”? Why?

# MATTHEW 6.1-4; 16-18

## WEEK 16 | SECRET SERVICE

---

*Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. (V.1-2)*

---

Christians have a Savior who lived sinlessly, served quietly, and gave sacrificially. Genuine disciples of Jesus do the same. Our spirit is willing, but our flesh is weak. All too often, Christians pursue right actions and perform good works with wrong motives. They sin by serving loudly and only give in order to obtain something from others, namely, their approval. At its core, this unhealthy desire for the approval of men evidences a lack of faith in the gospel. Jesus warns men to avoid practicing their righteousness in order to be seen by others whether that be serving, giving, fasting, praying, etc. We are not to announce with “trumpets” good works we do or show discomfort in our sacrifice in order to receive personal glory from others. Only what we do for God’s glory, away from the eyes of men, will be rewarded by our Father who sees all of our private actions and knows the private motives of our hearts behind them.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. According to the text, what defines a hypocrite? For further clarity, review Jesus’ “woes” to the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23.
3. When we desire praise from others for our good deeds, what are we revealing about our belief in God’s approval of us in Christ?
4. Read **Proverbs 27:2**. How does our social media saturated culture encourage or discourage the kind of self-righteous self-promotion Jesus speaks against? How can Christians combat this temptation?
5. Discuss a time when you have done something good for others or denied yourself for the wrong motives? How can we better live out the call to “not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing?”

# MATTHEW 6.5-15;7.7-11

## WEEK 17 | CALLING FOR THE KING

*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask (V.11)*

We have a Father in heaven who wants to hear from us. The only thing that is more magnificent than the glory and grandeur of God is the fact that He has concern for us. Jesus reminds us that God is waiting to hear from us; He also warns us about how we come before God. We should not approach Him in an attempt to be seen and heard by others; prayer is not a tool for our ego. We must also be careful not to be overly concerned with the brilliance of our words; prayer is not about us impressing God. Instead, He has given us the opportunity to bring our cares and concerns before Him in an honest way, and He promises to hear and respond to everything that is presented in this manner. This does not mean He will do whatever you want, but He promises, as a perfect Father, to give you what is best for you. Prayer then becomes a matter of reliance. It is not about what you get out of it, or how well it works. It is about trusting in the goodness and sovereignty of God to come to Him for everything you need.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. When Jesus tells us to pray in secret, is He condemning public prayer?
3. *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find* has been used by prosperity preachers as the promise that God will give us whatever we claim. What does Jesus actually mean?
4. Read **James 5.13-18**. How is prayer characterized here? How can we hold up the power of prayer without distorting it into a wish list?
5. Is prayer a regular part of your life? How can you incorporate prayer into your routine while keeping in mind the warnings that Jesus gives us here?

# MATTHEW 6.19-34

## WEEK 18 | KINGDOM OF SECURITY

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (V.33)*

The world offers us many good things, but these things can easily become our greatest burden. Jesus warns against placing too much value on the things of this world as He points out numerous different ways that they can become a trap to us. First, he warns that earthly things change our heart; we think that we can control them, but they end up controlling us. Second, they pull us away from God, by continually forcing us to pick a side. Third, they cause us to become anxious, constantly worrying about them. We live in a time where people are frantic and stressed. We are all busy trying to get, keep, and maintain. There is a constant air of worry and fear of loss. We need something to free us from the rat race that most of us seem to be losing. Jesus tells us that we need to reorient our drive. We need to be ambitious toward Him and the rest will work itself out. This solution ties back to the Beatitudes, as we are called not to spend all of our time focused on the situation, but on He who is eternal.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Jesus says: *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* This is backwards from how we expect Him to say it. What does this mean for how we spend our time, energy, and money?
3. Anxiety defines our society. How does the life that Jesus calls us to here keep us from anxiety while keeping our passion intact?
4. Read **Ecclesiastes 3.10-15**. How does the acceptance of God's sovereignty and goodness give us the freedom to find joy in the things of this world?
5. What parts of your life have you been controlling apart from God? How can you turn them over to God? How will this bring you joy?

# MATTHEW 7.1-6; 12

## WEEK 19 | CITIZEN JUDGMENT

*So whatever you wish that other would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (V.12)*

If there is any verse that you will have thrown in your face, it is this one: *Judge not, that you be not judged.* This is usually quoted by someone who has taken offense to your making a moral judgment on their lifestyle and wants you to stop. But Jesus isn't calling us to accept the gospel of tolerance that our culture is constantly shoving down our throats. If He was, verse 6, which tells us make a judgment about those with whom we share His treasure with, would contradict it. Instead, Jesus is urging us to treat people with respect; to treat them as human beings, with fears, dreams, and personalities. They are not just souls to be won or lost, but they are sinful people in need of a savior. **JUST LIKE YOU AND ME.** It is much easier to treat someone with dignity and respect when you realize that they are no different from you. The things that Christians have is not morality, goodness, or even religion, it is Jesus Christ alone. Focusing on the cross forces us to refine how we treat others.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. If we are all sinners, what right does any of us have to ever judge anything?
3. What does Jesus mean by: *Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you?* What does this mean for how we evangelize?
4. Read **Mark 4.22-24**. Here Jesus uses the same phrase as verse 2, but in the affirmative. How does this help us to understand what Jesus is saying? How does it help us to judge appropriately?
5. How can we uphold God's Word, proclaim His truth, and judge in a way that is respectful and bold? When have you experienced this?



# MATTHEW 7.13-23

## WEEK 20 | KINGDOM ADMISSION

*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (v.21)*

People always want to know who is “in” (eternally)? Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount by addressing this question. He does it by process of elimination; by pointing out the people who are NOT part of His kingdom. He begins with the narrow gate, pointing to the fact that His people are not those who are concerned with inclusion, but those who faithfully choose the exclusivity of Jesus. Jesus then warns of the false prophets, those who talk about Jesus, but do not live as people who have been given grace. The third group that Jesus denies admission to is much more ambiguous: they are those who seem to have lived as Christians, but in the end are not known by God. The Kingdom is not entered through good theology, good deeds, or widespread acceptance; it is only through trusting Jesus fully for salvation and living for His glory.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How does the wide road distract us from the narrow gate?
3. How do these verses remove the pressure of 'closing the deal' that is often found in evangelical churches?
4. Read **1 Timothy 6.3-10**. What is some of the bad fruit produced by false teachers? How can we identify these things?
5. If everyone who claims the name of Jesus, and even performs good works in His name, is not necessarily a Christian (**v.21**), how can we have confidence that we are saved?

# MATTHEW 7.24-29

## WEEK 21 | AUTHORITY OF THE KING

---

*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (v.28-29)*

---

Every person builds their life on something; no one is completely objective. The truth that you allow yourself to be your authority will determine each and every other thing that you believe. Using the analogy of a house, Jesus reveals the fate of trusting any authority outside of Himself. To build your house on any other foundation may seem safe, but when the storm comes, it will fail. The truest test comes at death, but even before then, in the storms of life, a foundation is tested. Jesus taught with a different authority and boldness because He was not simply the messenger of truth, but He was truth itself.

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What are some of the 'ideas of sand' that we are offered by our culture as a foundation to build upon?
3. How was the teaching of the scribes different than the teaching of Jesus? What does this say about how we should teach?
4. Read **Romans 13.1-2**. How should we understand earthly authority in light of Jesus' authority? How does building on the rock allow for submission to others?
5. What storms of life have you weathered? How has this revealed cracks in your foundation?









## Appendix 1: History Before the Time of Jesus

The Old Testament canon closes with the prophet Malachi. His oracle from the LORD to Israel ends with. *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lets I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction”* Malachi 4:5-6. These are God's final words to His people leading into roughly 400 years of silence before the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist fulfilling Elijah's role calling people to *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* Matthew 3:2. In this silence, the Hebrew people were:

- *Grieved* – Many recognized their sins had led to God's judgment.
- *Divided* – Some people had returned to Israel from exile, some had remained in Persia, others had settled in Egypt. Many were worshiping faithfully in Jerusalem; some had fallen away from faith in God.
- *Expectant* - Overwhelmingly Israel was waiting for the Messiah who would come to fulfill God's saving covenant with His people to deliver them from bondage and begin a new kingdom.

While God was not explicitly speaking to His people He was still active in history raising nations, bringing others down according to His perfect will. Israel, released from Persian rule, did not have an effective standing army at the close of the OT. Israel was easily conquered and subjugated by foreign empires and armies leading to 4 main periods of rule between 400 BC and the life of Jesus:

### *Ptolemies* – **323 – 199BC**

Beginning with Alexander the Great, the rise of Greek culture of Hellenism spread as his armies moved across the known world. One of Alexander's generals, Ptolemy, was given rule of Egypt and Judea. Israel was granted significant religious freedom, but they were allowed no king. This made the High Priest the cultural, religious, and political head of the Jews. Hellenism was in stark contrast to Jewish culture, and God's people were

under pressure to adopt Greek culture. Jewish colonies in Egypt taught much of Hebrew history to the surrounding gentiles in a preservation effort. Some in Judea tried to combine OT biblical religion with Greek philosophy leading to syncretism and seeing God's word as merely allegory not revelation.

### *Seleucids- 198BC- 143 BC*

Another of Alexander's generals, Seleucus, had an empire spanning from Asia Minor (Turkey) and moved east from Babylon. In 198BC this empire gained control of Palestine. Ruled by Antiochus III, who referred to himself as Epiphanes ("God manifest"), from the capitol of Antioch in Syria, life for the Jews became increasingly difficult. Fearing Roman expansion Antiochus sought to make the culture of his empire more "Greek" cracking down on much of Israel's religious freedom. Great apostasy began as many Jews embraced this culture in a rejection of their religious identity. Other Jews grew firmer in their identity and resistance of Antiochus. He responded with great religious persecution, Hebrew Scriptures were burned, Sabbath observance was banned, and circumcision was outlawed, violators were put to death. The greatest offense occurred in 167BC when he put a statue of Zeus in the temple and began sacrificing pigs to it. This spurred the the Maccabean revolt lead by Judas Maccabeus (The Hammer). Jewish guerilla fighters enjoyed continued victories over the Seleucid armies. Their reoccupation of the temple in 164 BC is memorialized and recounted in the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah.

### *Hasmoneans 142BC- 64BC*

Wanting more than just religious freedom Jews also desired political independence they had not experienced since their return from Babylonian exile in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Judas' brothers continued the fight against the Seleucids and Judea gained independence in 142 BC. Unfortunately, Hellenization of the culture continued as Jonathan Maccabeus, despite not being party of the proper family, took over the role of High Priest. This caused great division of religious practice and political parties as the Hasmoneans progressively adopted Greek ways of life.



## *Romans* **63BC**

Some periods of prosperity were not enough to make up for the lack of unity in Jewish society. Divided and weak, Israel was unable to resist steady Roman Imperial advancement. Pompey began occupation of Jerusalem in 63 BC. However, great unrest in the city caused Rome to make Herod the Great “king” of Judea. While not Jewish by birth he was considered a Jewish “proselyte” but his primary allegiance was to Caesar and Rome. Herod and his family ruled Judea as a Roman puppet government during the life of Jesus.

As the New Testament narrative begins, God's people are under subjugation from a foreign pagan nation, a dictatorship of an unstable and unfaithful king, paying exorbitant taxes used to fund their own oppression. Israel is divided by culture, religion, and politics waiting for God's salvation and deliverance He promised but has not yet fulfilled. It is a dark time but light is coming.

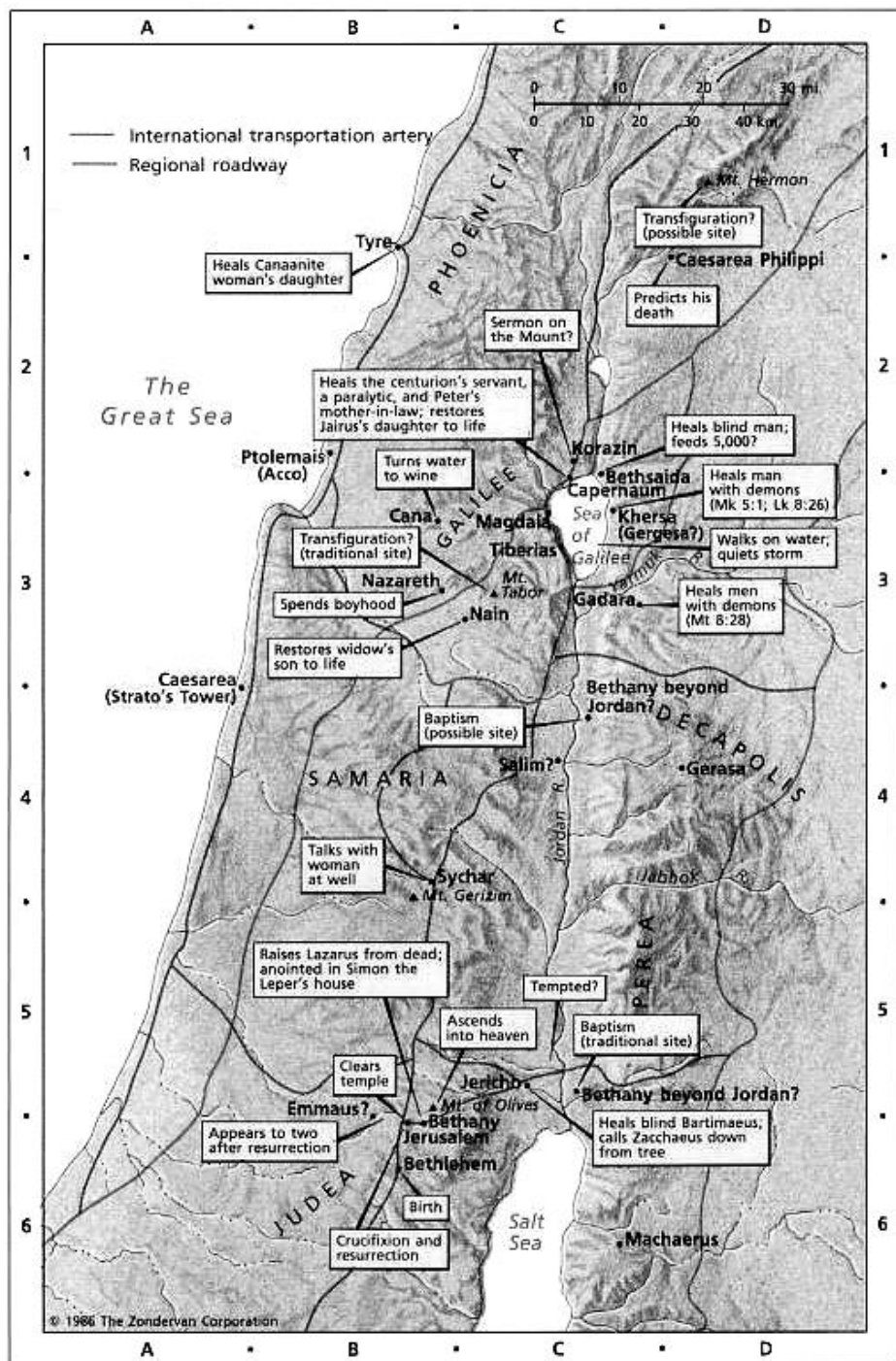
## Appendix 2: Messianic Prophecies

The books of the Old Testament contain many passages about the Messiah—all prophecies Jesus Christ fulfilled. Bible scholars suggest there are more than 300 prophetic Scriptures completed in the life of Jesus. Below is a list of 40 messianic predictions fulfilled in Jesus Christ, with references from the Old and New Testament.

Prophecies About Jesus	Old Testament	New Testament
Messiah would be born of a woman.	Genesis 3:15	Matthew 1:20 Galatians 4:4
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1 Luke 2:4-6
Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22-23 Luke 1:26-31
Messiah would come from the line of Abraham.	Genesis 12:3 Genesis 22:18	Matthew 1:1 Romans 9:5
Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.	Genesis 17:19 Genesis 21:12	Luke 3:34
Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.	Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:2
Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.	Genesis 49:10	Luke 3:33 Hebrews 7:14
Messiah would be heir to King David's throne.	2 Sam.I 7:12-13 Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33 Romans 1:3
Messiah's throne will be anointed and eternal.	Psalms 45:6-7 Daniel 2:44	Luke 1:33 Hebrews 1:8-12
Messiah would be called Immanuel.	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
Messiah would spend a season in Egypt.	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14-15
A massacre of children would happen at Messiah's birthplace.	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:16-18
A messenger would prepare the way for Messiah	Isaiah 40:3-5	Luke 3:3-6
Messiah would be rejected by his own people.	Psalms 69:8 Isaiah 53:3	John 1:11 John 7:5
Messiah would be preceded by Elijah.	Malachi 4:5-6	Matthew 11:13-14
Messiah would be declared the Son of God.	Psalms 2:7	Matthew 3:16-17
Messiah would be called a Nazarene.	Isaiah 11:1	Matthew 2:23

Messiah would bring light to Galilee.	Isaiah 9:1-2	Matthew 4:13-16
Messiah would speak in parables.	Psalms 78:2-4 Isaiah 6:9-10	Matthew 13:10-15,34-35
Messiah would be called King.	Psalms 2:6 Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 27:37 Mark 11:7-11
Messiah would be praised by little children.	Psalms 8:2	Matthew 21:16
Messiah would be betrayed.	Psalms 41:9 Zechariah 11:12-13	Luke 22:47-48 Matthew 26:14-16
Messiah's price money would be used to buy a potter's field.	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:9-10
Messiah would be falsely accused.	Psalms 35:11	Mark 14:57-58
Messiah would be silent before his accusers.	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
Messiah would be spat upon and struck.	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67
Messiah would be hated without cause.	Psalms 35:19 Psalms 69:4	John 15:24-25
Messiah would be crucified with criminals.	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38 Mark 15:27-28
Messiah would be given vinegar to drink.	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34 John 19:28-30
Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced.	Psalms 22:16 Zechariah 12:10	John 20:25-27
Messiah would be mocked and ridiculed.	Psalms 22:7-8	Luke 23:35
Soldiers would gamble for Messiah's garments.	Psalms 22:18	Luke 23:34 Matthew 27:35-36
Messiah's bones would not be broken.	Exodus 12:46 Psalms 34:20	John 19:33-36
Messiah would be forsaken by God.	Psalms 22:1	Matthew 27:46
Messiah would pray for his enemies.	Psalms 109:4	Luke 23:34
Soldiers would pierce Messiah's side.	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
Messiah would be buried with the rich.	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
Messiah would resurrect from the dead.	Psalms 16:10 Psalms 49:15	Matthew 28:2-7 Acts 2:22-32
Messiah would ascend to heaven.	Psalms 24:7-10	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:51
Messiah would be seated at God's right hand.	Psalms 68:18 Psalms 110:1	Mark 16:19 Matthew 22:44

# Appendix 3: Map of Jesus' Ministry



## Appendix 4: Gospel Comparison

Each the gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record the story of Jesus. Though the essential stories are the same, God used the personalities and the experiences of each gospel writer to reach a different audience in a different way—similar to different news stations reporting the same story. Each writer is a unique person giving us a unique portrait of Jesus which, taken together, give us a colorful picture of our Savior.

	<b>MATTHEW</b>	<b>MARK</b>	<b>LUKE</b>	<b>JOHN</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Jewish Christian	Young Jewish Christian	Gentile Doctor	Jewish Christian
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	Jews	Romans	Gentiles	Greeks
<b>PORTRAIT of JESUS</b>	King/Messiah	Faithful Servant	Song of Man	Son of God
<b>GENEAOLGY</b>	Traced to David/Abraham	None	Traced to Adam	Traced to God
<b>FEATURES</b>	60% Teaching Words of Jesus Contains 90% of Mark	Shortest gospel Few OT quotes Explains Jewish customs 150 present tense verbs 35 miracles 40% Jesus Words	50% Jesus Word 13 Women Lots of prayer Early Years Contains 90% of Mark	90% unique to John No parables No Exorcisms I AM statements

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>Law and Promise</b>	<b>Power and Service</b>	<b>Grace and Salvation (Holy Spirit)</b>	<b>Glory and Life</b>
<b>STYLE of AUTHOR</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Preacher</b>	<b>Storyteller, Historian</b>	<b>Theologian</b>
<b>ORDER WRITTEN</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are usually known as the *Synoptic Gospels*. *Synoptic* comes from two Greek words which mean, "to see together" and literally means able to be seen together. These three gospels give an account of the same events of Jesus' life. There are in each of them additions and omissions; but broadly speaking their material is the same and their arrangement is the same. John wrote his gospel like a theologian to prove Jesus' deity, which explains his loose commitment to chronology as well as his inclusion of stories not found elsewhere.

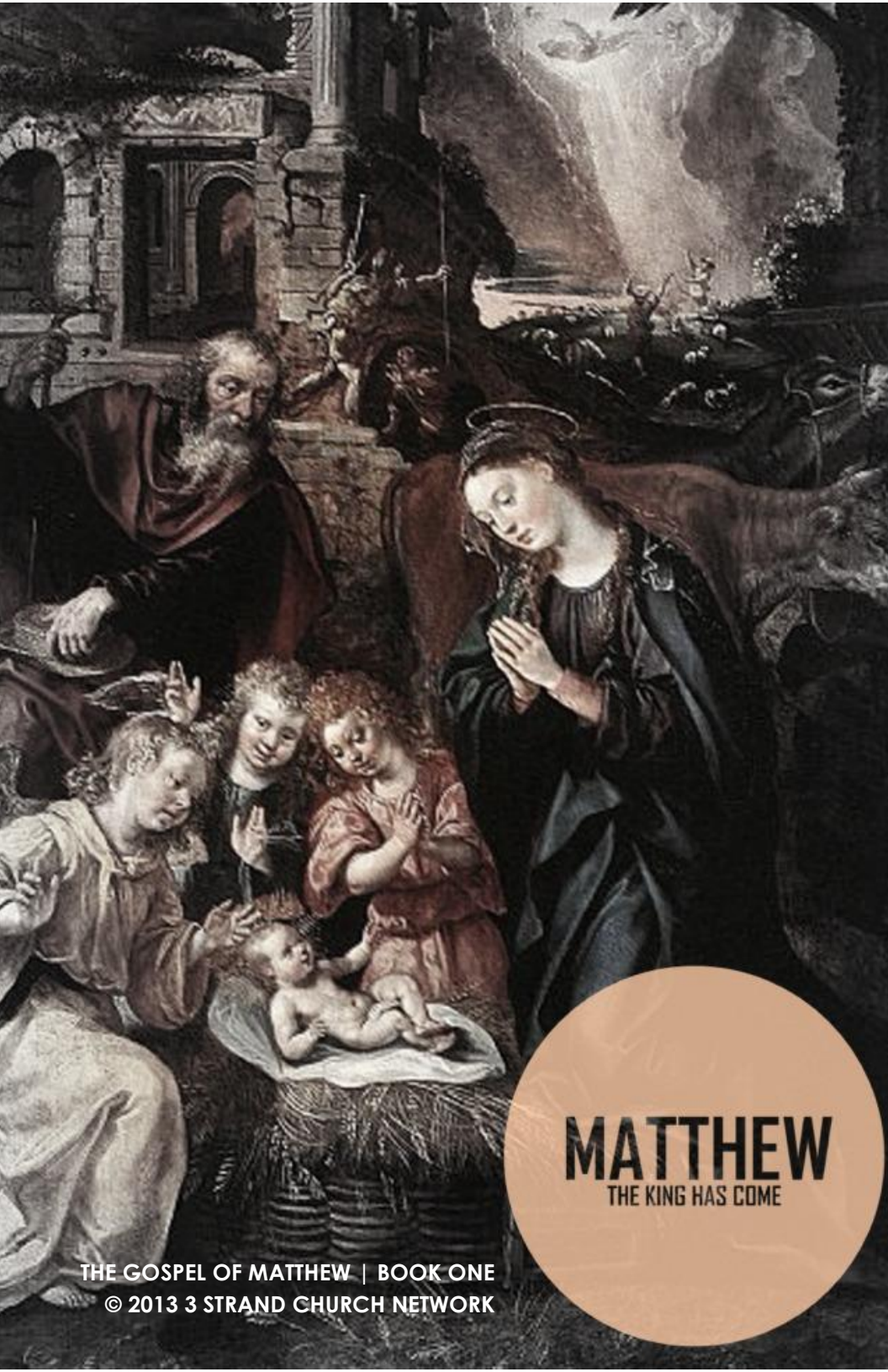
The earliest gospel was most likely Mark. Historically, in addition to being the cousin of Barnabas and the companion of Paul, it is believed that Mark was the secretary of Peter (1Peter 5.31). As Mark was not an apostle of the Lord, it is assumed that Mark's gospel witness is a record of Peter's. It is dated either early AD 50-64 or later from AD 65-70. Peter was martyred AD 64-67. Both the books of Matthew and Luke contain large portions of Mark—upwards of 90%. Consider the following breakdown:

<b>BOOK</b>	<b>CHAPTERS</b>	<b>TOTAL VERSES</b>	<b>VERSES SHARED</b>	<b>ACTUAL WORDS</b>
<b>Mark</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>*</b>	
<b>Matthew</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Luke</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1149</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>53%</b>

Of the 55 verses that Matthew does not produce of Mark, 31 are produced by Luke. In all, only 24 verses in all of Mark are NOT reproduced

by either Matthew or Luke. Both Matthew and Luke follow Mark's chronological order of events. Occasionally, either Matthew or Luke differ from Mark; but they never both differ against him; always at least one of them follows Mark's order.

These numbers appear insignificant until we consider the additional verses NOT included in Mark's gospel but do appear in Matthew (or Luke respectively). Of all the additional material that both Matthew and Luke provide, more than 200 verses are nearly identical. The material that both gospel writers drew from focused largely on Jesus' life—what He did. In Matthew in particular, the additional verses focus on Jesus' words—what He said. This is probably what led an early Church historian named Papias to say, "*Matthew collected the sayings of Jesus in the Hebrew tongue.*"



# MATTHEW

THE KING HAS COME

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW | BOOK ONE  
© 2013 3 STRAND CHURCH NETWORK