

MATTHEW

SELF-STUDY GUIDE

for use with

New International Version
of the Bible (1984)

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This self-study course was designed with careful attention to teaching methods for distance learning. It has course aims, lesson objectives, questions (and answers) on important matters, and preparations for unit examinations based on objectives. This present version has all the same features but no exams.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Gospel of Matthew was designed to be the first book of the New Testament and key to the books that follow. Sooner or later, every serious Bible student will develop his own understanding—whether right or wrong—of that book. I am thankful for those who helped build my own views. The earliest was my godly mother. Another was Lewis S. Johnson at Dallas Theological Seminary in the 1950s. Also beginning then and there were many private discussions with Stanley D. Toussaint, later head of the Bible department. Stan's doctoral dissertation on Matthew, adapted and published for a wide audience, reaches many of the same conclusions I do.

Matthew tells about the King and His kingdom. One's approach to Matthew will depend on how one defines the kingdom that drew near, widely misunderstood nowadays. I am convinced that it is defined correctly by Alva J. McClain (*The Greatness of the Kingdom*, Zondervan) and George N.H. Peters (*The Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, the Christ*; 3 volumes, Kregel). The main point is that the kingdom is exactly what the prophets had predicted; Jesus did not change its meaning. It is not true that Jesus inaugurated His kingdom. Instead, He will do so at His Second Coming, just as He said.

In the 1960s I sharpened my views on Matthew while teaching in the Puebla Bible School in Mexico. Since then there have been many opportunities to develop them, on return trips to Mexico and with groups in Van and Lindale, Texas. Many other people have kindly responded in various ways to my relevant writings.

The most important critic is my wife and fellow-student, Billie Jean Hepp. The following people studied this completed course as reviewers and gave many helpful suggestions: Robin Kelley, Eric Olson, Maggie Raines, and Matt Raines.

John Hepp, Jr.

GOALS

This is a careful introductory study of Matthew, the first Gospel. Understanding Matthew will help you understand the Old Testament, on which it is based, and the rest of the New Testament. You will not study a system of theology but Matthew itself. You will become acquainted with that book as a whole and some of its main teachings. For example, you will learn

- ◆ the meaning and character of the kingdom that Jesus and the apostles preached
- ◆ the purposes of the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus' miracles
- ◆ the reason Jesus switched to teaching in parables—and the secrets He thus revealed
- ◆ the meaning of Jesus' title *Christ*
- ◆ the importance of the coming kingdom to everything you do
- ◆ the structure of the Book of Matthew

ABBREVIATIONS

A.D. or AD	(<i>Anno Domini</i>) of the Christian era
B.C. or BC	Before Christ
cf.	compare
ch.(chs.)	chapter(s)
f.(ff.)	and the following unit(s)
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version of the Bible
p.(pp.)	page(s)
v.(vv.)	verse(s)
√	shows a question that is part of basis for examination

BIBLE BOOK ABBREVIATIONS

Gen.	2 Kings	Isa.	Nah.	Rom.	Titus
Exod.	1 Chron.	Jer.	Hab.	1 Cor.	Philem.
Lev.	2 Chron.	Lam.	Zeph.	2 Cor.	Heb.
Num.	Ezra	Ezek.	Hag.	Gal.	James
Deut.	Neh.	Dan.	Zech.	Eph.	1 Peter
Josh.	Esth.	Hos.	Mal.	Phil.	2 Peter
Judg.	Job	Joel	Matt.	Col.	1 John
Ruth	Ps. (Pss.)	Amos	Mark	1 Thess.	2 John
1 Sam.	Prov.	Obad.	Luke	2 Thess.	3 John
2 Sam.	Eccl.	Jonah	John	1 Tim.	Jude
1 Kings	S. of Sol.	Mic.	Acts	2 Tim.	Rev.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to this study of Matthew, which God designed as the first Gospel and the first book of the New Testament. In it you will discover the continuity of God's salvation plan begun in Genesis. You can exult in its magnificent portrayal of God's Savior. You can lay a firm foundation for your own New Testament study and spiritual growth.

MATERIALS

This study guide will lead you as you study Matthew in your own Bible in order to reach the goals listed earlier. It is based on the New International Version of the Bible, 1984 (NIV). Use that version if you have it, comparing other versions if possible. To understand Matthew, it is important to understand the Old Testament, on which it is based. As you proceed in this course, try to look up and read all Old Testament references plus their contexts.

My explanatory outline of Matthew is designed to give a look at the book as a whole. You will read that outline before lesson 1—and parts of it at various stages.

UNITS AND LESSONS

The whole course consists of four units, each unit containing three or four lessons plus a unit examination. Most lessons follow this order:

1. Lesson objectives in question form
2. Brief introductions to longer and shorter sections of Matthew
3. Reading assignments of those Bible sections
4. Helps with some of the difficult words and expressions
5. Questions and answers over important matters

QUESTIONS

The questions in the lessons are designed to help you learn—not to test you. They are all based on information in this study guide or your own Bible study. Their main aim—like the course itself—is to help you become acquainted with Matthew. Some of the questions are checked (✓) and will serve as basis for the examination for their respective unit. Nearly all questions are answered in the back of this study guide. You should not send your answers to your teacher but save them to study for your unit examinations.

READING MATTHEW

To understand any Bible book there is no substitute for reading the whole book repeatedly. Matthew is too long for such a requirement in this course; you will read it section by section. But you will know it better if you read it much more often.

UNIT EXAMINATIONS (available only under special arrangement)

You will be told when and how to prepare for unit examinations, which are based on the questions marked ✓. There is room on the examination pages for you to write all the answers.

Now begin your studies with prayer! Read quickly through the outline, then start lesson 1.

Explanatory Outline of Matthew

“The written account of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”

The two-word Greek phrase with which Matthew begins (Biblos geneleos) has been translated various ways. The NIV says, “a record of the genealogy.” The most likely meaning of the phrase is “the written account,” as it is used in the Greek version of Genesis 2:4 and 5:1. There it marks some of the divisions in that book. Thus, Matthew continues the history of redemption begun in Genesis. In this history God fulfills divine covenants made with King David and Abraham the patriarch.

In this outline, quotations are from the NIV. However, the King’s title Christ is changed to its equivalent Messiah. The outline is based on two refrains indicating structure:

“From that time on Jesus began” (4:17 and 16:21)—a refrain that introduces the two major phases in the Lord’s ministry.

“When Jesus had finished” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1)—a refrain that always follows a major discourse and concludes that section.

Introduction (1:1 to 4:16) Preparation for the King’s Ministry

In this section are recorded the historical events which, in accordance with prophecy, set the stage for the King’s public appearance. By chapters:

- Chapter 1. Jesus is the divine gift to the house of David.
- Chapter 2. The King is worshipped and protected as a child.
- Chapter 3. The forerunner prepares the people for the King and the kingdom.
- Chapter 4. The King is proved in the desert, then goes to Galilee.

*“From that time on Jesus began to preach,
‘Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”
(4:17; this message underlies all of Part I.)*

I. The King’s Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)

A. The King’s Message (4:17 to 7:29) “Repent because the kingdom of heaven has drawn near” (Greek)

“Kingdom of heaven” was a common Jewish designation for the expected kingdom of God. Since Jesus nowhere defined this term, He intended for the Jews to understand it according to their common usage, which came from the Scriptures. They expected a kingdom of God which, though originating in heaven, would be established on earth (Dan. 2, 7). This kingdom would perpetuate eternally the house and throne of David (2 Sam. 7, Psa. 89). Therefore, it would be a new form of “the former dominion” in which God had ruled through David over Israel (Micah 4:1–8). This kingdom had

“drawn near”; therefore, it was not God’s universal rule or His rule in men’s hearts, which are always present.

In this section the King goes up on a mountain to announce a “law” (Heb. 7:12; James 1:25) that will become the basis of an eternal covenant. The standard of righteousness in His law shows the requisite for entering the kingdom that is being announced as near. That standard is perfection, impossible to attain except through Him. Perfection will be granted to those who are repentant, as they are described in the Beatitudes.

First Discourse (chs. 5–7): *The Righteousness Required to Enter the Kingdom*

“When Jesus had finished . . .” (7:28)

B. The King’s Works (chs. 8–10) Proof that He is the Messiah

Here are nine scenes of miracles showing His great power and the different responses to it. In this way He proves that He can bring the kind of kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament (as seen, for example, in Isa. 11, 35). In fact, Hebrews 6:5 calls His miracles “the powers [the word for miracles] of the coming age.” Also He can and does transmit the same power to His disciples—but He warns them of opposition.

Second Discourse (ch. 10): *The King’s Servants Sent Forth*

“After Jesus had finished . . .” (11:1)

C. The King Rejected (chs. 11–13) “His own did not receive him” (John 1:11).

Jesus encourages His forerunner John, who languishes in prison, with His mighty works of the kingdom. But the Jewish cities and religious leaders have accepted neither John nor Jesus. They have heard the good news but not repented. The Pharisees, in fact, decide that Jesus must die; they publicly state that His authority is from the prince of the demons.

The King pronounces woes upon the unrepentant cities and warns the leaders of unforgivable sin. Then He changes to a new method of teaching, that of parables. His main purpose is to hide from the majority, while revealing to the faithful, the “secrets of the kingdom” (13:11). The secrets are previously unrevealed information about the kingdom; they in no way redefine or change it. They reveal that the kingdom will be postponed, that there will be a time of seed-sowing and growth, and that the King will come a second time—to inaugurate the kingdom. Why had these secrets not been revealed to the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter 1:10–12)? Perhaps so that Israel could not use them as an excuse. Israel was fully responsible to accept or reject the King in His first coming.

Third Discourse (ch. 13): *The Secrets about the Kingdom*

“When Jesus had finished . . .” (13:53)

D. The King Confessed (13:53 to 16:20) Faith amid unbelief

This section moves from unbelief in Nazareth to the Great Confession near Caesarea Philippi. Death comes to the King’s forerunner, and danger comes to the King through traps set by the religious leaders. He continues to do mighty works, but now often in places of retirement and mainly for the disciples’ sake. To the disciples, Jesus’ retreat from His foes must seem most unkingly. Nevertheless, they make the great confession through Simon, their spokesman: Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus blesses the first confessor with a new name, Peter. On him as bedrock (a figure similar to the one in Eph. 2:20), He promises to build His own new assembly (*ekklesia*, “church”). This church will have authority (the keys) in the coming kingdom.

THE GREAT CONFESSION & THE GREAT PROMISE (16:13–20)

“You are the Messiah.” “You are Peter...I will build my church.”

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer...be killed and...be raised to life.”
(16:21; this message underlies all of Part II.)

II. The King’s Ministry until the Great Commission (16:21 to 28:20)

A. The King’s Disciples Challenged and Encouraged (16:21 to 18:35) “take up his cross and follow me” (16:24)

Both for Master and disciple, the way to the crown will be through a cross. Yet, the crown is sure. When Jesus is transfigured on the mountain, three disciples see there a foreview in miniature of “the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” (16:28). During this period they are learning their great need of faith and an inoffensive and humble spirit.

Fourth Discourse (ch. 18): *Christian Humility and Meekness*

“When Jesus had finished . . .” (19:1)

B. The King Formally Presented and Rejected (chs. 19–25) “See, your king comes to you” (21:5). This section is doubly long and closed by two discourses.

1. The Trip to Jerusalem (chs. 19–20) The disciples are taught lessons regarding the kingdom: its importance, its entrance, its rewards.

2. The Royal Entry and Resultant Opposition (chs. 21–22) For the first time Jesus presents Himself publicly to Israel as the Messiah. This is met by a demand to know His authority. In response, His parables reveal God’s judgments on Israel’s leaders for rejecting the Son (and therefore the kingdom). He answers their captious questions; they do not answer His question (based on Ps. 110).

The fifth and sixth discourses follow. The fifth one (ch. 23) lays bare the wicked hypocrisy of the leaders, whose attitude had prevented the kingdom’s coming at that time. The sixth—and last—discourse (chs. 24–25) traces the events that will lead to the King’s Second Coming to establish His kingdom.

Fifth Discourse (ch. 23): *Woes upon the Religious Leaders*

Sixth Discourse (chs. 24–25): *Events Leading to the Future Kingdom*

“When Jesus had finished . . .” (26:1)

- C. The King Crucified and Triumphant** (chs. 26–28) “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Messiah?” (27:22)

Both parts of this section revolve around Jesus’ kingship. The first part, the crucifixion or the passion, is in chapters 26–27. It has four focal points: Jesus’ being anointed for death, the last supper, the betrayal and trial, then the crucifixion itself. In the supper Jesus affirms that He will not drink with them again until the kingdom comes (26:29). In both the religious trial before the Jews and the civil trial before Pilate, the question is whether or not Jesus is the King of the Jews (26:63; 27:11). He clearly affirms that He is. This charge is placed above His head when He is crucified (27:37); all the scorn and abuse center on this very theme of His kingship. Even the tomb is sealed to prove that He is a “deceiver” (27:63–64).

The second part is the triumph, recorded in chapter 28. In spite of every effort by Jewish and Roman authorities, the Lord has risen. He reveals Himself to some women and to the eleven closest disciples. The book quickly reaches its culmination as the risen Messiah gives His Great Commission. Claiming all authority, he sends forth His servants to make disciples who will keep His commandments. This time He sends them to all the world, not just to Israel. He promises to be spiritually present with them until the end of the age. At that time, as He had said before, in His renewed physical presence He will usher in the “coming age,” the kingdom.

THE GREAT COMMISSION & THE GREAT PRESENCE (28:18–20)

“Go and make disciples...I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Unit One

Lesson 1

Introduction, Matthew 1–2

How do the first two Greek words of Matthew link it to the Old Testament? What earlier famous man had the same name as Jesus (in Hebrew)? What does the title Christ mean? What purpose does the genealogy serve? For whom were the Magi looking? In what sense did Jesus “fulfill” Hosea 11:1?

In each lesson you will have three ways to learn about Matthew:

- by studying Matthew as guided, and making your own observations
- by studying our explanations
- by answering questions, then checking your answers

1. It would probably take you over two hours to read the book of Matthew aloud. If you can afford that long, read it. If not, use about half an hour to look through it all. Then write down three of your impressions about the book before you read what follows.

Book Keys

Some Keys to Understanding Matthew

(Look up all Bible references.)

The Gospel of Matthew is a mountain of gold, ready to be mined. It is fitting for it to be first. There is evidence that it was designed as a catechism (handbook of basic teachings) to instruct early believers. Of the four Gospels Matthew gives the most complete view of Jesus the Messiah. And it most clearly shows how the Old Testament story is continued and completed in the New. Matthew has at least 129 quotations of the Old Testament or allusions to it. Even the first verse of Matthew shows at least five links to the Old Testament. Some of these will be considered below, for such links are keys to understanding this Gospel. Permeating all else are the themes of the King and His kingdom.

1. Use of the title *Christ* and other titles. One link between the testaments is the title *Christ*, emphasized throughout Matthew chapters 1 and 2 (see 1:1, 16, 17, 18; 2:4 plus equivalents in 2:2, 6). It is also emphasized at high points such as the Great Confession (16:16, 20), the Royal Entry (21:5), the final struggle with Israel’s leaders (22:42), the Prophetic Discourse (24:5), and Jesus’ trial and crucifixion (26:63–64, 68; 27:17, 22).

Why is this title a link between the testaments? Because it is used often in each testament referring to the same office. In each testament the word used for this office literally means “anointed” and is equivalent to “given God’s Holy Spirit.” The Hebrew (Old Testament) word is *Mashiach*, and from its Aramaic equivalent we get the synonym *Messiah*. The Greek word with

the same meaning is *Cristos* (Christ). This word is used in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) to translate *Mashiac*, and throughout the New Testament as a title for Jesus. Thus, a Bible written wholly in Hebrew has *Mashiac* in both testaments while a Bible wholly in Greek has *Cristos* in both. This powerful link disappears in most English versions, however, because of an inconsistent procedure: the Old Testament Hebrew word is translated (as “anointed [one]”), but the New Testament Greek word is simply transferred to English (as “Christ”). See the following chart.

What office does this title refer to? Those familiar with Old Testament prophecies, as the first readers of Matthew were, know the answer: *Mashiac/Cristos* refers to the promised King of Israel (Psa. 2:2; Dan. 9:25, 26), the Messiah. Only He has the absolute fullness of God’s Spirit (Isa. 11:1–2). He is to be the successor to David. David also was called “the LORD’s *Mashiac*”¹ (1 Sam. 16:6, 13; 2 Sam. 22:51). Matthew 2:2, 4 shows that a title equivalent to *Christ* is *King*. Jesus accepted the title *King* in Matthew 21:5; 25:34, 40; 27:11 and was given the same title—though in mockery—in 27:29, 37, 42.

The Words for the Title “Anointed” in Hebrew, Greek, and English Bibles		
Language	Old Testament	New Testament
Hebrew (& Aramaic)	<i>Mashiac (& Messiah)</i>	<i>Mashiac (& Messiah)</i>
Greek	<i>Cristos</i>	<i>Cristos</i>
English	<i>Anointed [One]</i>	<i>Christ</i>

To remind yourself of this meaning of *Christ*, it would be helpful to read “Messiah” every time you see it in Matthew or elsewhere. We will follow that procedure here. For example: “The genealogy in Matthew 1 traces Messiah’s ancestry to David and Abraham.”

Other titles for Jesus in Matthew are more or less equivalent to *Messiah*. For example, (1) “Son of David” (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15) is used in the Messianic sense. This descendant of David’s is heir to the LORD’s covenant with David. (2) “Son of...God” is also equivalent to *Messiah* at 16:16, as we will show later. In 22:42, however, it is clear that as “Son of God” the Messiah must be more than just the Son of David.

(3) In speaking about Himself, Jesus normally used a different title: *Son of Man*. Originating in Daniel 7, this title, like *Messiah*, also referred to the One who will rule over the everlasting kingdom. But *Son of Man* (a) was a safer term to use, since it did not suggest an immediate patriotic war for the Jews, as *Messiah* might, and (b) had other important connotations.

¹ When you see “the LORD” with LORD in all-capital letters, it stands for God’s Old Testament name Yahweh.

2. Early emphasis on kingship. As usual in a Gospel, the first chapters set the course for the entire book. And that course has to do with kingship. Consider, for example, some of the brief selections about Jesus' birth and childhood in Matthew 1–2:

- Joseph, the descendant of David (1:16, 20), accepts God's Son into his family by taking Mary and naming Jesus. He thereby gives Jesus the legal right to the throne of David.
- The wise men (Magi) look for the King of the Jews (2:2), same as the Messiah (2:4).
- Two other kings play their part in chapter 2: King Herod, who tries to kill the Messiah, and King Archelaus, whose presence is the human reason Jesus is taken to Nazareth.

In fact, as stated before, these themes of king and kingship dominate this Gospel. This will become clear in the outline.

3. "The kingdom has come near." Two verses in Matthew begin with the following words: "From that time on Jesus began" (4:17; 16:21). Each of these verses gives a message that Jesus repeated often and that characterized His ministry recorded in the following chapters. The first—Jesus' constant message during the first part of His ministry—was identical to what John the Baptist had preached: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Greek, 3:2; 4:17). Notice that He told His disciples to preach the same message (10:7).

In the New Testament only Matthew uses this term *kingdom of heaven*, more than thirty times. What does it mean? Since the term is never defined, we must assume the basic Jewish meaning for it. It was their common name for the kingdom promised through the prophets. The term came from the description in Daniel 2 of a "rock" that will become a "huge mountain [filling] **the whole earth**" (vv. 34–35, emphasis added). The rock will strike the kings represented by the toes on the statue Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about (v. 42). Then "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed" (v. 44). Thus, the "kingdom of heaven" will come from heaven but will exist forever on earth. It will not be "spiritual" in the sense of non-material or non-political. Rather, it will have all the features the prophets foresaw.

Other New Testament books—even when recording the same stories as Matthew—do not use this term. They substitute equivalent terms easier for Gentiles to understand (and sometimes used in Matthew): *kingdom* or *kingdom of God*.

So Jesus kept on saying to repent because the kingdom had come near. This meant that they should get right with God because the kingdom promised through the prophets might begin at any time. This was His principal message. Other messages were subordinate to this one, were in harmony with it, and need not be interpreted in a way that contradicts it. For example, consider Matthew 12:28, "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (NIV). Does this mean that the kingdom, which was still being announced as near, had fully arrived and been inaugurated? That is an unnecessary conclusion. Rather, it had arrived only in the King Himself and His power.

4. “He must go to Jerusalem and suffer.” The high point in Jesus’ early ministry was the disciples’ Great Confession: “You are the Christ [Messiah]” (16:16). Immediately after they confessed this, Jesus began to stress a different message, first recorded in 16:21. This was a private message for His disciples—that He must die and rise again. Matthew 16:21 introduces the second part of His ministry, which reaches to His death/resurrection and the Great Commission.

Not that the kingdom subject is dropped. Consider the fact, seen earlier in Matthew, that the judgment and the kingdom were clearly future (7:21–23; 8:11–12; 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36, 41, 42; and especially 13:39–43). This fact is given even greater emphasis in the second part of Jesus’ ministry. Note especially His references to His future glory at His Second Coming (16:27–28; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31–46). In fact, entering the future kingdom is the same as entering or inheriting eternal life (18:3, 8, 9; 19:16, 17, 23, 24, 29; 25:34, 46).

In this second part of His ministry, the King teaches disciples who will soon have to operate without His physical presence. But in every subject treated—such as, forgiveness, divorce, serving others, the resurrection—He shows that the coming kingdom is the determining consideration. In other words, everything should be done with the kingdom in mind.

To summarize, after the introductory chapters (1–4) Matthew has two main divisions of Jesus’ ministry, each characterized by a dominant message. The first division is indicated by the public message at 4:17; the second, by the private message (for His disciples) at 16:21. In both divisions the King and His coming kingdom are the main theme.

5. Shorter sections. Is there any indication of major subdivisions in this Gospel? Yes, in a pattern that is repeated several times:

- a. A series of brief episodes, which is climaxed by
- b. A relatively long discourse, which is terminated by
- c. A refrain.

Consider an example of this pattern:

- a. Chapters 8–9 give nine miraculous episodes in groups of three; then
- b. Chapter 10 is a relatively long discourse, in which the Lord sends out His disciples with the same miraculous powers. At the end of this section we read,
- c. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished...” (11:1, Greek).

In the outline we suggest, you can see that Matthew has followed this same pattern several times, ending each section with the same refrain just quoted (at 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Each section has a special emphasis.

6. Israel and the True Israel. The many Old Testament passages quoted in Matthew show that the story of Jesus is the continuation of salvation history. Israel is still God’s key people through most of the book. Only Matthew stresses the fact that Jesus limited His own ministry to

Israel (10:5–6; 15:24). And Israel’s response is carefully traced in such passages as chapters 11–13; 21:33–46; and the unique parable in 22:1–14.

A fruitful and interesting observation is that Jesus fulfills the mission of Israel; He is the true Israel. As such, He recapitulates (briefly repeats) parts of Israel’s history: in His miraculous birth, in being brought out of Egypt, tempted in the desert, etc. Thus, even Israel’s history—not just prophecy—is “fulfilled” by Him (see 2:15, which quotes history from Hosea). This is made quite clear when the Servant Song of Isaiah 42:1–4 is quoted in Matthew 12:17–21. In the Isaiah context (see 41:8–9) the nation had been called God’s Servant. But in Matthew we see that the true Israel, who fulfills the whole Servant concept, is Jesus the Messiah.

- end of Book Keys -

You have just finished reading six keys to the Gospel of Matthew. Later you will reread some of these “Book Keys.” Now you will begin a section-by-section study of Matthew. The first section goes from 1:1 to 4:16. It records the historical events which, in accordance with prophecy, set the stage for the King’s public appearance.

There will be questions on important matters. For each question answer the best you can before you look at the answer provided starting on page 81.

The two-word Greek phrase with which Matthew begins (*Biblos geneleos*) has been translated various ways. NIV says, “a record of the genealogy.” The most likely meaning of the Greek is “the written account,” as it is used in the Greek version of Genesis 2:4 and 5:1. There it marks some of the divisions that give structure to that book. So Matthew 1:1 can be translated, “The written account of Jesus Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Thus, Matthew continues the history of redemption begun in Genesis. In this history God fulfills divine covenants made with King David and Abraham the patriarch.

- 2.√ How do the first two Greek words of Matthew link it to the Old Testament, specifically to Genesis? (See just above.)
3. Read Matthew chapters 1 and 2, then answer the following questions
4. It is impossible to fully understand the New Testament without a knowledge of the Old Testament. Matthew shows that the two testaments are inseparably joined. For example, in Matthew’s introductory title to the book, Matthew 1:1, there are at least five links to the Old Testament. One link was pointed out in question 2. Find two more that are referred to in the paragraph just before question 2.
5. Another link to the Old Testament is a name found in 1:1 and 1:21. Joseph was told to give his Son this name meaning “Yahweh [The LORD] is salvation.” It was a shortened form of the name of another famous man in Jewish history. In Greek it was also the name of the book about that man’s times, the sixth Bible book.

- a. What was the name Joseph gave his Son?
 - b.√ Who was the earlier famous man who had this name?
- 6.√ Yet another link to the Old Testament is the title *Christ*. What does that title mean? (Matt. 2:2, 4 and Book Key 1)
7. After the title (1:1) the first item in Matthew is a rather long genealogy (1:2–17). This genealogy shows Jesus' right to the throne of David and the blessings of Abraham. It organizes the lineage of Messiah into three equal stages. It does so—as Old Testament students well know—by omitting several names. In contrast, it includes four women of questionable background, whom Jews probably would not have mentioned. Look through it again, then answer.
- a.√ What purpose does the genealogy serve?
 - b. The women listed in this genealogy show that God Himself oversaw the line of Abraham and David. List the four women it mentions before Mary. What do they have in common? (You may know if you have studied the Old Testament.)
8. The rest of Matthew 1 (vv. 18–25) shows how God gave the Messiah to the house of David. What two things did He want Joseph to do in order to receive Him?
NOTE: This divine Gift was the fullest meaning of the ancient name *Immanuel* (God with us, Isa. 7:14). Probably there was a child so named in the time of Isaiah (see Isa. 7:15–16).² Yet no one fulfilled the meaning of that name until Jesus came.
9. Matthew 2:1–12 begins by reporting that Jesus Messiah was born in Bethlehem, as foreseen centuries earlier (Micah 5:2). Then it tells of gentile Magi (Wise Men) coming to worship.³ They were possibly from the same area where Daniel had written his prophecies.
- a.√ For whom were the Magi looking?
NOTE: In contrast to them, King Herod was upset that another King was born (2:3) and inquired with the purpose of killing the Child (2:4–5, 7–8).
 - b. How could they have known that it was time for Him to appear? (Read Daniel 9:25–26.)

² The original sign was for the “house of David,” represented by King Ahaz (Isa. 7:2, 13). He was petrified by two enemies allied against him (vv. 1-4), the kings of Aram and Israel. David’s “house” needed to learn that God was with Judah. The sign started with an *almah* pregnant (v. 14), which usually referred to a young woman, not technically to a virgin (a different word found in Deut. 22:15, 17, 19, 23, 28, et al.). The sign continued with her child named Immanuel *and what would happen to him*. While still small he would “eat curds and honey” (Isa. 7:14-15), because only that food would be plentiful (v. 22). The land of the two kings Ahaz dreaded would be “laid waste” (v. 16) and so would Judah (vv. 18-25). Only certain aspects of this prophecy were “fulfilled” by Jesus.

³ Though popularly called “three kings,” the Magi (1) were not kings but wise men/scholars who studied the stars, (2) may have numbered more than three. Each of them may have offered various gifts.

NOTE: Apparently the Magi did not see the star during most of their journey. Matthew mentions two occasions: (1) “in the east” (2:2, 7, 9) and (2) as they traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem (2:9–10). On the second occasion it led them to the house where the Child was. The first occasion is probably not a geographical statement (“in the east”) but astronomical, as translated by the NET Bible (“when it rose” and “in its rising”).

- c. The Wise Men recapitulated aspects of one part of Israel’s history. Read Numbers 23:7–8 and 24:17, 19 to find at least two parallels.

NOTE: They also foreshadow the future. Just as the Magi did (2:2, 11), many foreigners will come to worship and give gifts in the future kingdom (Rev. 21:24, 26).

NOTE: Before continuing in Matthew, consider the date of Jesus’ birth. The Gregorian calendar, now used in most countries, took its present form in the sixteenth century. It dates everything as “B.C.” (Before Christ) or “A.D.” (*Anno Domini*, “in the year of our Lord”). Its date for the birth of Jesus, however, is wrong. We now know, for example, that King Herod died in April of 4 B.C. according to that calendar. Jesus had been born before that. How long before? We must add the periods of time (a) before the flight to Egypt and (b) during that flight until Herod died. (a) At the time of the flight, Jesus was probably several months old. When Herod ordered that little boys “two years old and under” be killed (2:16), he made sure the baby King would be included. (b) Jesus was in Egypt for probably a few more weeks or months until Herod died.

10. In view of the information in the preceding note, in what year(s) of the Gregorian calendar was Jesus probably born?

11. ✓ When the worldly power tries to destroy God’s Messiah, God shelters Him. Matthew 2:13–23 shows Joseph continuing to obey the angel of the Lord. He (a) takes the Child and His mother to Egypt, to save them from Herod (vv. 13–15), then (b) returns them to Israel—specifically to Nazareth—after Herod’s death (2:19–20, 22–23). These activities “fulfill” Scriptures such as Hosea 11:1 and Jeremiah 31:15. No one could guess from reading Hosea 11:1 in its context that it was in some sense a prediction. It was simply part of the history of Israel. In what sense did Jesus “fulfill” it? (Matt. 2:15 and Book Key 6)

NOTE: King Herod, called “Herod the Great” was not Jewish but Idumean (descended from Esau). Married at least nine times, he jealously protected his throne and succession. For example, he had his own wife and her two sons slain because they were suspected of treason.

12. What are three reasons Jesus was taken to Nazareth instead of Bethlehem?

Lesson 2

Matthew 3:1 to 4:16

What kingdom did John the Baptist announce as near? What are two things John expected the One who was coming after him to do? Why is it logical to conclude that at His baptism Jesus was constituted as the Messiah?

You have just looked briefly at Matthew 1–2. Those chapters can be summarized as follows: In fulfillment of His promises to Abraham and David, God gives to David’s royal house the Savior, Messiah. In Him all of Israel’s history and prophecy find their meaning.

Now you will look at Matthew 3:1 to 4:16, which shows the preparations for the King’s ministry. The forerunner, John the Baptist, prepares the people for the King to appear. Then he baptizes the King and witnesses the Father’s anointing Him with the Spirit. After this the King proves His moral right to rule; He does so by overcoming temptations from the devil. This section is set in the desert, recapitulating aspects of the history of the nation Israel just before they entered the Promised Land.

1. Read Matthew chapter 3, then answer the following questions.
2. John the Baptist fulfilled Isaiah 40:3 (Matt. 3:3). His voice urged Israel to prepare for the Lord to come and manifest His glory (Isa. 40:5). His command to “repent” was common for a prophet and meant “Turn from your sins to God.” He also baptized people from the whole area (3:5) in anticipation of the kingdom. This baptism was a ritual cleansing, like the one all Israel had before the “first covenant” (Heb. 8:7, 13; Exod. 19:10), that is, the law of Sinai.
 - a. What was the message John preached to Israel?
 - b.√ What was this kingdom that had come near? (Book Key 3)
 - c. According to the Isaiah prophecy, what was the purpose of John’s ministry?
3. John’s message, and maybe his lifestyle, showed divine disapproval of the chosen people.
 - a. Where and how did John live?
 - b. Apparently he refused to baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees. Why?
NOTE: The Pharisees were religious conservatives, highly esteemed by the people. Their greatest goal was to remain pure, primarily by separating from “sinners.” They exalted oral traditions. Sadducees were religious liberals, anti-supernaturalists who accepted only the Pentateuch as inspired. They came primarily from high-priestly families.
 - c.√ What are two things John expected the One who was coming after him to do? (3:11, 12)

4. John did not feel worthy to baptize Jesus but had to do so “to fulfill all righteousness” (3:15). This probably included Jesus’ identification with the people, with John, and with the Father. He presented Himself with His cleansed people—in fact, as the true Israel—ready for the kingdom. John was His divinely authorized herald (forerunner). And this was the occasion for the Father to anoint Him with the Spirit and recognize Him as beloved Son. Furthermore, His baptism portrayed His future death and resurrection for His people (see Luke 12:50).
 - a. Immediately after Jesus went up out of the water, what did He and John see and hear?
 - b. How does this event reflect the description of the Messiah in Isaiah 11:2?
 - c. What words about Messiah in Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1 are reflected by God’s words at the baptism?
 - d. √ Why is it logical to conclude that at His baptism Jesus was constituted (appointed and enabled) as the Messiah? (Figure out two reasons from above and Book Key 1, page 11.)

5. Man was tempted—in the garden—soon after being created. The nation Israel was tempted—in the desert—at the beginning of its life as a nation. Messiah, the true Israel, recapitulates Israel’s experience, but He triumphs rather than fails. Read about Messiah’s trial in Matthew 4:1–11. Notice that all His answers to the tempter (4:4, 7, 10) were from Deuteronomy, the book that recorded the lessons Israel should have learned in the desert. We have the same book to learn from.

NOTE: By saying “If you are the Son of God” (4:3, 6), the devil neither denied nor affirmed that fact. His idea was “Assuming you are the Son of God, you should insist on your rights.”

 - a. “Temptation” means being attracted to do something that would be wrong to do. Was Jesus really tempted? (See Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15.)
 - b. In the case of each of these three temptations, tell what He could have gained by following the devil’s suggestion.
 - c. Give a name to each sin He would thereby have committed.
 - d. Apparently His triumph was not due to His using divine abilities but to using a resource available to us. What resource?
 - e. Remember that His temptations were like ours. His specific ways to triumph should help us too. For each temptation, tell how He triumphed.

6. Read Matthew 4:12–16, which gives the setting for the Lord’s public ministry.
 - a. When and where did the Lord begin His public ministry (according to Matthew 4:12–13)?
 - b. What prophecy did He thus fulfill?

NOTE: Jesus’ ministry is the greatest light of all time (4:16). It was appropriate for this light to begin shining in Galilee, where the greatest Old Testament darkness had begun (4:12c–16; Isa. 9:1–2). That darkness was the breakup of God’s Old Testament kingdom and the exile of His people Israel.

7. In the Outline (page 7) what names have we given to the section you have just studied and the main division that follows?

Lesson 3

Matthew 4:17 to 6:34

In the Lord's early ministry, what were His three activities? His constant message? How do we know that the kingdom is to be on earth, with material and political aspects? What response (from 4:17) do the Beatitudes describe? What are "the Law and the Prophets"? the main rule for giving, fasting, and praying? the main concern rather than physical needs?

Now that the Introduction is finished, Matthew 4:17 begins the first of the two main divisions of Jesus' ministry. This division continues until the Great Confession in chapter 16. At the same time that Jesus tells the people to repent because the kingdom has drawn near, He speaks kingly words and performs kingly works. In this lesson and the next we will consider the first sub-division, which stresses His words. This consists mostly of the first and longest discourse in the book, which we often call "The Sermon on the Mount." In lessons 3 and 4 you will study that sermon directly, then our Keys to it. Read the whole sermon as often as possible.

1. Read Matthew 4:17–25, which tells of the Lord's constant message, His choice and call of four disciples, His threefold ministry in Galilee, and His immediate fame. After you read, answer the following.
 - a.√ What was the message the Lord began preaching?
 - b. What evidence do you see in Matthew 4:17 that the message recorded in that verse was constantly repeated?
 - c. What evidence do you see for this in Matthew 10:7?

- 2.√ Reread what is said in Book Key 3 ("The kingdom has come near"). Then answer.
 - a. How do we know that the kingdom of heaven is to be on earth rather than in heaven?
 - b. How do we know that it has material and political aspects?

3.
 - a. Name the first four disciples mentioned in Matthew.
NOTE: The Gospel of John shows that they had already followed Jesus in Judea.
 - b. What did Jesus promise to make out of (at least) the first two?

- 4.√ Matthew mentions three activities the Lord engaged in, bringing Him great fame and many followers. What activities?
NOTE: "Syria" (4:24) usually refers to the Roman province north of Galilee (Acts 15:23, 41; Gal. 1:21) but here may include the entire Holy Land.

5. Matthew 5–7 is the first discourse in this book.
 - a. What do we call this discourse?
 - b. Read Matthew 5:3, 10, 20; 7:21. What do these verses suggest about the purpose of the sermon?

Using terminology from Hebrews 7:12 and James 1:25, we will call this sermon a statement of Jesus’ “law.”⁴ However, the word *law* can be misunderstood. His law is **not a set of rules** by which we try to please God. Instead, it is a whole approach to life in which God transforms us. It orders our relationship, like the law of marriage (Rom. 7:2–3). As the “law of the Spirit of life,” it sets us “free from the law of sin and death” and empowers us (Rom 8:2–4).

6. Read Matthew 5:1–2, which gives the setting for the sermon. How does Jesus suggest He is giving a “law” similarly to what God had done centuries before? (See Exodus 19:3, 20; 20:1.)⁵
7. Read the pleasant words found in the Beatitudes (5:3–12),⁶ prefacing Jesus’ “law.” Then read them again.
NOTE: All of Jesus’ “rules” are aimed at such “blessing.” For example, “He does not regulate sex because He wants to rob us, but rather, because He wants to bless us. Whenever God says, ‘No’ it is that He might say ‘Yes.’”⁷
8. Jesus is “son of Abraham” (1:1). As such, He is Abraham’s chief Heir and the means of fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - a. Read Genesis 12:1–3, which gives the first statement of that covenant. The end of this statement promises worldwide blessing. To what extent?
 - b. How does the first word of each Beatitude remind us of this covenant?
 - c. What were the people expecting who followed Jesus up the mountain? (4:17, 23)
 - d. What will they get if the Beatitudes describe them?
 - e. What response (from 4:17) do the Beatitudes describe?
 - f. Is this your own response?
9. Read Matthew 5:13–16, then answer.

⁴ Hebrews 7:12 says that “when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.” Thus, the change from the Levitical priesthood to our Lord’s priesthood made a different law necessary (Heb. 7:13–18). James 1:25 calls the new law “the perfect law that gives freedom.”

⁵ The NIV says that Jesus went up “on a mountainside.” The Greek (*eis to oros*), however, is more specific: “on the mountain” (NASB). Since no mountain had been mentioned previously, this may be a deliberate repetition of the same words in Exodus 19:3 and 24:12.

⁶ Beatitude comes from *beatus*, Latin word for blessed used in translating this passage from Greek.

⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Loyal* (Colorado Springs, ChariotVictor Publishing, 1980), p. 38.

- a. What two things does Jesus compare His followers to?
 - b. For each case what do you think is the main quality (in its relationship to other things)?
10. Read Matthew 5:17–20, then answer. These verses introduce the main part (the body) of the sermon, a description of the righteousness of the “Law” and the “Prophets.” These two words are found here at the beginning (5:17) and again at the end and summary (7:12) of the body of the sermon. The two words together represent all of God’s written revelation. The sermon cannot deal with all that revelation; it can only give samples.
- a.√ What parts of God’s written revelation does Jesus want fulfilled?
 - b. Why is the righteousness described in this sermon important for us? (5:20)
11. Read Matthew 5:21–48, which gives six samples of righteousness (beginning at verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). All but one begin, “You have heard,” followed by “But I tell you.” List the Lord’s “standard” in each case.

NOTE: Here and in the outline we have used words like *law*, *rules*, and *standards*. These words are risky in respect to this sermon. It is **none of these things** in the usual sense, as you will see.

12. Read Matthew 6:1–18, which deals with three acts of righteousness often seen in public.
- a. What are these three? (vv. 2–4, 5–15, 16–18)
 - b.√ What “rule” does the Lord repeat for all three? (vv. 4, 6, 18)
 - c. What are two additional rules He gives for praying?
13. Read Matthew 6:19–34, which stresses life choices and concerns.
- a. Why should we lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth? (two reasons)
 - b. The “good eye” is generous; the “bad eye” is greedy. What effect does the “eye” have on the rest of the person?
 - c. List at least three reasons not to worry about physical needs.
 - d.√ What should our concern be?

Lesson 4

Matthew 7, Review

What is the main theme of the Sermon? Can you summarize the righteousness of the Law and the Prophets? match the three contrasts and related exhortations in the epilogue? Who is like a wise man? a foolish man?

In this lesson you will look briefly at the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. Then you will study our “Keys” to that sermon, followed by further questions and a review. This lesson will con-

clude the first subdivision (that is, A) of Part I in the Lord's ministry.

1. Read Matthew 7:1–12, which includes a warning against pride, an encouragement to prayer, and the summary of the body of the sermon.
 - a. Verse 1 says not to judge; yet verses 5, 6, 15–16 (and many verses elsewhere) give occasions when we should judge. Verse 1 is an example of “the absolute for the relative,” a common Bible idiom. What seems to be an absolute command (“do not judge”) has a relative meaning: we should not judge if we don't want to be judged ourselves. What can we call this wrong attitude?
 - b. The right way to get the righteousness God requires is through prayer (7:7–11). The three imperatives in verse 7 (“ask,” “seek,” “knock”) refer to continued action. So do the same verbs in verse 8. Translate the imperatives to show continued action.
 - c.√ In your own words state the summary of the righteousness of the Law and the Prophets.

2. Read the epilogue to this sermon, Matthew 7:13–27, in which there are three exhortations (vv. 13–14, 15–23, 24–27).
 - a.√ Label each of the exhortations by the figurative contrast it uses (in each case, “The Two _____”).
 - b. Twice we are told how to recognize false prophets. How?
 - c. Why will the Lord exclude some “prophets” and wonder-workers from the kingdom?
 - d.√ In the last exhortation who is compared to the wise man and who is compared to the foolish man?
NOTE: It is quite dangerous to convince ourselves that we are secure while not obeying the Lord as He requires here. See Appendix C (p. 100) about this matter.

3. In the conclusion to this section (7:28–29), precisely what amazed the people?

Now that you have become familiar with this great sermon, read the following keys to its interpretation. Look up references as you need them to understand.

Sermon Keys **(Keys to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5–7)**

The Sermon on the Mount, as found in Matthew 5–7, is a foundation for everything Jesus taught. These keys do not attempt to explain the details of that sermon but merely to suggest a correct approach to it. The study of the sermon, and obedience to it, should last a lifetime.

1. Its position of importance. The Sermon on the Mount is found in its fullest form at the beginning of the Lord's public ministry as told in Matthew. This shows its importance. Matthew is by design the gate to the New Testament. And of the Lord's recorded public discourses

in Matthew, it is first and longest. (The Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24–25, was spoken only to the apostles, as was the Farewell Discourse in John 13–17.)

Such discourses mark the ends of sections in Matthew. One recurring pattern in this Gospel is that after each of five narrative sections there is a discourse (chs. 5–7, 10, 13, 18, and 23–25) followed by this expression: “When Jesus had finished...” (KJV, 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). The first such section begins at Matthew 4:17 and quickly moves to this sermon, which is its main emphasis.

2. Its royal Speaker. Matthew presents Jesus as the King. His royal title is *Christ*, that is, Messiah. He is Ruler of the promised kingdom, the “Coming One” anticipated across the centuries. Matthew shows that Jesus fulfills the pictures of the King found in the prophetic Word: He is David’s descendant, born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem. Matthew’s introductory chapters show Jesus’ legal right to rule (ch. 1), Gentile recognition (ch. 2), recognition by the forerunner and by the Father (ch. 3), and His moral right to rule (ch. 4). As recorded by Matthew 4:17–25, the King begins His public ministry before He goes up on the mountain to speak this sermon.

3. Its repetition of history. There is another picture of the King besides the one in prophecy: He can be seen in the sacred history of God’s people. For Messiah is the true Israel and—as such—He relives parts of Israel’s history. This theme is important in Matthew. It explains why, for example, Matthew 2:15 says that Hosea 11:1 was “fulfilled” when the Father brought Jesus out of Egypt. What happened to God’s son, the nation Israel, happened also to His Son, the Messiah.

How does this affect our approach to the Sermon on the Mount? By making us aware of parallels to the Exodus. When God began to redeem Israel (as told in Exodus), Moses led his followers to the mountain to hear the words of God’s covenant. In Matthew Israel has a new Prophet and Lawgiver, a greater Moses, who also leads His followers to a mountain. Consider the following statements, which are true for both sets of followers.

- a. They have a leader whom God marvelously preserved as a child and set apart to save them.
- b. They expect God soon to fulfill the promises to their forefather Abraham.
- c. They expect the kingdom of God to begin soon.
- d. They have been seeing God’s miracles of deliverance.
- e. They have been washed in anticipation of hearing God’s Word. (Cf. Exod. 19:10, 14.)
- f. They have been led to the mountain. (Cf. Exod. 19:2, 3, 20; 24:12.)
- g. At the mountain they will hear God’s authoritative laws teaching them how to be righteous.
- h. These laws will be part of a covenant later ratified with blood.

Besides these parallels there are instructive contrasts. For example, in Exodus the people did not dare approach the lawgiver; in Matthew, they follow Him right up the mountain. In Exodus the result was a curse; in Matthew, the blessings expressed in the Beatitudes. In Exodus the cove-

nant was ratified with the blood of animals; in Matthew, with the blood of the Lawgiver. In Exodus the laws were written on stone tablets; those of Matthew, by God's Spirit on human hearts.

4. Its hearers, expecting the kingdom. To whom does the King preach this sermon? Directly, He addresses "disciples" (5:1), those who profess to accept His authority. He repeatedly calls God their Father, whom they should be like (5:48). But to some extent He also takes into account the crowds these disciples come from. These crowds apparently keep arriving during the sermon and are "amazed at his teaching" because of His authority (7:28–29).

Two things have attracted these disciples and crowds. The first is the message constantly preached by John the Baptist and now by Jesus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near" (Greek, 3:2; 4:17). This means to turn from sin to God because the kingdom is ready and can begin. But what kingdom is this? The Jews used three terms in the same sense: *kingdom of heaven*, *kingdom of God*, and *kingdom*. All these terms referred to the future kingdom pictured by the prophets: the restored Davidic rule, the goal of all history, for Israel and for the world, involving political, material, social, and "spiritual" blessings. It would be the *kingdom of heaven* because it would come from heaven to fill the earth (Dan. 2). Since John and Jesus never define this term, they must want the Jews to understand it in the same way.

Everything Jesus says about the kingdom in the sermon will fit this meaning. First, consider the times He mentions it by name:

- At the beginning and end of the Beatitudes (5:3, 10), He refers to the kingdom as the disciples' great prize.
- In the thematic statement (5:19, 20), it is their goal.
- In the model prayer (6:10), it is what they ask the Father to bring.
- Again in the body of the sermon (6:33), it is their greatest concern.
- In the epilogue (7:21–23), it is the destiny to which the King will admit some and not others. Often He refers to the kingdom without naming it. For example, it is (a) inheriting the earth (5:5) and (b) the "life" awaiting those who enter the narrow gate and travel the narrow road (7:14).

5. Its hearers, impressed by the King. The disciples and crowds are also attracted by Jesus' authority and power, in two aspects. (a) He has taught in the synagogues (4:23). This sermon demonstrates His authority in teaching (7:28–29). (b) He has also healed "every disease and sickness" (4:23), and many have come to Him for healing (4:24–25). That aspect of His authority will be emphasized right after the sermon, in Matthew 8–10. Thus, Jesus shows both by His words and His works that He can bring the predicted kingdom.

To summarize keys 4 and 5: this sermon is primarily for Jesus' disciples but has some features designed for the interested crowds. Both groups are attracted to Him by His message and authority. The disciples are repentant in expectation of the coming kingdom.

Does this sermon speak directly to non-Jews in the twenty-first century? Yes, for at the end of the same book He sends the disciples to “all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19–20). Do we dare to exclude this sermon from our teaching?

6. Its prologue (5:3–16). The sermon begins with the Beatitudes (5:3–12) and the Similitudes (5:13–16), describing the disciples and sketching their future. The Beatitudes include repeated promises of blessing. These constitute the blessing promised to Abraham (Gen. 12:3), whose Son and Heir is the Speaker (Matt. 1:1).

Whom are these blessings for? For these disciples who are listening to the King. They have responded to His call to repent in preparation for the coming kingdom. Since they are repentant, He describes them as poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry and thirsty for righteousness. This description shows that they do not deserve the blessings but will nevertheless obtain them.

What are the promised blessings?⁸ They are future blessings: these disciples “will be comforted,” “will inherit the earth,” “will be filled,” “will be shown mercy,” etc. They are the blessings of the kingdom: “theirs is the kingdom” (vv. 3, 10).⁹ This summary promise is found at the beginning and end of the Beatitudes.¹⁰ It cannot mean that the kingdom has begun by the time of the sermon, for the kingdom is being preached as near (4:17). Nor does it reinterpret the kingdom, changing its predicted character. Instead, the Lord is telling who will enter the kingdom and inherit it. When the kingdom does come, it is theirs.

Would Jesus use the present tense (“is”) to speak of something future (the kingdom)? Why not? We do it often. For example, we can say, “This **is** an important election” long before it takes place. Notice in Luke 20:36 how Jesus speaks about the future resurrection as present (“they **can** no longer die...they **are**...”). Similarly, Paul says, “All things **are** yours,” including even “the future” (1 Cor. 3:21–23). When we know that something is future, it is often not confusing to speak of it as present.

⁸ Nearly all the descriptions and promises in the Beatitudes come from the Old Testament and should be studied there. For example, the LORD will comfort those that mourn (5:4), as promised in Isaiah 61:2. Psalm 37:11 also said that “the meek will inherit the land” (5:5). The promise to satisfy the thirsty (5:6) recalls Isaiah 55:1. The blessing on the merciful (5:7) comes from Psalm 44:1–3. That on the pure of heart (5:8) comes from Psalm 24:4 and 73:1. See also Appendix B: The Beatitudes (p. 98).

⁹ “Theirs is the kingdom” means the same as the promise in Revelation 11:18. When the kingdom is about to begin, the heavenly elders give thanks to God that “the time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great—and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” See also 1 Peter 1:4–6.

¹⁰ The summary promise is identical in verses 3 and 10. Then it is expanded in verses 11–12—those persecuted for Messiah’s sake have great reward now kept in heaven but to be given in the coming kingdom. See the two previous footnotes and their references.

7. Its body (5:17 to 7:12). What is the main theme of Jesus' sermon, developed in the body of the sermon? It is true righteousness as the requirement for entering the kingdom.

The body of Jesus' sermon begins with a thematic statement (5:17–20) and ends with a summary (7:12). In both places He refers to “the Law and the Prophets.” This expression does not refer just to the law of Moses but to all of God's previous written revelation. “Not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen” of God's demands, He says, can be set aside as unimportant (“breaks” in 5:19 means “annuls”¹¹). Every part demands a response (“practices and teaches,” 5:19) from man. Such response will make one's name great in the coming kingdom.

In fact, no one will get into the kingdom without the righteousness of such response (5:20).¹² Even “the Pharisees and the teachers of the law” do not qualify. They perform certain religious actions but harbor unworthy attitudes. Jesus describes this true righteousness from 5:21 to 7:12 and summarizes it at 7:12 by the Golden Rule (“this sums up the Law and the Prophets”). True righteousness is neither selfish nor superficial. It relates correctly to men (the emphasis in 5:21–48) and to God (ch. 6) with proper motives (7:1–12). In this sermon the King proclaims only a few of His “laws” (“I tell you”); the rest of His laws are like these and are found in all the Scriptures. In fact, the standard He requires is perfection, measured by God's own character (5:48).¹³

8. Its epilogue (7:13–27). The conclusion to the sermon makes use of three principal contrasts: two gates (opening to two roads), two trees (bearing two kinds of fruit), and two houses (built on two foundations). These illustrate the Lord's exhortations, especially for the crowds, to find the narrow way to life (that is, to the kingdom), not to follow false teachers (nor depend on false profession), but to build strong lives by obeying His teachings. Hearing His teachings is not enough; only by obeying can one withstand the storms of life (7:24–25).

9. Its purpose. The thematic statement (5:17–20) and epilogue (7:13–27) make it clear that these are laws to be obeyed to enter the kingdom. Someone might object that (a) obeying such a perfect standard is impossible and (b) we are not saved by our works but by grace (Eph. 2:8–9). Because of these objections, some believe that the sermon is not really our standard but is only designed to make us repent. They think that by trying to keep it we come to realize our sin—the same result as under the law of Sinai (Rom. 3:19–20; 7:7–13).

It is true that Messiah's law can convict, but that is not its purpose. His law does not point to something better, as the Sinai law did, but is eternal. The Sinai law was weak (Rom. 8:3) and

¹¹ Though sometimes translated “break,” the Greek word *luo* does not mean “disobey” but “annul,” “destroy,” or even “free” (release). For example, NIV translates it “destroy” in John 2:19, Ephesians 2:14, 1 John 3:8, et al. It has the same meaning in John 5:18; 7:23; 10:35; and here in Matthew 5:19.

¹² Regarding our goal of entering the kingdom, see Appendix D (p. 102).

¹³ The Greek word twice translated “perfect” in 5:48 can also mean “mature.” But “perfect” fits both uses here.

could not survive; it was to cease at Messiah's cross (Rom. 7:7–13; Col. 2:14). The law Messiah proclaims in His sermon is far better, not merely repeating the Sinai law but replacing and fulfilling it (Heb. 7:18–19; Gal. 3:10–24; Rom. 3:31). His law will do what the Sinai law “was powerless to do” (Rom. 8:3–4).

Others believe that this sermon is a “constitution” for the kingdom, to take effect only when the kingdom comes. That view is inadequate. The sermon does not describe kingdom conditions but pre-kingdom conditions and those who hope to enter the kingdom. Its hearers mourn, hunger for righteousness, suffer for righteousness' sake, are a light in the dark, must love their enemies and not worry over material needs. They need to fast, persevere in prayer, and watch out for false teachers. They are not in the kingdom yet but eagerly look for it.

Still others believe that this sermon was only for Jews: either those first hearers who were looking for the “Jewish” kingdom—or other Jews in the future Tribulation. But that view wrongly restricts the kingdom, which is not just Jewish but is the goal of the entire worldwide church (Acts 14:21; Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; see Appendix D on page 102).

To reiterate, Messiah still expects us to hear His words and “put them into practice” (Matt. 7:24–27). As His “disciples” from “all nations,” we are taught to “obey everything I have commanded” (Matt. 28:19–20). We should follow the example of the apostles, who referred to the Lord's commands as still in force (1 Cor. 7:10; 1 Tim. 6:3). We are still on the way to the kingdom (Acts 14:22; James 2:5) and confess that Jesus is the King (Acts 17:7). We have repented toward God and trusted in the Lord Jesus (Acts 20:21). We still hunger and thirst for righteousness. And not only have we been declared righteous (justified); God has also begun a process in us that He will eventually complete. We shall attain that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (KJV, Heb. 12:14), the perfect standard of the Sermon on the Mount.

10. Its fulfillment. How will we obey this sermon? How are we guaranteed the perfect holiness it requires? Not by our own power but by the Holy Spirit. As promised, the Lord has baptized us in the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:13), who has begun to write God's laws into our hearts (Heb. 8:10; 2 Cor. 3:3). This is a new arrangement with God, called the New Covenant and inaugurated by Messiah's death (Matt. 26:28). As we behold the Lord's image (listen to His “laws” in all of Scripture), the Spirit transforms us into the same image (2 Cor. 3:18). Thus, the “laws” being made part of us are the very ones Messiah announced. But even as we become righteous, we are still poor in spirit; we still mourn—and hunger and thirst for righteousness. The glory can never be ours. Both now and when He finishes transforming us, the glory is His.

His New Covenant is much bigger than we are. It extends to heavenly things (Heb. 9:23), to the future (“promises” in Heb. 8:6), to converted Israel (Heb. 8:10), in fact, to the whole eternal kingdom. But that which really belongs to “the future” (1 Cor. 3:21–23) has begun with us in this age, as first described in the Sermon on the Mount.

- end of Sermon Keys -

Answer the following questions based on the Sermon Keys.

4.
 - a. In your own words, list five ways this Sermon recapitulates the history of Israel at the Exodus. (Key 3)
 - b. What were the two kinds of hearers? (Key 4)
 - c. What had attracted them to the mountain? (Keys 4–5)

5.
 - a. How are the Beatitudes related to Abraham? (Key 6)
 - b. In a word, what kind of people do the Beatitudes describe? (Key 6)
 - c. In a phrase, what blessings do they describe? (Key 6)

6.
 - a.√ What is the main theme of the Sermon? (Key 7)
 - b.√ Again, summarize the righteousness of the Law and the Prophets. (See the earlier question and Key 7)
 - c. How does Messiah’s law accomplish what the Sinai law could not accomplish? (Key 10)

- 7.√ For each contrast in the epilogue, choose the exhortation. (Key 8)

Contrast	Exhortation
a. two gates	1. not to follow false teachers (nor depend on false profession)
b. two trees	2. to build strong lives by obeying His teachings
c. two houses	3. to find the narrow way to life (that is, to the kingdom)
	4. to do to others what you want them to do to you

Now, prepare for unit 1 examination. Do so by learning to answer all the checked questions in lessons 1–4. Test yourself by answering the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. Then try the sample questions that follow. You may write your answers in the spaces provided. The first twenty-two questions are multiple-choice or matching; put the letter for the best answer on the line before the number.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- ___ 1. How do the first two Greek words of Matthew link it to the Old Testament? The same two words
 - a) refer to Abraham in Genesis
 - b) introduce each genealogy in the Old Testament
 - c) are used only in Matthew
 - d) mark some divisions in Genesis.

- ___ 2. What earlier famous man had the same name as Jesus (in Hebrew)?
 - a) Jacob
 - b) Joshua
 - c) Judah
 - d) Joseph

- ___ 3. What does the title *Christ* mean?
 - a) high priest
 - b) “anointed” as king
 - c) heir of God
 - d) “most exalted prophet”

- ___ 4. What purpose does the genealogy serve? To show
 - a) Jesus’ right to the throne of David and the blessings of Abraham
 - b) that women had rights too
 - c) that every individual is important
 - d) that Jesus’ father was a genuine Israelite.

-
- ___ 5. For whom were the Magi looking? a) King Herod b) the One called “the Star” c) the Babe in the manger d) the King of the Jews
- ___ 6. In what sense did Jesus “fulfill” Hosea 11:1? a) He was the real writer of Hosea. b) His name meant the same as Hosea’s name. c) He relived that part of the history of Israel. d) He was the “son” Hosea referred to.
- ___ 7. John the Baptist announced as near a kingdom that a) will descend from heaven but fill the earth b) will enter men’s hearts c) is identical to the church d) will be established in heaven.
- ___ 8. John announced that the One coming after him would judge between “wheat” and “chaff” and would also a) be rejected by the Jews b) baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire c) baptize in water as John did d) bring peace to the nations.
- ___ 9. In the Lord’s early ministry, what was His constant message? a) “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” b) “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” c) “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” d) “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has begun.”
- ___ 10. “The kingdom of heaven” will be on earth, as described in the passage from which the Jews summarized that title. What passage? a) Genesis 12 b) Genesis 22 c) Isaiah 11 d) Daniel 2
- ___ 11. How do we know that the kingdom will have material and political aspects? Because a) the prophets so described it b) every kingdom has those aspects c) both John and Jesus so defined it d) it is a Jewish kingdom.
- ___ 12. What response (from Matt. 4:17) do the Beatitudes describe? a) love b) repentance c) preaching d) boldness
- ___ 13. What are “the Law and the Prophets”? a) all of God’s written revelation b) God’s revelation whether written or not c) the first five books d) the Ten Commandments
- ___ 14. What is the main theme of the Sermon on the Mount? a) laws that every nation should adopt b) Jesus’ authority as King c) true righteousness as the requirement for entering the kingdom d) the blessedness of the kingdom
- ___ 15. The main rule for giving, fasting, and praying is that these deeds be a) frequent b) sincere c) done in love d) secret.
- ___ 16. Rather than physical needs, our main concern should be a) God’s kingdom and righteousness b) witnessing to everyone c) Bible reading d) not offending anyone.
- ___ 17. Which is the best summary of the righteousness of the Law and the Prophets? a) We must not judge unless we want to be judged. b) We must show the same love to others that we want to receive ourselves. c) Love God with all your heart. d) Do your good deeds in secret.
- ___ 18. According to Jesus, who is like a wise man? One who hears Jesus’ words and a) memorizes them b) teaches them c) puts them into practice d) understands them.

Unit Two

Lesson 5

Matthew 8–9

What is the main purpose for the Lord's works (Matt. 8–9)? How did Jesus heal the leper? The centurion: (a) how did he think that Jesus could heal at a distance? (b) what people and what action does he represent? What was the Pharisees' response to Jesus' authority?

In this unit you will consider two more major subdivisions in this Gospel: (a) Matthew 8–10 and (b) Matthew 11–13. These are parts B and C in the part of the outline repeated below. As usual, each of these subdivisions concludes with a discourse and the same refrain.

I. The King's Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)

A. The King's Message (4:17 to 7:29) Repent because the kingdom has drawn near.

First Discourse (chs. 5–7): *The Righteousness Required to Enter the Kingdom*

B. The King's Works (chs. 8–10) Proof that He is the Messiah

Second Discourse (ch. 10): *The King's Servants Sent Forth*

C. The King Rejected (chs. 11–13) "His own did not receive him."

Third Discourse (ch. 13): *The Secrets about the Kingdom*

Matthew 8–9 contains nine scenes in which Jesus performs miracles. Look at the chart entitled "Scenes of Miracles in Matthew 8–9," printed below. These nine scenes are grouped in three sets, with interludes separating the sets and a summary at the end.

1. Read chapters 8 and 9 of Matthew. As you do, fill out the "Reference" and "Title" columns on the chart. For example, you will find the first scene in 8:1–4; write that number in the first empty cell under "Reference." In the next cell to the right, write your own title for that scene (such as, "Jesus Cleanses a Leper"). Continue this process until you finish all the scenes. The last scene is at 9:32–34, followed by the summary statement. The "Comments" column on the chart is for you to use as you wish.
2. It is interesting that Matthew often has a different order of events from Mark or Luke. In Luke, for example, the Sermon on the Mount is in 6:17–49.
 - a. Look at the stories in Luke 4:38–40; 5:12–14, 17–26, and 27–39. In Luke how are these stories related in time to the Sermon on the Mount?

- b. What is the relation of the same stories to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew?
3. It is evident that Matthew has collected stories from different parts of Jesus’ ministry and grouped them to demonstrate something. As you have seen, he has put them in three sets.
- a. Probably each set has a different emphasis, which some commentators call “power,” “restoration,” or “healing.” Look at your titles on the chart and tell which of those emphases fits each set.
 - b.√ What is Matthew’s purpose for the whole collection? (See the appropriate part of the complete outline, which begins on page 7.)

SCENES OF MIRACLES IN MATTHEW 8–9		
REFERENCE	TITLE OF SCENE	COMMENTS
SET		
I		
INTERLUDE		
SET		
II		
INTERLUDE		
SET		
III		
SUMMARY		

4. Answer the following questions about the first set of miracles (8:1–17).
- a. Read the instructions about a leper in Leviticus 13:44–46. What are five things he had to do?
 - b. How is the leper described five times in the Leviticus passage (as also reflected three times in Matthew 8:2–3)?

- c.√ Jesus must have startled everyone both by healing this man and by the way He did it. How did He heal him?
 - d. What did Jesus want the man to do at once, and why?
 - e. Look at Leviticus 14:1–32, which tells about the required offerings for a cleansed leper. These involved sacrifices and/or rituals on three separate days, to restore him to the community and to the service of God. One sacrifice had to be a male lamb for a guilt offering. To what parts of the man was some of the blood of this lamb, as well as some of the oil, applied?
 - f.√ The emphasis in the second miracle was the Roman centurion’s faith, faith that Jesus could heal at a distance. How did he think Jesus could do this?
NOTE: Apparently he expected **immediate** results, not delayed as they would be from sending human disciples.
 - g.√ The centurion was seen as representative of many other people and what they will do. Representative of whom? What did Jesus say they will do?
NOTE: The people represented by the centurion will do many things. Learn the activity Jesus mentioned.
 - h. How did Jesus heal Peter’s mother-in-law?
5. The first interlude between miracles (8:18–22)
 - a. No doubt the disciples thought a teacher of the law would be a great addition to their group. How did Jesus discourage one such teacher?
 - b. How did He advise a disciple who wanted to return home?
 6. The second set of miracles (8:23 to 9:8)
 - a. Some of Jesus’ disciples were fishermen. What are two indications of the severity of this storm?
 - b. What are two or more indications of the terrible condition of the demon-possessed Gadarene men?
 - c. Notice the contrast between those who met Jesus in verse 28 and those who met Him in verse 34. How did the latter respond?
 - d. In the story of the paralyzed man, how did Jesus prove He could forgive sin?
 - e. To summarize: what three kinds of power did Jesus demonstrate in this set of miracles?
 7. The second interlude between miracles (9:9–17)
 - a. The meal mentioned in this interlude was provided by the tax collector who became a disciple. Who was he?
 - b. What are two reasons the Lord ate with “sinners”?
 - c. What are two reasons Jesus’ disciples did not fast? (One is illustrated with sayings about garments and wineskins.)

8. The third set of miracles (9:18–34)
 - a. On the way to restore one daughter, Jesus restored another “daughter” (v. 22). What was wrong with each of them?
 - b. The last two miracles are also of restoration. From what to what? (They possibly both symbolize, too, what Jesus could have done for Israel.)
 - c.√ The Pharisees were spiritual leaders in Israel. Here we see the beginning of their response to Jesus’ authority. What was their response?

In Matthew 8–9 you have considered Messiah’s miraculous works as sketched by Matthew. These works demonstrate His power to establish the promised kingdom that had drawn near. That is what Hebrews 6:5 means by calling them “powers [miracles] of the coming age.” What the law, the “first covenant,” had only foreshadowed, He can do. No sickness can resist His touch; no wind of nature or spirit of evil can disobey His voice. Sin and death—indeed, all their tragic results—bow obediently at His feet. When He passes by, His fragrance remains: life, light, and the power of God-like speech.

The results of these works usually included material and physical changes. Were such results insignificant or unworthy? Was their main value in what they could symbolize, in “spiritual lessons” they could teach? By no means. Instead, they confirmed the greatness of the future kingdom; it will come in all its predicted fullness.¹⁴ Jesus’ miracles showed His ability to restore, one by one, **all things** as the prophets had said (Acts 3:21). This is the meaning of His later answer to John the Baptist (11:1–6).

9. a.√ What was the main purpose of the Lord’s works?
 - b. What expression in Hebrews 6:5 reflects this purpose?
10. Matthew 9:35–38 shows that Jesus continued the same activities as before (see 4:23) but wanted help.
 - a. What was the condition of the multitudes that made Him feel compassion?
 - b. What request did He say the disciples should make? (This began to be answered in chapter 10.)
11. Begin to get familiar with the Matthew Mountain pictured at the end of this course (Appendix F on p. 106). On the left side of the mountain find Phase I of the Lord’s ministry. In Phase I find Section B, which you are studying. It will conclude with a discourse (chapter 10), shown as a level area.

¹⁴ *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (see Acknowledgments) is the title of an extremely helpful book by Alva McClain. It traces the subject of the kingdom through the entire Bible.

Lesson 6 Matthew 10–12

With what authority and message did Jesus send the apostles to Israel? What double answer did Jesus send to John in prison? While the kingdom was near, how was it treated? For what sin did Jesus condemn the towns where He had worked? Why did He withdraw from His enemies (Isa. 42)? What did His victories over Satan’s kingdom prove?

Since the beginning of human history, there had never been events so thrilling and important as those Matthew narrates. For the first time Someone had appeared on the world’s stage with power to undo the results of the fall and to bring the predicted Golden Age (Matt. 8–9). Furthermore, as you will now see, He could pass this power to others (Matt. 10). In spite of such evidence, the chosen people made the tragic response of rejecting the King (Matt. 11–12).

1. Not only could Jesus do the works of the kingdom; He could give the same power to others. Read Matthew 10:1–15, then answer.
 - a. ✓ Verse 1 summarizes the main kinds of authority He gave them. Authority to do what?
 - b. He chose twelve apostles (those sent as official representatives), whom He sent out by twos. Name the first two pairs.
 - c. To whom did He send them in this first tour?
 - d. ✓ With what message?
 - e. In this tour He wanted them to travel lightly and swiftly (vv. 9–13). How did He indicate the great importance of their witness (vv. 14–15)?

2. In spite of their wonderful works and words, the disciples would encounter growing opposition. Some of the warnings and instructions in Matthew 10 are found only much later in Mark and Luke. The Matthew version of the mission points to the end of the age as well as its beginning.¹⁵ Read Matthew 10:16–42, then answer.
 - a. Why should the messengers not worry when about to speak before rulers?
 - b. The promise in verse 22 of being “saved” may refer to participating in the kingdom, as in 19:25.¹⁶ Who will be saved?
 - c. Only Matthew adds a verse (v. 23) that apparently refers to a preaching tour of Israel during the Tribulation. What assurance does this verse give?
 - d. Find and list at least three reasons not to fear men.
 - e. What kind of reward will they get who receive the messengers?

¹⁵ It is a mistake to think that the message about the kingdom is only for Israel. See Appendix D (p. 102).

¹⁶ This is the future aspect of “salvation” seen in Romans 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 1:14; 9:28; and elsewhere in both Testaments.

Matthew 11:1 has the usual refrain that ends a section. The next section will show Israel's tragic response to the King (chs. 11–12) and His new revelations about the coming kingdom (ch. 13). Neither His words nor His works had changed the meaning of the kingdom. He had denied none of its predicted aspects, not even the political and material ones. On the contrary, He had demonstrated that He could bring about all those promised elements. But just as plainly, He had also demanded repentance and faith. In the words of John 3 (and using a figure suggested by the prophets), no one can enter that coming kingdom without being born from above.¹⁷ As Jesus had said in the Sermon on the Mount, those who heard should humbly admit their need before God, in order to receive His grace. But as we will now see, Israel would not repent, so they could not believe. Chapter 11 emphasizes the response of the common people; chapter 12, that of the leaders.

3. Read Matthew 11:1–11, then answer.
 - a. What was John the Baptist concerned about?
 - b.√ What double answer did Jesus send to John (vv. 4–5, 6)?
 - c. Why was John so important?
 - d. Who is (will be) greater than John?

Matthew 11:12–19 shows how Israel's unrepentant attitude toward John and Jesus affected the kingdom. Instead of humbly submitting to the kingdom, the Israelites were **violent** men (v. 12, not "forceful"; the Greek word always designates evil) who plundered the kingdom for themselves. (See Appendix E on page 105.) Verse 12 has been translated many different ways. NASB is acceptable:

And from the days of John the Baptist until now
the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and
violent men take it by force [literally, plunder it].

4. Read Matthew 11:12–19, then answer.
 - a.√ Both John and Jesus had announced that the kingdom had drawn near. How had it been treated? (See the middle of v. 12 in NASB and KJV.)
 - b. What did the people think of John? of Jesus?
 - c. What other figure of speech did Jesus use here to show what the common people thought of John and Himself? (vv. 16–19)
 - d. In a sentence summarize the main thought of 11:12–19.

¹⁷ Many assume that John 3 teaches that Nicodemus could have entered the kingdom the night he came to Jesus. This is not correct; Jesus said no such thing. He did say that Jews had to be born from above in order to enter the kingdom. And He said (in v. 10) that Jewish teachers should have known this (from prophecies such as Ezekiel 36). Since Jesus did not define the kingdom, it must be the one Nicodemus was expecting in accordance with the prophecies—and which is still future.

Yes, Israel wanted the kingdom, but they wanted it to conform to them. By refusing the kingdom's representatives, they mistreated the kingdom itself, plundering it for themselves. Therefore, their cities, which had seen Jesus' Messianic works and had not repented, could expect only the severest judgment.

5. Read Matthew 11:20–30, which contains a terrible verdict against the towns of Galilee and a gracious invitation.
 - a. ✓ What sin called forth this verdict?
 - b. Why will Sodom have it easier in the judgment than Capernaum?
 - c. Who are the “little children” to whom God revealed “these things”?
 - d. Because the Father knows the Son, there are two sets of those who know the Father. Who are they?
 - e. What two things will they get who come to the Son?

Matthew 11 shows the common people rejecting the King; Matthew 12 shows the leaders doing the same. From the beginning the leaders had resented Him for using different methods from theirs, and for preaching that they were not good enough for the kingdom (Matt. 5:20). Soon they began to explain His works as those done by “the prince of demons” (Beelzebub, Matt. 9:34). Further pursued by His majestic claims and His powerful proofs, they considered how to destroy Him (Matt. 12:14). It was His attitude toward the Sabbath that made them decide that He must die.

6. Matthew 12:1–21 shows (a) how the Pharisees came to decide that Jesus must die—and (b) how He responded to this opposition. His response had a far greater purpose than self-preservation. Read 12:1–21, then answer.

NOTE: The “bruised reed” and “smoldering wick” in verse 20 probably refer to the cheap pen and candlewick that a scribe would usually replace rather than repair.

- a. Verses 1–8 find the disciples plucking heads of wheat on the Sabbath and eating them. What are at least two reasons why they had the right to do that?
- b. In verses 9–13 find another reason why it was right to heal on the Sabbath.

NOTE: As you have seen, the Jewish religious leaders resented the fact that Jesus considered Himself and His work greater than the Sabbath (vv. 8, 12). They also distorted the meaning and observance of the Sabbath. They considered it only a requirement for man to rest as God had rested after creation. They imagined that by scrupulously—even painfully—obeying, they pleased God. Meanwhile, they missed a more important meaning of the Sabbath: to picture that greater rest when re-creation is complete. That is the kingdom Jesus was working to prepare.¹⁸ As John's Gospel points out, He had to force the issue of the Sabbath because it pictured the goal for Him and His Father.

¹⁸ This explains the unusual expression in Hebrews 4:9: “There remains, then, a **Sabbath-rest** [*sabbatismos*] for the people of God.” The expression summarizes a common and valid concept godly Jews had of the future kingdom. In fact, throughout Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11, to “enter God's rest” means to enter His coming kingdom. (See my course on Hebrews.) John 5 gives an example of Jesus forcing this issue. Though the man “had been an invalid for thirty-eight years” (v. 5), Jesus chose to heal him on the Sabbath. This was not because the man got faith in

- c. What action did the Pharisees take on that same day?
- d.√ Verses 17–21 quote Isaiah 42:1–4, one of the “Servant [of the LORD] Songs.” This passage explains why Jesus withdrew (v. 15) rather than fight His enemies. What will be the general outcome of His way of acting?
7. Matthew 12:22–50 centers on the unpardonable sin and Israel’s resultant condition. “Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come” (v. 32). The “age to come” is the age of the kingdom. Read verses 22–37, then answer.
- a. What outstanding miracle was the occasion for speaking of this sin?
- b. This sin was unpardonable probably because it rejected the only testimony that can lead to salvation.
1. It was against the one who gave the testimony. Who was that?
 2. It was not against the one who was testified to. Who was that?
- NOTE: The apostles later said, “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” (Acts 5:32). Their testimony was summarized a few verses later: “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah” (5:42). If a person definitely rejects that apostolic testimony, God has no other way to save him.
- c.√ Jesus did not act on His own but by the Spirit of God. What did His victories over Satan’s kingdom prove? (Be sure to read the note in Answers.)
8. Read Matthew 12:38–50, then answer.
- a. Verses 38–40 show a wicked generation asking for a sign. As though they had seen none! Now He promised “the sign of the prophet Jonah.” What did this mean in His case?
- b. What would happen to that generation because it remained “unoccupied”?¹⁹
- c. What do you think verses 46–50 have to do with this context?
- 9.√ Some Review
- a. What double answer did Jesus send to John in prison?

Jesus that day—the man did not even know who healed him—but because it was the most appropriate day.

¹⁹ “A very genuine and widespread moral cleansing had been experienced in the nation through the great preparatory ministry of John the Baptist. But the house of Israel remained empty; there was no national reception of its incarnate King. Not only did the people of that generation accept the responsibility for His crucifixion (Matt. 27:25), but within the lifetime of those concerned, among all the enemies of the Gospel of salvation through the Cross of Christ, the people of Israel would become the bitterest. The last state would become worse than the first. Recorded in the Book of Acts, which covers the years of a single generation, the lamentable story may be found. And the account derived from noninspired sources is not better. As Ellicott has said, ‘We must turn to the picture drawn by the Jewish historian of the crimes, frenzies, insanities of the final struggle that ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, if we would take an adequate measure of the “last state” of that “wicked generation.”’” (Alva McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, p. 318)

- b. While the kingdom was near, how was it treated?
- c. According to Isaiah 42, why did Jesus withdraw rather than fight His enemies?

Lesson 7 Matthew 13

When Jesus began teaching by parables, (a) why did He do so? (b) what was the main secret He revealed? (c) where would the disciples have seen the kingdom in each parable? (d) what did “the kingdom of heaven is like” mean? (e) what had happened to the kingdom? How does Matthew 25:31–46 show that the kingdom had not changed? Can you write a simplified outline of Matthew Part I?

When Messiah’s rejection became evident, He began a decisive turn in His ministry. He revealed new truths about the kingdom, using a new method. The new truths were called “secrets”; the new way of revealing them was by parables.

1. Read Matthew 13:1–52, listing the eight parables Jesus used.
- 2.√ Why did Jesus begin teaching by parables? (vv. 1–3, 10–17)
NOTE: Although these parables reveal secrets about the kingdom, the first parable nowhere describes the kingdom itself. The seed is “the message about the kingdom” (13:19), but the lesson is that different people respond differently to the message (13:19, 20, 22, 23). There is no indication of **how many** are in each category.
- 3.√ Considering their previous background, we can assume that the disciples saw the kingdom in the great consummation of each parable. (This would be the concluding condition but not necessarily the last thing mentioned.) If so, what would they see as the kingdom in each of the following? Look up each passage, then answer.
 - a. The Wheat and the Weeds (vv. 24–30, 36–43)
 - b. The Mustard Seed (vv. 31–32)
 - c. The Net (vv. 47–50)

Secrets Keys (Keys to the Secrets of the Kingdom - Matthew 13ff.)

1. A new method. Matthew 13 took place on “that same day” of rejection (v. 1) as Matthew 12:22–50. On that day Jesus began to teach by the new method of parables (Matt. 13:3, 10). Although parables can be used as illustrations to make the truth plainer to all, that was not His purpose. Instead, in part His purpose was to hide truth (vv. 9–17). “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” His disciples asked. “He replied, ‘The knowledge of the secrets of the

kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them” (vv. 10–11). This new method of teaching was, therefore, a deliberate judgment, a method that would reveal truth to some but hide it from others. Only those with spiritual ears would really hear (vv. 9, 13, 15, 16); others would go their way uninformed. This was a main teaching of the first parable.

2. New truths about the kingdom. “Secrets” (KJV “mysteries”) were truths not revealed before (Rom. 16:25–26). These new truths had to do with the kingdom. But remember that the Lord had not defined the kingdom; He had announced it as something already known. And what definition had the Jews acquired from the prophecies? That the kingdom would be the rule of David restored. The “former dominion” (Micah 4:8) would come back to Jerusalem, far more glorious than before. The stone would drop down from heaven and become an earth-filling mountain (Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45). This kingdom was being announced as having “drawn near”; in fact, in the Person and works of Jesus it had touched upon the earth. And His miracles showed that the kingdom would be all that the prophets had said. Yet the people refused to repent and believe. Therefore Messiah revealed the secrets. There are eight such parables in Matthew 13 and several in later chapters (see below).

3. A new kingdom? Did these newly revealed secrets change the meaning of the kingdom or introduce a new form of it? In other words, did Israel’s rejection of the King cause the kingdom itself to be transformed? Our answer to this will affect our interpretation of a great many passages to the end of the New Testament.

The simplest answer is one that harmonizes with all the facts: The kingdom was not changed at all but simply—from man’s point of view—“postponed.” God was revealing for the first time that there would be an interval between Messiah’s sufferings and Messiah’s glory. The unforeseen interval is the age in which we live, since He began to build the church. Why then, if He was revealing an interim age, did He call such revelations “secrets of the kingdom”? For the simple reason that the new age was part of His kingdom plan. All He would do in the present age would be bound up with the future coming of the kingdom.

This explains why He calls the seed He sows “the message about the kingdom” (Matt. 13:19). Was such seed sown only during His earthly life? Did He not preach the same message through His apostles (Acts 20:25; 28:23, 31; cf. Matt. 24:14)? This is why He calls the wheat “the sons of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:38). Because even believers today will be heirs of the promised kingdom (James 2:5)—as the Jews assumed they were (Matt. 8:12).

In other words, there is no need to believe that the “secrets of the kingdom” reveal a new form of the kingdom. Instead, they refer to the new age that is intimately bound to the same expected kingdom and leads to it. Can this interpretation be substantiated in the parables? Yes, it can.

4. The kingdom clearly future in some parables. Sometimes the Lord’s parables leave no doubt that the kingdom is still future. Look, for example, at the parable of The Talents (Matt. 25:14–30). There it is not until the “master” **returns from his journey**, that he puts his faithful

servants “in charge of many things” (vv. 21, 23). That refers to authority in the future kingdom after the Lord’s second coming, an interpretation verified in the parallel Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11–27. There the master “went to a distant country **to have himself appointed king** and then to return” (19:12). After “he **was made king...and returned home**” (v. 15), he put his faithful servants in charge of cities (vv. 17, 19).

That return of the master is the setting for the next passage in Matthew (Matt. 25:31–46). In it the nations are compared to sheep and goats, so it is sometimes wrongly called a parable. Instead, it presents sober reality. It tells of the Lord’s future coming “in his glory, and all the angels with him, [to] sit on his throne in heavenly glory” (v. 31). As King He invites “those on his right” (compared to “sheep”) into their “inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you” (v. 34), which is the same as “eternal life” (v. 46). Thus, the kingdom (and eternal life) is clearly future, at the Lord’s Second Coming. Notice that He mentions the same elements in Matthew 19:28–29.

5. The kingdom can be future in all parables. What about the parable of The Wheat and the Weeds, which the Lord Himself interprets? In Matthew 13:37–39 He identifies seven items of this parable. For example, the sown field is “the world” (v. 38), and the wheat (“the good seed”) are “the sons of the kingdom” (v. 38). But He identifies none of these seven things as the kingdom itself. He first mentions the kingdom as being present in connection with the harvest at “the end of the age” (v. 39): at that time the angels “will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling-blocks, and those who commit lawlessness” (v. 41, NASB). When this separation has been made, “then the righteous [earlier called the “sons of the kingdom”] will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (v. 43).

It is true that the words “gather out of His kingdom” could be understood to imply that the kingdom had existed previously. But more likely they mean that His first step in inaugurating the kingdom is to purge undesirable elements from it. This would agree with everything else in the parable and the fact that the age to come is the age of the kingdom (cf. Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 2:5).

Put yourself in the disciples’ place. The Lord had not told them that the kingdom would assume a new form. Therefore, in this parable they would look for a kingdom like the one that had been prophesied. They would find it where it was first mentioned as being present, at the time of the harvest. In other words, since Jesus said nothing to make them redefine the kingdom, they would understand it as they had before.

The same rule should be followed in all the parables of the kingdom. Look for the kingdom where the disciples would look: in the grand climax. Thus, it is not in the dragnet being pulled through the water, but after it is drawn to shore (13:47–50); not in the mustard seed when sown, but after it becomes a tree (13:31–32); not in the process of inviting to the wedding of the king’s son, but in the wedding itself (22:1–14); not while the virgins wait, but when the groom arrives (25:1–12).

6. “The kingdom is like.” Many of the “secrets” parables are introduced by the expression “the kingdom of heaven is like.” This follows a common Jewish method of introducing parables, and means, “Here is a parable about the kingdom.” Normally, the first thing mentioned after this introduction cannot be the kingdom. For example, no one thinks that the “man” in 13:24, 45; 18:23; 20:1; 22:2; 25:14; or the “ten virgins” in 25:1 represent the kingdom. If the kingdom is not usually the first thing mentioned, where, then, do we find it? Each person will use the same method the disciples used in finding it—namely, where his prior definition leads him. If he begins with the right definition, he will end right, seeing the kingdom in the grand climax.

7. Each parable was understandable to the disciples at that time. At least they understood the main points. Suggested under keys 5 and 6, this key was clearly stated in Matthew 13:51–52:

- (a) The Lord asked, “Have you understood all these things?”
- (b) They replied, “Yes.”
- (c) His response, beginning with “Therefore,” accepted their reply as correct.

Accordingly, no interpretation is likely unless the disciples could have understood it at that stage. This rule disqualifies some of the interpretations given nowadays, such as, the treasure being the church or the pearl being Israel. The disciples’ preconceptions about the kingdom also make it unlikely that they would understand the mustard tree (v. 32) or the fully leavened dough (v. 33) as “bad.” Both figures were quite capable of “good” meanings. For example, Ezekiel 17:22–24 used a similar description of a tree symbolizing a good kingdom. And yeast, though it sometimes symbolized evil (1 Cor. 5:6–8), could simply picture the permeating quality of teaching.²⁰ That seemed to be the point of the Lord’s warning about “the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6, 12) and His description of His own teaching here. The disciples had no reason to think that the kingdom would be contaminated. Instead, they pictured it as still future and glorious, similar to the tree and the fully leavened dough. Test the “good” interpretations for these two parables in Luke 13:18–21. The context for them there makes a negative meaning even less likely.

In conclusion, what was Jesus revealing in the “secrets” of the kingdom? Neither a transformed kingdom nor a different form of it. Instead, a previously unannounced period of waiting for the same future and glorious kingdom already predicted. Starting with these secrets, it became ever more obvious that Messiah would come not once but twice! Like the writers of the New Testament, we are still waiting for Him and His kingdom.

- end of Secrets Keys -

MORE QUESTIONS

- 4.√ a. What is the main secret revealed in the Lord’s parables?

²⁰ Yeast was normally used in daily bread. Though generally excluded from sacrifices, it was actually required in some cases (Lev. 7:13–14; 23:17–18). Its exclusion from the original Passover was due to haste and hardship, rather than evil meaning (Exod. 12:39).

- b. What happened to the kingdom?
- 5.√ a. Today many believe that the secrets describe the kingdom as present, greatly changed from the predicted form. How does Matthew 25:31–46 show that the kingdom was still future and unchanged?
- b. Where would the disciples have seen the kingdom in each parable?
- 6.√ What is the meaning of “the kingdom of heaven is like” introducing these parables?
- 7.√ Memorize and practice writing the following simplified outline of Matthew to 16:20.

<p>Preparation for the King’s Ministry (1:1 to 4:16)</p> <p>I. The King’s Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)</p> <p> A. The King’s Message (4:17 to 7:29)</p> <p> B. The King’s Works (chs. 8–10)</p> <p> C. The King Rejected (chs. 11–13)</p> <p> D. The King Confessed (13:53 to 16:20)</p> <p> THE GREAT CONFESSION & THE GREAT PROMISE</p>

- 8.√ Make sure you can’t see the outline just given. Then practice it by filling in the blanks that follow. Check your answers using the outline.

<p>Preparation for _____ (1:1 to 4:16)</p> <p>I. _____ until _____ (4:17 to 16:20)</p> <p> A. _____ (4:17 to 7:29)</p> <p> B. _____ (chs. 8–10)</p> <p> C. _____ (chs. 11–13)</p> <p> D. _____ (13:53 to 16:20)</p> <p>_____</p>
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The final questions provide some review about the parables. For each question choose the letter of the best answer or ending.

- ___ 9.√ In the parables Jesus revealed to His disciples secrets about the kingdom. The main secret He revealed was a) how to get into the kingdom. b) a new form of the kingdom c) the meaning of the kingdom d) this age, between the two comings.
- ___ 10.√ To interpret the parables correctly, we should remember how the disciples would understand them. Because of their background, where would they see the kingdom in each parable? In a) the next thing after the introduction b) the last thing mentioned c) the present age d) the consummation.
- ___ 11.√ Jesus often began these parables by saying “the kingdom of heaven is like.” What did this introduction mean? a) “Here is a parable about the kingdom.” b) “Here is a description of the kingdom.” c) “The next thing I mention describes the kingdom.” d) “The kingdom is inside of you.”
- ___ 12.√ The parables did not change the meaning of the kingdom. How does Matthew 25:31–46 show that the kingdom was still future and unchanged? It a) promises a banquet b) promises that in heaven some will sit on Jesus’ right and left c) promises that Jesus will return in glory to rule d) repeats the prophecy of Daniel 2.

Now, prepare for unit 2 examination. Do so by learning to answer all the checked questions in lessons 5–7. Test yourself by answering the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. Then take the examination without looking up any answers.

Unit Three

Lesson 8

Matthew 13:53 to 16:20

What did the people of His home town decide about Jesus? Which miracle is told in all four Gospels? How did Jesus' method of doing it train the disciples? What did He teach about the source of defilement? What was the Great Confession and its meaning? the Lord's Great Promise?

In this unit you will consider two more major sections (subdivisions) in this Gospel, and the beginning of a third. This lesson 8 looks at the last section in Part I of the book, which part concludes with the Great Confession and the Great Promise. Find that section (D) in the outline of Part I below. The next two lessons begin Part II.

I. The King's Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)

A. The King's Message (4:17 to 7:29) Repent because the kingdom has drawn near.

First Discourse (chs. 5–7): *The Righteousness Required to Enter the Kingdom*

B. The King's Works (chs. 8–10) Proof that He is the Messiah

Second Discourse (ch. 10): *The King's Servants Sent Forth*

C. The King Rejected (chs. 11–13) "His own did not receive him."

Third Discourse (ch. 13): *The Secrets about the Kingdom*

D. The King Confessed (13:53 to 16:20) Faith amid unbelief

THE GREAT CONFESSION & THE GREAT PROMISE (16:13–20)

As just noted, this section, "The King Confessed," ends Part I. It moves from unbelief in Nazareth to the Great Confession and the Great Promise near Caesarea Philippi. Death comes to the King's forerunner, and danger comes to the King through traps set by the religious leaders. He continues to do mighty works, but now often in places of retirement and mainly for the disciples' sake. To the disciples, Jesus' retreat from His foes must seem most unkingly. Nevertheless, through Simon their spokesman they make the great confession: Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus then makes a revelation concerning His own new assembly ("church"), which will have authority in the coming kingdom.

1. What title have we given to this section (13:53 to 16:20)?

2. What change in Jesus' ministry must have puzzled His disciples?
- 3.√ Read Matthew 13:53–58, which records the first of several conclusions about Jesus in this section. The first was by the people of His own home town, Nazareth. Their conclusion was based on the fact that they knew His father, mother, brothers, and sisters. Because of their unbelief, He did few of His mighty works there. His works were designed to awaken and strengthen faith—but not to force it. Therefore, their unbelief was “self-fulfilling”; it kept away the evidence that it was wrong. What did the people of His home town decide about Jesus?
4. Read Matthew 14:1–12, which shows the next mistaken conclusion about Jesus. This one was by the powerful ruler Herod Antipas, one of Herod the Great's sons.²¹ This Herod's conclusion was based on his own dark burden of guilt. That guilt began when he married his half-sister, Herodias, who had divorced his brother. When John rebuked him for this immorality, Herod first imprisoned John and later—at Herodias's request—beheaded him. Now what did Herod's twisted conscience tell him about Jesus?
5. Read Matthew 14:13–22, which tells the story of an outstanding miracle done during one of Jesus' withdrawals. Told in all four Gospels, this miracle made a great impression on the multitudes (John 6:14–15). Yet, Matthew does not say so. He simply states that Jesus immediately sent the multitudes away. What Matthew emphasizes is Jesus' training the disciples. (See if you can determine why we say this.)
 - a.√ What is this miracle that is told in all four Gospels?
 - b.√ How did Jesus' method of doing this miracle train the disciples?
 - c. Do you see a lesson in this for yourself?
6. Read Matthew 14:23–33, which tells about another miracle done that very night. Jesus walked on the water and calmed a wind that prevented the disciples' progress. This was also clearly planned for the disciples' sake. As a result of it all, they suddenly confessed, “Truly you are the Son of God” (v. 33). Possibly they meant that Jesus is more than human.
 - a. How did Jesus ease their fears?
 - b. He gave Peter—and all of them and us—an important lesson about faith. Can you state that lesson in general terms?
7. Read Matthew 14:34–36. These verses continue to paint the background for this section, showing the Lord's undiminished power to heal.

²¹ Herod Antipas is called a “tetrarch” because he was made ruler over a “fourth” of Herod the Great's kingdom. He reigned from 4 BC to AD 39, when he was banished to Gaul. He took part in Jesus' trial (Luke 23:7–12; Acts 4:27). He was not the same as the Herod Agrippa of Acts 12 or that man's son, Herod Agrippa II, of Acts 25.

8. Read Matthew 15:1–20, which tells how Jesus offended important people from Jerusalem. While teaching His disciples, He was confronted on the issue of purification (washing hands—v. 2). As usual, He took this opportunity for further teaching.
 - a. Who were these important people? (vv. 1, 12–14)
 - b. What did He show about them?
 - c.√ What did He show disciples (then and now) about the source of defilement?
9. Read Matthew 15:21–28, which paints a scene from another withdrawal. This time Jesus took His disciples north into Gentile territory on the Mediterranean coast. While there, He made it plain that He had no divine call to minister to the people in that area. Yet one of those Gentiles—indeed, a woman!—convinced Him to meet her need. The disciples’ faith had not reached the same level as hers. No doubt they discounted the title she used for Jesus, considering that a Gentile woman was its source.
 - a. Copy Jesus’ words implying that He was not sent to Gentiles. (v. 24)
 - b. By what title did that Gentile woman call Jesus?
10. Read Matthew 15:29–39, which is another stage of the same withdrawal. By this time the Lord and His disciples had circled to the area east of the Sea of Galilee. Again He showed undiminished power to heal and—again through the disciples—to feed a multitude. Considering the location and the kind of baskets filled with leftovers, some consider this another miracle for Gentiles. If it was, that would seem to contradict 15:24. How many did Jesus feed this time?
11. Read Matthew 16:1–4, which echoes 12:38–40. Again the Pharisees, this time joined by Sadducees, demanded a sign that would force them to believe. His answer, the same as before, was no doubt unsatisfactory to the disciples as well as the leaders. And again He withdrew from conflict.
12. Read Matthew 16:5–12, in which the Lord warned of the yeast (KJV, leaven) of the two groups that had just demanded a sign. The yeast to avoid is merely human teaching (apart from the Word of God). But as often happened, the disciples misunderstood Him. They thought He was referring to literal bread, which they had forgotten to bring. How did He clarify the fact that for disciples there is no danger in the lack of bread?

Notice that in what follows we freely use the title *Messiah* instead of *Christ*. As explained in John 1:41, the two terms denote the same thing: “the Anointed One” (the King). Nowadays, however, though many recognize *Messiah* as a royal title, they wrongly consider *Christ* a mere name. See our comments on Matthew 1:1.

Matthew 16:13–20 concludes Part I with the Great Confession and the Great Promise. This section (13:53 to 16:20) has reported several inadequate “confessions” of Jesus. It is interesting that

in general Jesus was not considered to be the expected King, Messiah.²² He did not use this title for Himself; neither did He do some things Messiah was supposed to do (even according to John the Baptist). And yet the disciples had reached a conclusion about Him, which Jesus now wanted them to express. Naturally, it was Simon who voiced their conclusion: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” This confession meant that Jesus was the promised King, the One who would fulfill God’s promises and bring His everlasting kingdom.

13. Read Matthew 16:13–20. Then answer the following.
 - a. Which verse summarizes the inadequate confessions reported in this section?
 - b.√ What was the disciples’ conclusion about who Jesus was?
 - c.√ What does their conclusion mean?

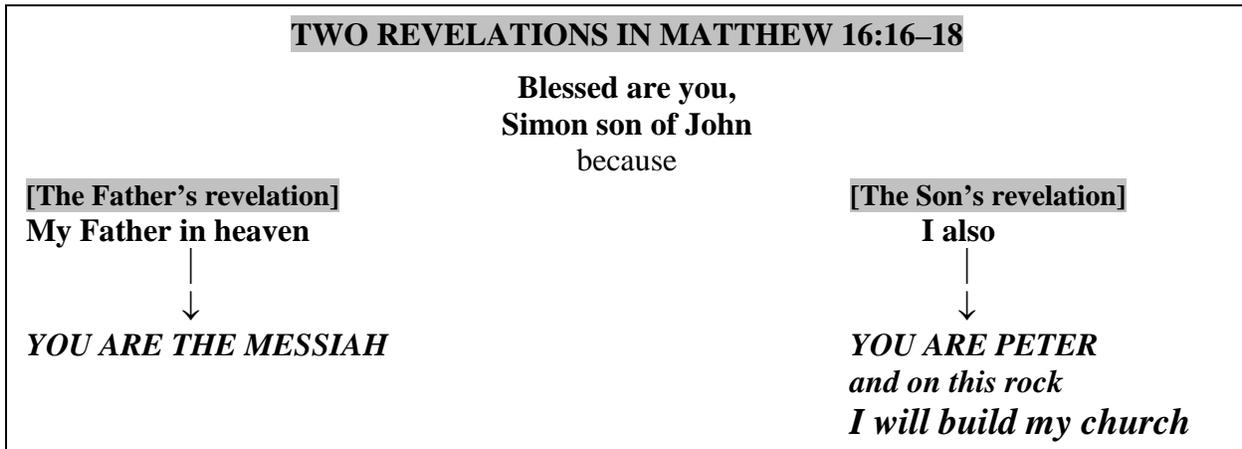
By calling Him “Son of the living God,” they did not mean that Jesus was divine. Indeed, He is divine, but the disciples did not realize that yet. They meant He was God’s Son in the same sense that David and his royal descendants had been: God’s royal heir. For example, in 2 Samuel 7:14 God promised this title for Solomon: “I will be his father, and he will be my son.” It is true that these words would later apply to Messiah (see Heb. 1:5). But the next words show that they originally referred to Solomon: “When he does wrong, I will punish him.” Similarly, Psalm 89:26–27 calls David God’s “firstborn” son. Therefore, we may conclude that both parts of the confession in Matthew 16 (“Messiah” and “Son”) mean virtually the same thing. That explains why the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke give only the first part of it; neither includes “Son of God.”

- Mark 8:29 has only “You are the Messiah [Anointed One].”
- Luke 9:20 has only “the Messiah [Anointed One] of God.”

According to the record in Acts, Jesus’ Messiahship was the main message proclaimed by the apostles and prophets in founding the church. In fact, in its summaries of evangelistic sermons, Acts includes no unambiguous statement of Jesus’ deity nor the reason for His death. Apparently the gospel did not include these truths—though it led to them.

Simon’s confession was a revelation from the Father (v. 17). In response the Son (“And I also say to you,” v. 18, NASB) gave His own revelation: “You are Peter...I will build my church.” Consider the parallelism of the two revelations:

²² The Gospel of John makes it clear that even at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry some did consider Him to be Messiah. In fact, that was Andrew’s witness to his brother Simon (John 1:40–41). But Matthew is presenting what people thought after the evidence was in.



In other words, the Father's revelation was that Jesus is Messiah. The Son's revelation was that Simon is Peter (*petros*, man of rock). John 1:42 informs us that Jesus had promised this change of Simon's name the first time Jesus saw him. John gives the Aramaic that was actually used, plus a Greek translation: "You will be called **Cephas** (which, when translated, is **Peter**)."²³ Changing Simon's name at the time of this confession showed what was rocklike in him: his faith in Messiah. On him as the first confessor (therefore, "on this *petra*," not "on you"), the Architect and Builder would build.²³ Build what? His own new assembly (church).²⁴ And that is just what happened: that *petros* indeed became the *petra* (bedrock) of the church.²⁵

The figure of speech the Lord used here (bedrock) is different from those in the following:

- 1 Corinthians 3:10–12 (only Messiah as the "foundation" of spiritual ministry at Corinth²⁶)

²³ Many Protestants and Church Fathers believe that the bedrock (*petra*) is Peter's confession or Messiah Himself. These views detract from the importance given to Peter in the literary structure of the passage. Roman Catholics, in contrast, use this passage to prove that Peter received a "primacy of jurisdiction" (greatest authority) which, they affirm, he passed to the bishops of Rome (popes). Clearly, none of the apostles understood it that way (cf. Matt. 20:20–21). George Salmon exhaustively answers the Roman view in his *Infallibility of the Church* (reprinted 1959 by Baker Book House). He carefully considers all the views and favors the one presented in this study.

²⁴ When did Messiah begin to build His assembly? Clearly, at Pentecost, when He first baptized in the Spirit (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:12–13).

²⁵ The term we translate "church" is *ekklesia*. This term was common in the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures. It was first used to designate Israel as God's assembly at Mt. Sinai, when they first became God's kingdom (Deut. 4:10; 9:10; 18:16; etc.). Stephen used it in this same sense (Acts 7:38). It also referred to Israel assembled as God's kingdom people on other occasions (Deut. 23:1–3; 31:30; 2 Chron. 7:8; 20:5, 14; etc.). When Jesus used the term in Matthew 16, He apparently referred to the assembly of His future kingdom. Hebrews 2:12 uses the term in the same sense, quoting Psalm 22:22. Regarding the relationship between the church, Israel, and the kingdom, see Appendix D (p. 102).

²⁶ It is obvious that the building on Messiah Paul pictures at Corinth is not the true church. Parts of that building will be destroyed by the fire of judgment.

- 1 Corinthians 10:4 (Messiah a rock that “followed” Israel)
- 1 Peter 2:4–5 (Messiah and believers as “living stone” and “living stones” in the building)
- Ephesians 2:20 (apostles, prophets, and Messiah as the “foundation” of the universal church)

Messiah’s assembly cannot be defeated; “the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (16:18). Considering their usage in Isaiah 38:10, the words “gates of Hades” refer to “powers of death” (RSV). Even death, the final enemy, cannot destroy the *ekklesia*.

To Peter as bedrock the Lord now promised authority (keys). This referred to authority in the future kingdom, not in the present age.²⁷ Neither did it mean that Peter would be the supreme ruler. If it had meant that, there would not have been a continuing struggle for first place (see Matt. 18:1 and 20:21). In fact, such a position is not the Son’s to give (Matt. 20:23). Rather, it meant that Peter would receive authority on behalf (as representative) of all the church—just as he had confessed as first and representative of all.²⁸ In other words, in the Lord’s future kingdom all believers will “reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:5; cf. Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 6:2–3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 2:5–10). The power of binding and loosing (forbidding and permitting) that the Lord now promised refers to the same future authority.²⁹

14. What was the probable meaning of “the Son of God” in Simon’s confession?
15. In response to Simon’s confession, the Son gave His own revelation.
 - a. This included the Great Promise that He would do what?
 - b. Related to this was His promise of the keys. What did that mean?

²⁷ Isaiah 22:22 shows that “keys” refer to authority. A different suggestion is that the keys in Matthew 16:19 mean the privilege of opening the door to the coming kingdom to Jews on the day of Pentecost and later to the Gentiles.

²⁸ Many Church Fathers held this view that Peter received the keys for all believers. For example, with emphasis added: “Hereby, then, is the excellence of Peter set forth that he was *an emblem* of the Church in its *universality and unity*, when it was said to him, I will *give to you* what was given to all....Peter then *represented the whole Church*” (Augustine: Sermo CCXCV, cap. II). Again, “Whether, then, did Peter receive the keys and Paul not? Did Peter receive them, and did not John and James receive them? But when in signification Peter represented the person of the Church, that which was given to him alone was given to the Church. Peter therefore *represented the Church*, the Church is the Body of Christ” (Augustine: Sermo CXLIX, cap. 7).

²⁹ Both Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 say, “whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Though “you” is singular in 16:19 and plural in 18:18, both passages probably mean the same. (See the previous footnote.) The words “will be bound/loosed,” represent an unusual Greek form, which some translate “shall have been already bound/loosed.” That translation is probably mistaken (see the same form in Luke 12:52).

Lesson 9

Matthew 16:21 to 18:35

What are the keynotes of Part I and Part II? the only way to life? Jesus' assurance and promise in 16:27–28? the right attitude about our rights? four steps to take, if necessary, when another Christian sins against us? Can you write a simplified outline of Matthew?

Matthew 16:21 introduces Part II of Matthew by saying “From that time on Jesus began....” These are the same words that introduced Part I (see 4:17). The keynote of Part I was the need to repent because the kingdom had drawn near. The keynote of Part II is the Lord’s coming death and resurrection. This lesson considers the first subdivision of Part II, which, as usual, concludes with a discourse and refrain.

We have entitled Matthew 16:21 to 18:35, “The King’s Disciples Challenged and Encouraged.” The Lord had forbidden His disciples to announce their Great Confession to others (16:20). For both Him and them, the way to the crown would be through a cross. Yet, He took three of them to see a preview in miniature of His future kingdom, the Transfiguration. During the period that now began, they were learning their great need of faith and an unoffensive and humble spirit. The fourth discourse (ch. 18) builds on this theme.

1. [√] Read Matthew 16:21–28, which announces the keynote of Part II. That announcement immediately sparked Peter’s opposition. Yet, following Jesus to death is the only way to life. That is because the world will not change immediately; His kingdom will not yet come. What a disappointment this was to the disciples! Therefore, Jesus gave them some great assurances.
 - a. What are the keynotes of Part I and Part II?
 - b. What is the only way to life?
 - c. What did Jesus assure His disciples in verse 27?
 - d. What did He promise some of them in verse 28? This promise was fulfilled in the next event.

2. Read Matthew 17:1–13, which describes a preview—for three disciples—of Jesus’ future kingdom. In his second epistle Peter later affirmed that in the Transfiguration (“when we were with him on the sacred mountain”) they saw the “majesty” of the Lord’s “power and coming” (2 Pet. 1:16–18). The disciples were not permitted to tell this vision until Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus also explained that Elijah must come to “restore all things” (see Mal. 4:5–6)—but had already come (Matt. 17:12). How could he have already come but still be future? Jesus probably meant that John the Baptist could have fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi but did not (v. 13; cf. 11:14).
 - a. Copy some of the words from 2 Peter 1:16–18 showing that the Transfiguration was a preview of the future kingdom.
 - b. Find at least four elements in the Transfiguration that picture that kingdom.

3. Read Matthew 17:14–21, which describes a scene in contrast to the glory on the mountain. It emphasizes a boy’s pathetic condition and the disciples’ lack of faith, in spite of the fact that the Lord had given them His power. How do you understand His “how long” questions in verse 17?
4. Read Matthew 17:22–23, which reports Jesus’ final announcement in Galilee of His coming death and resurrection.
5. Read Matthew 17:24–27, which shows us how to think about our rights. Simon Peter was asked if his master paid the annual temple tax required of every Jewish male aged twenty or older. Possibly to help Jesus’ reputation, he said yes. In private Jesus told Peter that as God’s family they were exempt from such a tax—but would pay in order not to offend. His and Peter’s tax was miraculously provided by a fish.
 - a.√ What is the right attitude about our rights?
 - b. What do you learn from the method of providing this money?
6. Read Matthew 18:1–4, which begins a discourse on Christian Humility and Meekness (the high importance of lowliness). The Lord had often pointed forward to a kingdom of power and glory. Also, He had accepted from the disciples the title meaning King (16:16–17). They naturally expected to share His rule. Their question on this occasion (18:1) was to know which of them would have first place in that future kingdom. His answer showed that humility was essential for many reasons.
 - a. What do the following references tell about the kingdom’s power and glory?
 1. Matthew 8:11
 2. Matthew 11:11
 3. Matthew 13:32, 43
 4. Matthew 16:27, 28
 - b. Why is humility essential according to 18:2–3? 18:4?
NOTE: 18:3 should be compared to 5:20. The last words—and their meaning—in each verse are identical.
7. Read the rest of Matthew 18 (vv. 5–35), listing three other reasons why humility is essential. They are in verses 5–14, 15–20, and 21–35. Notice that “to enter life” (vv. 8, 9) is the same as “to enter the kingdom” (v. 3). In 5:29–30 the Lord had given essentially the same warning as in 18:8–9.

Matthew 18:19–20 is often misunderstood. Verse 19 promises that the Father will do whatever two agree about and ask for. The reason for this assurance (“for”) is given in verse 20: that Jesus is present when “two or three come together in [His] name.” However, the promise in verse 19 is not absolute; God will not grant every wish that two believers share. The promise must be read in the context that begins in verse 15, “If your brother **sins against** you.” This subject is still in view in verse 21, “when he **sins against** me.” The promise shows why the

“church” (v. 17) in such cases has authority when it “binds” and “looses” in discipline (v. 18, “you” and the verbs are plural). The Lord lends His power to such decisions.

- 8.√ Reread Matthew 18:15–20, the section about church discipline. The Lord gives four steps to take, if necessary, when “your brother sins against you” (v. 15).³⁰ List those steps (from vv. 15, 16, 17a, 17b).
9. Reread Matthew 18:21–35, another parable revealing “secrets” about the kingdom. This parable shows the great importance of forgiving a brother who wrongs us. Notice the contrast between ten thousand talents (each talent worth thousands of days’ wages) in verse 24 and a hundred denarii (each worth one day’s wages) in verse 28.
- Summarize the four stages in this parable (vv. 23–27, 28–30, 31, 32–34).
 - The lesson is in the last verse. Say it in your own words and as applying to yourself. NOTE: The Lord had said equivalent things in the Sermon on the Mount. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matt. 5:7). “If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (6:15, also v. 14). James draws this conclusion: “Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful” (James 2:13). This implies that one who is truly repentant shows it by becoming merciful himself.

- 10.√ In lesson 7 you memorized to the end of Part I of this outline. It is also in Appendix A. Now memorize the rest of it. Practice writing it all.

It may help if you practice by comparing it to the mountain in Appendix F (p. 106).

The Gospel of Matthew

Preparation for the King’s Ministry (1:1 to 4:16)

I. The King’s Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)

- The King’s Message (4:17 to 7:29)
- The King’s Works (chs. 8–10)
- The King Rejected (chs. 11–13)
- The King Confessed (13:53 to 16:20)

THE GREAT CONFESSION & THE GREAT PROMISE

II. The King’s Ministry until the Great Commission (16:21 to 28:20)

- The King’s Disciples Challenged and Encouraged (16:21 to 18:35)
- The King Formally Presented and Rejected (chs. 19–25)
- The King Crucified and Triumphant (chs. 26–28)

THE GREAT COMMISSION & THE GREAT PRESENCE

³⁰ “A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense” (Prov. 19:11). However, if he cannot or should not overlook a personal offense, he must follow these steps.

Lesson 10 Matthew 19–20

What is the historical setting for Matthew 19–20? What did Jesus say the Creator’s design was for marriage? with what exception? What did the rich young man ask Jesus? What did Jesus command him? In Matthew 19:16–29 what are six equivalent expressions referring to eternal life? What did the mother of James and John request for them?

By Matthew 19 the Lord has concluded His ministry in Galilee. He and His disciples leave there and head generally south for Jerusalem. The section from Matthew 19 to 25 (see B below) is doubly long and closed by two discourses. We call it “The King Formally Presented and Rejected.” In this lesson you will consider its first part, The Trip to Jerusalem (chs. 19–20). In that part the disciples are taught lessons regarding the kingdom: its importance, its entrance, its rewards.

II. The King’s Ministry until the Great Commission (16:21 to 28:35)

A. The King’s Disciples Challenged and Encouraged (16:21 to 18:35)

Fourth Discourse (ch. 18): *Christian Humility and Meekness*

B. The King Formally Presented and Rejected (chs. 19–25)

1. The Trip to Jerusalem (chs. 19–20)

2. The Royal Entry and Resultant Opposition (chs. 21–22)

Fifth Discourse (ch.23): *Woes upon the Religious Leaders*

Sixth Discourse (chs. 24–25): *Events Leading to the Future Kingdom*

- 1.√ Read Matthew 19:1–2, which gives the historical setting for chapters 19–20. What is that setting?
2. Read Matthew 19:3–12, which again deals with the sanctity of marriage. The Pharisees no doubt expected to get Jesus in trouble with the people or the authorities because of His strict standard. In this same region John the Baptist had lost his life over this issue.
 - a.√ What did Jesus say the Creator’s design was for the permanence of marriage? with what exception?
NOTE: The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:12–13 adds another exception: a spouse without faith who refuses to continue the marriage.

- b. Surprised at such a standard, the disciples said that it was therefore good not to marry. Jesus again responded, that celibacy (remaining unmarried) has to be a gift. A gift from what possible sources?
3. Read Matthew 19:13–15, which again emphasizes that little children (Luke 18:15 says “infants”) should not be hindered from coming to Jesus. Why not?
4. ✓ Read Matthew 19:16–26, which tells about a rich young man who came to Jesus. Jesus questioned this man’s light use of the word “good” (v. 17)³¹ and proceeded to show that the man was not as good as he thought. In fact, it is “impossible” to convert such a rich man so that he will get into the coming kingdom (vv. 23–26). We hope that God did the impossible in his case.
 - a. What did this rich man ask Jesus?
 - b. If the man had truly loved his neighbor as himself (vv. 19–20), he would have obeyed the Lord’s command. What command?
 - c. Note that “get eternal life” in verse 16 means the same as “enter life” in verse 17 and “enter the kingdom of heaven” in verse 23. Find three more equivalent expressions in verses 24, 25, and 29. Then memorize all six expressions.
5. Read Matthew 19:27–30, which records the disciples’ question when the rich man had gone. They indeed had left everything to follow Jesus. What would they get? (In verses 28–29 find two future things; in verse 29 find a present thing.³²)
NOTE: The first two are at “the renewal of all things, when the Son of man sits on his glorious throne” (v. 28), that is, when He comes to rule. “The renewal of all things” clearly refers to the new world promised by the prophets (cf. Acts 3:21).
6. Read Matthew 20:1–16, which explains Jesus’ statement of 19:30 and reiterates it at the close. In this parable He warned the disciples that God (the landowner) may surprise everybody when He gives rewards in the kingdom. To those who have served long, He may give no more than to latecomers.
 - a. In the parable the householder first paid those who worked only one hour. How much did he give them in comparison to those who worked all day?
 - b. What word in verse 4 describes the pay he gives?
 - c. What word in verse 15 describes him?
7. Read Matthew 20:17–19, which records yet another announcement of Jesus’ coming death and resurrection (see 16:21 and 17:23). Twice these verses refer to “going up to Jerusalem.” Jesus knew exactly what would happen to Him there. What was the last thing He predicted each time?

³¹ Luke 18:18 says he also called Jesus “good teacher.”

³² Mark 10:30 leaves no doubt about the time: “in this present age...and in the age to come.”

8. Read Matthew 20:20–28, which shows what was on the disciples’ minds—the glory of the coming kingdom. James and John considered that they had an inside track to the highest positions. Indeed, they were Jesus’ cousins, children of Mary’s sister (cf. Matt. 27:56 and John 19:25), and He had shown them favor. Jesus did not contradict their expectation of such a kingdom and high positions. But He taught them important lessons for such future rulers. Notice that Jesus’ “cup” in verses 22–23 (also His “baptism,” KJV) refers to His suffering.
 - a. Give an example of how Jesus had shown favor to James and John.
 - b. ✓ What did their mother request for them?
 - c. List three lessons for those who want high positions in the future kingdom. (vv. 22–23a, 23, 25–28)
 - d. Verse 28 is unusual in the Gospels for explaining the reason for Jesus’ sacrifice. What is that reason?

9. Read Matthew 20:29–34, which took place at the last sizable town on the way to Jerusalem. This passage portrays the Lord’s undiminished power to restore, gives the clear witness by two blind men that He is Messiah, and shows that they were added to the large company that went with Him to the capital.
 - a. At what town did the Lord give sight to these two blind men?
 - b. Their witness consisted of a title they kept on shouting. What title?

10. ✓ Practice the outline you should know by memory. Fill in the blanks; then check your answers against the outline in the previous lesson (also in Appendix A, p. 97).

<p>_____ (_____)</p> <p>I. _____ (_____)</p> <p>A. _____ (4:17 to _____)</p> <p>B. _____ (chs. _____)</p> <p>C. _____ (chs. _____)</p> <p>D. _____ (_____ to _____)</p> <p>THE GREAT _____ & THE GREAT _____</p> <p>II. _____ (_____)</p> <p>A. _____ (16:21 to _____)</p> <p>B. _____ (chs. _____)</p> <p>C. _____ (chs. _____)</p> <p>THE GREAT _____ & THE GREAT _____</p>

11.√ For practice. Which of the following expressions is/are NOT found in Matthew 19:16–29 as equivalent to “get eternal life”? a) “inherit eternal life” b) “be forgiven” c) “enter the kingdom of God” d) “be saved” e) “enter life” f) “enter the kingdom of heaven”

Now, prepare for unit 3 examination by learning to answer all the checked questions and the objectives in lessons 8–10. Then take the examination without looking up any answers.

Unit Four

Lesson 11

Matthew 21–23

Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey? How do the Gospels show the importance of this royal entry (three ways)? What divine purpose was accomplished by Jerusalem's tragic decision? What was the basic error of the leaders?

In lesson 10 you began to study the long section that we call “The King Formally Presented and Rejected” (Matt. 19–25). Reread the paragraph and partial outline at the beginning of lesson 10. In this lesson 11 you will study the second part of that section (chs. 21–22), also the first of its two discourses (ch. 23).

On the trip to Jerusalem (chs. 19–20), Jesus has taught His disciples how important the kingdom is, that only the humble will enter it, and what are some of its rewards. Upon arriving at Jerusalem, Jesus finally presents Himself publicly to Israel as Messiah, Ruler of the promised kingdom. This is met by a demand to know His authority. In response, His parables reveal God's judgments on Israel's leaders for rejecting the Son (and therefore the kingdom). He answers their questions designed to discredit Him, but they do not answer His question. In a final public discourse (ch. 23), He lays bare the wicked hypocrisy of the leaders, whose attitude has prevented the kingdom's coming at this time.³³

1. Read Matthew 21:1–11, then answer these questions.
 - a.√ Nowhere else do we read of Jesus riding; He always walked. But this time He had two disciples borrow a donkey and its colt for Him to ride. Why did He enter Jerusalem in this way?
 - b. The answer to subquestion a refers to Zechariah 9:9. Look up the next verse (Zech. 9:10), which has still not been fulfilled. What does it say that the King will do?
NOTE: Old Testament prophets did not realize that the Messiah would come twice. They were often unaware of the gaps in their prophecies (1 Peter 1:10–12). As we pointed out under “Secrets Keys” (lesson 7), this interim age was first revealed by our Lord after Israel had rejected Him.
 - c. What did the multitudes welcoming Jesus do for Him and say about Him?
NOTE: Their expressions came mostly from Psalm 118, the last psalm in the “Egyptian Hallel” (Psalms 113–118), which was recited on many feast days.
2. Read Matthew 21:12–17, which shows how the King “took over” His capital city and how He was received.

³³ A private discourse follows (chs. 24–25), to be studied in the next lesson. It traces the events that will lead to the King's Second Coming and establishing His kingdom.

- a. How did He show His authority on this occasion?
- b. After cleansing the temple, Jesus ministered there. During those days what were two kinds of activities that irritated the leaders? (vv. 14–15)

The following keys are a summary of Alva McClain’s comments on pages 346–354 in *The Greatness of the Kingdom*.

Entry Keys

(Keys to Jesus’ Royal Entry into Jerusalem - Matthew 21:1–17)

1. Importance of this event. All four Gospels picture the so-called “Triumphal Entry” at the beginning of our Lord’s Passion Week. They all see it as an event of major importance. The Lord regarded it as crucial in relation to the Old Testament prophecies of His kingdom and the future of the nation Israel. His preparation for this entry was most impressive, including months of deliberate progress toward Jerusalem. Seventy heralds had announced Him in all the cities and villages (Luke 9:51; 10:1).

Various circumstances—both planned and “unplanned”—combined to make this entry notable. Among them: (1) the important words and miracles of the Seventy, (2) the personal follow-up ministry of our Lord, (3) His raising Lazarus from the dead, (4) the Passover celebration, (5) a general expectation that some kind of announcement would be made about the coming of the kingdom (Luke 19:11). These circumstances worked together to assemble in Jerusalem an impressively large and important section of the nation to witness His arrival. Jesus’ entry was royal: He offered Himself as the King of Israel (Matt. 21:5; Luke 19:38).

2. Fulfillment of prophecy. To enter Jerusalem the Lord secured a donkey’s colt to ride on, with its mother. Matthew shows that He considered this necessary in order to fulfill the Zechariah 9:9 prophecy that the Messianic King would arrive this way in Jerusalem. And since the King fulfilled verse 9 literally, so will He fulfill verse 10 literally: He will proclaim peace to the nations and rule over the whole earth in His still-future kingdom. Entering on the donkey did not emphasize His humility—He could have done that by walking—but the fact that He needs none of the usual means of authority. His Word alone will enable Him to rule “with a rod of iron.”

3. Words and actions to honor the King. What the people did and said showed that they considered this a regal entry. They spread garments and palm branches in the way, as was done for kings. They praised Him for the mighty works He had done (Luke 19:37)—works predicted for the still-future kingdom (Isa. 35:5–6; 26:19).

The people’s joyous language came from Psalm 118, one of the greatest Messianic psalms: “Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!” (Matt. 21:9); “Blessed is the King” (Luke 19:38; John 12:13). Later in this Passion Week the Lord Jesus

quoted from the same psalm regarding Israel’s judgment (Matt. 21:42) and future repentance (Matt. 23:38–39).

4. Something new. The Pharisees’ protest against the multitude’s praises (Luke 19:39) shows that something new had come. The Pharisees knew that Jesus had not previously allowed His disciples to publicly call Him King (that is, Messiah, Matt. 16:20; Luke 9:21).

His answer to the Pharisees (Luke 19:40) showed that the time had finally come for such testimony. If no one else gave it, the stones would do so. Israel could not later say, “Jesus did not tell us that He was Messiah.”

5. A crisis for Jerusalem. When the Lord saw Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, He lamented over the city and pronounced judgment on it (Luke 19:41–42). This proved that His final entry was a crisis-point in relation to the kingdom. He wept over Jerusalem because He saw how fickle it was—how quickly it would turn from love to hatred. “This thy day” (Luke 19:42, KJV) had arrived for Jerusalem on schedule as predicted in Daniel 9:25; Messiah was being officially offered to the theocratic nation. But He wept because He saw that Jerusalem would lose its golden opportunity, would reject Him, and consequently be judged.

6. Royal takeover. His acts after entering the city confirmed the regal character of His entry. He asserted His Lordship over the temple, (a) casting out those who by their business kept others from praying there, (b) healing the blind and lame, (c) teaching, (d) accepting perfect praise from children (Psa. 8:1–2).

7. His fickle people. Jesus’ weeping over His city and nation warns us not to take too seriously the people’s acclamation (praise and honor). He knew that they would soon turn against Him and bring about His death, the only means by which He could give eternal life to many (John 12:20–24). In other words, their awful decision would accomplish God’s purpose. Yet, Jesus’ tears showed that they were responsible for that decision.

This royal entry was the decisive and irrevocable turning point for Israel, an opportunity when they were all free to choose for or against Jesus. Yet, Jerusalem did not know the things that belonged to her peace (Luke 19:42). Since these things

now remained hidden from her eyes, the die was cast, and after the hen [the Lord] had vainly essayed [attempted] to gather her brood together, the eagles [the Romans], forty years after, stretch out not in vain their talons upon the carcass.

(McClain quoting Van Oosterzee)

- end of Entry Keys -

MORE QUESTIONS

3. a.√ In general, how do the Gospels show the importance of this royal entry? (first paragraph of Key 1)

- b. Jesus received a royal welcome to Jerusalem. But Luke 19:41–42 says that when He saw the city, He lamented over it and pronounced judgment on it. Why? (Key 5)
NOTE: Matthew 23:37–39 has a similar lament at the close of Jesus’ public ministry in Jerusalem. Probably the Lord lamented more than once.
 - c.√ Jerusalem’s tragic decision brought terrible consequences. Yet, it accomplished God’s grand purpose. What purpose? (Key 7)
4. Read Matthew 21:18–22 about The Cursing of the Fig Tree. As he sometimes does, Matthew compresses the time for this story. By comparing Mark 11:20–21, we see that it was the next day when the disciples noticed that the tree had dried up. From this event the Lord taught a lesson regarding prayer. Most commentators also see another lesson, one appropriate to all the events of that week. The tree represented a nation that made a show but was unfruitful, and then was cursed.
- a. What was the lesson about prayer?
 - b. What nation did the fig tree probably represent?

Matthew 21:23 through 22:46 records an intense public struggle between Jesus and the leaders of Israel. The struggle begins with a question about the source of Jesus’ authority. Next Jesus tells three parables showing Israel’s great guilt and coming punishment. The leaders respond by testing Jesus with three questions, which He answers. Finally, Jesus asks them why David in Psalm 110 called Messiah “Lord.” They cannot answer.

The Public Struggle Between Jesus & the Leaders of Israel Matthew 21:23—22:46			
Question by Leaders asking Jesus the source of His authority. His answer is conditional. 21:23–27	Three Parables by Jesus showing Israel’s guilt and punishment 21:28—22:14	Three Questions by Leaders testing Jesus, who answers each time 22:15–40	Question by Jesus asking leaders why David calls Messiah “Lord.” They cannot answer. (Ps. 110) 22:41–46

5. Read Matthew 21:23–27. Here Jesus acts in accord with His warning in the Sermon on the Mount: “Do not throw your pearls to pigs” (Matt. 7:6). Under what condition would He have given the leaders a full answer?

The three parables in Matthew 21:28—22:14 center on Israel’s relationship to the kingdom. Consider the following facts: (1) The Old Testament form of the kingdom was limited to Israel. God had actually ruled over Israel, beginning at Mt. Sinai: “When Israel came out of Egypt... Judah became God’s sanctuary, Israel his dominion” (Ps. 114:1–2). (2) The predicted future

form of the same kingdom would also center on Israel. Although the Old Testament kingdom came to an end, the prophets foresaw a future perfected form: “O stronghold of the Daughter of Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to the Daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:8). (3) In accordance with such prophecies, Jesus ministered only to Israel. Only to Israel did He declare that the kingdom had drawn near. For these reasons, in the second parable He pictured the leaders of Israel as vine growers in charge of the kingdom.

This does not mean that the predicted kingdom had begun. Yet, in the first parable some translations of Matthew 21:31 give that wrong impression. For example, consider the NIV. To chief priests and elders Jesus says that wicked people “**are entering** the kingdom of God **ahead of you.**” However, the Greek expression represented by bold letters (*proagousin eis*) says nothing about arriving or entering. Consider two examples of its use.

- In Matthew 14:22 Jesus had the disciples get into the boat and “**go on ahead of him to the other side.**” They went ahead, as the verb indicates; yet they did not arrive first (14:34).
- In Matthew 26:32 Jesus promised His disciples that after the resurrection “**I will go ahead of you into Galilee.**” The emphasis is not on entering Galilee but on leading the way (cf. Matt. 28:7).

Accordingly, Matthew 21:31 does not mean that wicked people had entered the kingdom. Instead, such people were ahead of the leaders on the way to it.

6. Read Matthew 21:28 to 22:14. Then for each parable make a summary in your own words of (a) its content and (b) its teaching. Write them in the following chart.

Reference	The Parable’s Content	Its Teaching
21:28–32		
21:33–46		
22:1–14		

Remember the fig tree, probably representing Israel, that Jesus had cursed so that it would bear no more fruit (21:19). To that add the following warnings you have just seen about Israel:

- Because Israel rejected all of God’s messengers and even killed His Son/Heir, God would “rent out the vineyard to other vinegrowers” (21:41). “The kingdom of God [would] be taken away from [them]” and “be given to a nation producing the fruit of it” (21:43).
- “Those who had been invited to the wedding feast” refused to attend and even killed the king’s slaves. Enraged, the King “sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire” (22:3–7).
- Since “the wedding [was] ready, but those who were invited were not worthy” (22:8), the King ordered for others to be invited in their place (22:9–10).

Such warnings at least anticipated God’s judgment on the generation that rejected Jesus. But many teach that His judgment was permanent—that God has forever rejected the physical nation of Israel. Such teachers allege that the many Old Testament prophecies of blessing for ethnic Israel will instead be fulfilled for the church. Their system of re-interpretation is sometimes called “Replacement Theology” (RT). RT requires major changes in the meanings of both Old Testament and New Testament prophecies. But there are several indications that it is wrong. It is better to agree with Paul’s conclusions about ethnic Israel in Romans 11: “All Israel will be saved, just as it is written” (Rom. 11:26). See my writing “[Will God Eternally Bless Ethnic Israel?: A Critique of Replacement Theology.](#)”

7. Read Matthew 22:15–40. Then summarize each question and answer in your own words. Write your summaries in the following chart.

Reference	Question	Answer
22:15–22		
22:23–33		
22:34–40		

8. Read Matthew 22:41–46, in which Jesus asks two questions about the Messiah (*Christ*). The first question itself (v. 42a) has two parts but requests only one answer. This prepares for the second question (v. 43, given in another form in v. 45). This question is much more difficult for them to answer.
- a. What were the two questions about the Messiah?

- b. What made the second question difficult?
- c. Can you answer it?

Matthew 23 records the first of two discourses ending this section. The one in chapter 23 is His final public discourse. In it He reveals the wicked hypocrisy of the leaders, whose attitude has prevented the kingdom’s coming at this time. Because those leaders “sit in Moses’ seat” (that is, teach the Scriptures, v. 2), they must—in that respect—be obeyed. But their deeds are devastating (very destructive).

NOTE: The leaders of Israel were extremely religious. Their phylacteries (v. 5; see Deut. 11:18) were little boxes containing Scripture verses and worn on the forehead and arm. Their tassels (v. 5) with blue cords were added to their robes. God required the tassels (see Num. 15:37–41) to remind them of their heavenly laws. They made the tassels long to show off.

9. Read Matthew 23:1–12. Then answer.
 - a.√ What was the basic error of the leaders?
 - b. The correct attitude is pointed out in verses 11–12 (cf. 20:28). In one word what is that attitude? What entire chapter was earlier dedicated to emphasizing it?

Matthew 23:13–36 has a series of woes on the leaders, detailing their wickedness and its results. The first woe (vv. 13–14) pictures the coming kingdom of heaven as a great palace with its doors opened. But the leaders refused to enter and by their attitude shut its doors to others. In effect, they had kept the kingdom from being established, which they could not have done to a purely spiritual kingdom. Verse 27 compares these leaders to “whitewashed tombs.” Tombs were regularly whitewashed to keep people from accidentally touching them and defiling themselves (Num. 19:16). The leaders acknowledged their descent from murderous forefathers (vv. 30–31); they were about to prove that they were just like them (vv. 32–36).

10. Read Matthew 23:13–36 and list each time the Lord says “woe” along with a brief summary of the sin it describes.
11. Read the Lord’s lament over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37–39. Notice the following:
 - (a) Jesus is the Lord of History who has “often...longed” to help Jerusalem.
 - (b) He predicts that her “house” will be “left...desolate,” meaning that the temple will be destroyed.
 - (c) He predicts His own absence from her—but not forever. Jerusalem will see Him again when she is converted. What will she then say? (v. 39, quoting from Psalm 118)
12. Review some things you have just seen.
 - a. What were the four stages in the great public debate between Jesus and the Jewish leaders?
 - b. With what questions did that debate begin and end?
 - c. Jesus’ three parables had to do with Israel’s relationship to the kingdom. Which way of ending the statement below would correctly reflect the meaning of the first parable

- (21:31)? Compared to Israel's leaders, the “sinners” were 1) more interested in the kingdom 2) farther down the road to the kingdom 3) already in the kingdom 4) the only ones that would be in the kingdom.
- d. What did Jesus reveal in His final public discourse?
 - e. What two things did He predict in His lament over Jerusalem?
- 13.√ This subsection of Matthew began with the Lord’s royal entry into Jerusalem. See if you can remember three ways the Gospels show the importance of that event.

Lesson 12

Matthew 24–25

Regarding the prophetic discourse: (a) What two questions did Jesus’ disciples ask Him? (b) What will signal the beginning of “the great distress”(Great Tribulation)? (c) Seeing we do not know when He will come, what must we do? (d) When He comes, how will He recompense those who received “talents”? (e) What evidence will He cite when He gives or does not give to “sheep” and “goats” the eternal inheritance?

In this lesson you will study the Lord’s final discourse, Matthew 24–25. In it the King traces the events that will lead to His Second Coming to establish His kingdom. As you are instructed to do so, read the sections of this discourse, answering the questions.

1. Read Matthew 24:1–3, then answer.
 - a. Many years before, Herod the Great had begun rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. It was one of the wonders of the world. What had Jesus said about the temple that prompted the disciples to engage Him in talk about it? (See the end of chapter 23.)
 - b.√ When Jesus told them that “not one stone [would] be left on another” (24:2), what two questions did they ask Him?
NOTE: “The end of the age” means the end of the evil period of time we live in. After that, “the age to come” will be that of God’s kingdom (see my comments on 12:32 and 13:39-43, 49). The Bible does not teach that time itself will end.
2. Read Matthew 24:4–14, then answer.
 - a. List four things the Lord called “the beginning of birth pains.”
 - b. In a word, what should believers expect for themselves during the “birth pains”?
 - c. What will believers do for the world before the end comes?
NOTE: As to whether this is the church’s task, see Appendix A, page 97.

3. Read Matthew 24:15–28, then answer.
NOTE: In verse 21 KJV has “great tribulation” instead of “great distress” (NIV). Bible students often modify that KJV translation into the name of a specific period: “The Great Tribulation.”
 - a.√ What will signal the beginning of the “great distress” (v. 21)?
 - b. Why will that distress/tribulation be cut short?
 - c. Many will be deceived. But why will believers not need to investigate reports of Messiah’s coming?
4. Read Matthew 24:29–31, then answer.
 - a. What kind of signs will accompany the Lord’s coming?
 - b. When “the Son of Man [comes] with power and great glory” (v. 30), what will He have His angels do?
5. Read Matthew 24:32–41, then answer.
 - a. Jesus had repeatedly told the disciples that He would come again to rule. Most recently He had advised them that the kingdom was no longer near. When would it be near again?
NOTE: Looking ahead, verse 33 says, “**it** is near.” This probably means “**the kingdom of God** is near,” as reported in Luke 21:31.
 - b. “Not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son” know exactly when that day will come (v. 36). Because of their ignorance, how will people in the last days act like those of Noah’s day?
6. Read Matthew 24:42–51, then answer.
 - a.√ In view of our ignorance of the Lord’s coming, what must we do?
 - b. The Lord gives an example of a “servant...put in charge of [other] servants” (v. 45). If that “servant” lives in an irresponsible way, what will the master do to him when he returns?
7. Read Matthew 25:1–13, the Parable of the Ten Virgins, then answer.
 - a. All ten virgins are waiting for the bridegroom and the wedding celebration. Why are five of them called “foolish”?
 - b. What did the bridegroom say when the foolish virgins arrived late?
8. Read Matthew 25:14–30, the Parable of the Talents, then answer.
NOTE: A talent was a great amount of money, equal to years of the average salary.
 - a. How did the one who received one talent use it differently from those who received five talents or two talents?
 - b.√ When the master returned, what reward did he give each one?
9. Read Matthew 25:31–46, the Prediction of the Sheep and the Goats, then answer.
 - a. List at least three things that relate this to the Lord’s return to rule. HINT: The first

- one tells what condition He will come in and where He will sit (v. 31).
- b.√ What will be the evidence when He gives or does not give the eternal inheritance?
 - c. What does the last verse call the two destinies?

Study the following keys, some of which are adapted from Alva McClain’s book about the kingdom.

Prophecy Keys **(Keys to Our Lord’s Prophetic Discourse, Matthew 24–25)**

Matthew 24–25 is the fullest record of our Lord’s longest and most important message predicting the future. The same message is recorded more briefly in the other Synoptic Gospels: Mark and Luke. (Luke has some important differences.) He spoke it to a small group of disciples just after He finished His public ministry. They were sitting on the side of a mountain just across the narrow valley east of Jerusalem. Since the place was the Mount of Olives, the message is often called “The Olivet Discourse.” It has to do mostly with the delay before the Lord finally comes back to set up His kingdom.

1. Background to this discourse. By the time of this discourse, the nation of Israel had rejected Jesus as Messiah, that is, the promised King. They had rejected Him both informally (Matt. 11–12) and formally (Matt. 21–23). In contrast, Jesus’ disciples had confessed Him as Messiah (Matt. 16:16–17). After they confessed, He repeatedly assured them that He will eventually come to sit on His glorious throne and rule (Matt. 16:27; 19:28; 20:20–23). As He had said earlier, He will bring an end to this present evil age and inaugurate the glorious age to come, the kingdom age (Matt. 13:39, 43).³⁴ But first He must suffer.

This discourse comes right after Israel’s formal rejection of the King, recorded in Matthew 21–23. Those chapters begin with Jesus publicly presenting Himself to Israel in His Royal Entry (21:1–11) and taking charge of the temple (21:12–16). Next they relate His public debate with the leaders of Israel, in which (a) they challenge His authority; (b) He tells three parables against them, in part predicting that God will take the kingdom program from them and destroy their city; (c) they ask three questions designed to trap Him; and (d) He asks a question pointing to the Messiah’s deity.

In short, Matthew 21–22 show that Israel’s leaders had formally rejected their Messiah (Jesus) and that He had rejected them. He fully stated this situation in His final public discourse (Matt. 23). In it He pronounced seven or eight “woes” upon the leaders and a terrible judicial sentence on “this generation” (23:34–36). He closed with a lament (23:37–39) showing Him to be the God of Jerusalem and of history. His purpose to save Jerusalem’s children (Israel) had been refused by Jerusalem (“you were not willing”). That purpose would not be fulfilled until His

³⁴ “This age” is contrasted with “the age to come” not only in Matthew 12:32 but also—years later—in Ephesians 1:21. This means that “the age to come” had not come when Paul wrote. It still has not come.

Second Coming (“You will not see me again until”). Instead, Jerusalem’s “house,” referring at least to the temple, would be left desolate.

These events and predictions had upset Jesus’ disciples. As they took their final leave of Jerusalem, they wanted Him to tell them more about the temple’s future (24:1). Wasn’t their glorious temple a wonder of the world? Think of its vast size—an area half again as large as today’s St. Peter’s Square in Rome. Think of the enormous blocks of white marble in its walls and columns, the lavish use of gold and gems. Jesus’ response was that not one stone would be left on another (24:2); destruction would be complete. Stunned, the disciples walked silently with Jesus to the Mount of Olives. But once seated there with Him, opposite the temple, they asked Him some questions.

2. The disciples’ questions, 24:3. See also Mark 13:3–4 and Luke 21:7. Matthew records two questions, as follows.

Their first question: “When will this [Greek, these things] happen?”

Their second question: “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

NOTE: This question about the sign is just one question, for the Greek has only one article for “coming” and “end.”³⁵

Mark 13:3–4 and Luke 21:7 also record two questions but state the second question differently from Matthew: “What will be the sign that they [Greek, these things] are all about to be fulfilled [Luke, to take place]?” At first glance this second question in Mark and Luke seems quite different from the second question in Matthew. According to Matthew, the sign they request is for the Lord’s coming and the end of the age. According to Mark/Luke, it is a sign for when “these things” of the first question will take place. Can these two versions of the second question mean the same? Yes they can, if the disciples assumed **that the Lord would come in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem**. If so, we can paraphrase their two questions like this:

Their first question: Lord, you have said you will return to put an end to the present evil age and set up your kingdom. But you have also said that Jerusalem and the temple must first be destroyed. How long will it be before these things—this destruction and your return—take place?

Their second question: What else will happen to show us that the time of that destruction and your return to rule are near?

In other words, the disciples apparently saw a close connection between the predicted destruction of Jerusalem and the Lord’s coming in His kingdom. Possibly they had in mind Old Testament prophecies like Zechariah 14:1–4, 8–9, 12, 16–17. These picture the nations assaulting Jerusalem just before the LORD God comes to save His people and set up His kingdom. But history did

³⁵ The Greek word here for “coming” (*parousia*) is used only four times in the Gospels, all of them in this chapter (vv. 3, 27, 37, 39). Here it clearly refers to the Lord’s promised return in glory to rule. A Bible student must decide if in the Epistles it sometimes refers to a separate and secret coming.

not turn out that way in the first century. Jerusalem and the temple were indeed destroyed in A.D. 70; yet the Lord did not return and still has not returned. Were the disciples or the prophecies mistaken? Not if the fulfillment is **contingent** (depends) on other factors and/or the Lord Jesus' answers refer to more than one destruction of Jerusalem.

3. The “birth pains,” 24:4–14. See also Mark 13:5–13 and Luke 21:8–19. In the first part of His answer, the Lord primarily warned the disciples not to let anyone deceive them into thinking that the end has come near. There are many things that “must happen” (Matt. 24:6, *dei genesthai*—as in Daniel 2:28, 29; Rev. 1:1; 4:1; 22:6) according to God's plan. Among these things are false Messiahs, wars, famines, and earthquakes. But such things do not mean that the end will come immediately. Rather, they will be the beginning of birth pains (v. 8) that will continue until the end.

It is possible—but unclear in the text—that the birth pains do not begin until verse 7. In that view (a) the “wars and rumors of wars” of verse 6 are local whereas (b) the “nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” of verse 7 are worldwide (birth pains).

Yet another viewpoint is that all things in verses 4–14 are birth pains, but none of them would start immediately. They would start just before the final “great distress” (Great Tribulation) described in verses 15–28.³⁶ In other words, verses 4–14 would be in the same end time period as 15–28. That conclusion about the timing is not likely, however. Writers of New Testament books apparently believed that the birth pains had already begun (see my discussion of 24:34). That did not imply, however, that the Lord would come immediately. Birth pains may begin long before the actual birth, gradually becoming more intense and more frequent.

Does the expression “birth pains” suggest that a new world will come forth? Possibly so—and we know that the Lord promised such a new world (Matt. 19:28).

In connection with these birth pains, there will be persecution of Jesus' disciples (24:9–14).³⁷ These will need to “stand firm to the end” (24:13) of their lives and ministries as they preach “the good news about the kingdom” (Greek, 24:14). By standing firm they show that they are God's elect, who will share in the salvation of His coming kingdom (19:23–30). Such endurance

³⁶ Isaiah 13:6–8; 26:16–18; and Revelation 6 describe such events in connection with the Tribulation.

³⁷ Dr. McClain (p. 364) says that after the reference to birth pangs, Luke 21:12–24 is a “literary parenthesis.” It starts “‘before all these things’...already referred to which will mark the beginning of the ‘end.’” Then Luke (and no other Gospel), says McClain, “answers the disciples’ question about the judgment of Jerusalem and the temple... in A.D. 70.” It jumps from that occasion to the end in one verse (v. 24), then rejoins the other Gospels. Only by this section with “no exact parallel,” says McClain, “can we distinguish generally between what has now become history and what is still future” (p. 363). McClain's suggestion is worthy of detailed study.

is the mark of the elect, not the cause of their election. In other words, God does not choose them because they endure, but they endure because God has chosen them.³⁸

Both Matthew 24:14 and Mark 13:10 indicate that this good news (Matt., about the kingdom) must be preached to all the nations before the end comes. This is the same gospel (good news) Jesus commanded us to preach “to all creation” (Mark 16:15). Our message concerns both “God’s grace” (Acts 20:24) and His “kingdom” (Acts 20:25). It says that (a) Jesus is the King and (b) mankind’s hope is to share with the King—by God’s grace—in His future kingdom. To preach this good news is the main purpose of our being left in this world in Messiah’s absence.³⁹ For more about this message, see Appendix D: Does the Church Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom? (p. 102).

4. The Great Tribulation, 24:15–28. See also Mark 13:14–23 and Luke 21:20–24. In Matthew 24:21 the New International Version uses the expression “great distress.” However, we will stick with the equivalent “Great Tribulation,” which is better known in prophetic studies. As described in verses 15–28, this will be a time of trouble so great that no human would survive were it not cut short (v. 22). In fact, various Scriptures show us that it will last only three and a half years. During that time false messiahs and false prophets will practice the strongest of deceptions on the world, though they cannot deceive the elect (those God has chosen, vv. 23–26).

How will believers in Messiah know that this Tribulation is about to begin? By seeing “standing in the holy place [the temple in Jerusalem] the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel” (24:15). They should immediately flee from around Jerusalem to the mountains, probably the mountains across the Jordan Valley to the east.

The expression “the abomination that causes desolation” comes from the Greek version of Daniel’s last recorded prophecy (Daniel 10–12). The expression is used in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. In 11:31 it refers to something done by Antiochus Epiphanes—as also recalled in Daniel 8:11–13. Antiochus was an evil Syrian ruler (in one division of the Greek Empire). In 167 B.C. he put an end to Jewish sacrifices and introduced an idolatrous worship into the temple. This worship, long before Jesus’ ministry, was the “abomination” that produced much desolation.

³⁸ This section about persecution has principles that often apply. Therefore, Matthew has included much of it in Jesus’ instructions about the mission, in 10:17–21.

³⁹ Some take Matthew 24:14 to mean that the Lord will not return with the kingdom until we complete our preaching. Perhaps so—but why then did Luke not mention that preaching? Others apply this preaching activity—and even the entire prophecy—to Israel of the end time. Some of them wrongly assume that the *ekklesia* (church), Messiah’s “body,” is basically different in character and hope from future redeemed Israel. It is true that Messiah did not begin to baptize with the Spirit and form His body until the Day of Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:12–13; Acts 1:5). But it is equally true that the same baptism was first promised to Israel. When that nation finally repents, Messiah will add it to His body. See Appendix A, page 96.

Yet Daniel used the same expression to refer to another event that is still future. After predicting in 11:31 what Antiochus would do, Daniel’s prophecy jumped to “the time of the end” (11:35). Here the prophecy merged the figure of Antiochus into that of a final willful king in the end time. “At that time,” Daniel said (12:1), there will be an unparalleled “time of distress” (the Great Tribulation) for Israel. That distress will lead to deliverance, resurrection, and an eternal kingdom (12:1–3). It is in connection with that final distress that Daniel once more mentioned “the abomination that causes desolation” (12:11–13). This time he clearly referred to the last days. Thus, in Daniel’s last prophecy (chs. 10–12) the “abomination” refers to two events widely separated in time, events similar but separate. The first took place long before Jesus’ birth. The second, still future, is the one Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:15.⁴⁰

Having revealed the sign of the Tribulation, Jesus emphasized (a) the severity of the Tribulation and (b) the danger of deception in contrast to the openness of His Second Coming. No one will have to be told when He comes; it will be as evident as the lightning.

5. Messiah’s coming, 24:29–31. See also Mark 13:24–27 and Luke 21:25–28. These verses describe the Lord’s coming “with power and great glory” (v. 30; cf. 16:27; 25:31) and having His angels “gather his elect from the four winds” (v. 31). This will take place “immediately after” the Tribulation (v. 29).

NOTE: We know from 1 Thessalonians 4:17 that both living and dead believers will be raptured (caught up). Will that happen on this occasion when angels “gather his elect” (Matt. 24:31)? Some teachers say no, that the rapture will be earlier. Such teachers usually claim that there will be basic differences between redeemed Israel and the church (see Appendix A, page 97). Based on those differences, they believe that the Lord will come secretly for believers before the Tribulation. As you see, Matthew speaks of only one future coming of Messiah. There is no evidence there that He will also come secretly. This is true in all the other Gospels. (There is no indication that even the coming in John 14 is separate.) Any evidence of a secret coming must be found in the Epistles, if at all. For more discussion see “[Will the Church Go Through the Great Tribulation?](#)”

“The sign of the Son of Man” in verse 30 is probably the Lord Himself. In addition to this sign are the heavenly signs listed in verse 29 (darkening of sun and moon, falling of stars, etc.). Some of this language may be figurative, referring to disruptions of order, as it does in the Old Testament sources. For example, the same expressions are used in Jeremiah 4:23–28 and Ezekiel 32:7–8. These passages describe figuratively, but not literally, Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment of Jerusalem and Egypt.

6. The time for the signs, 24:32–41. See also Mark 13:28–31 and Luke 21:29–33. This section records the following promise (emphasis added), often misunderstood:

⁴⁰ Although it uses different terminology, the prophecy in Daniel 9:24–27 refers to the same future event.

“This generation will certainly not pass away until **all these things** have happened.” (24:34)

Some interpret this to say that **all the signs and the Lord’s coming** would take place soon, before the death of the Jews then living. If it meant that, then the prophecy was faulty; because the Lord did not return. To avoid such a conclusion, some conservative interpreters have suggested two other meanings for “this generation” in 24:34 (instead of Jesus’ generation):

- the future generation that sees the signs of the end begin. This view assumes that the signs (including the “birth pains” of vv. 4–14) did not begin soon—or even yet. Instead, they will take place only in or just before the Tribulation period.
- the Jewish race, destined to survive forever. They understand the following words to mean “will certainly not pass away even when all these things have happened.”

Neither of these alternate meanings, however, can be supported in Matthew. “This generation” is used five other times there, always by Jesus (see 11:16; 12:41, 42, 45; and 23:36; cf. 12:39; 16:4; and 17:17). Each time it means the Jews of Jesus’ day, usually in contrast with earlier generations. Consider its use, along with “all these things” (NIV, “all this”), just before this prophetic discourse. Jesus had labeled Israel’s leaders as “snakes” and “brood of vipers” (23:33), who would persecute more of God’s servants, as their forefathers had done (23:34). This happened during the Acts period. Therefore, they would be punished for “all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth” (23:35). “**All this,**” He had said, “will come upon **this generation**” (23:36). And it did, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in A.D. 70. To repeat, “this generation” always referred to the Jews living when Jesus said it.

There is no need to avoid this usual meaning of “this generation” in 24:34. Jesus was not predicting the time of His coming but of its signs.⁴¹ By “all these things” He meant events leading to that coming but not including it. The preceding verse (24:33) makes precisely that distinction: “When you see **all these things**, you know that it [“the kingdom of God,” Luke 21:31] is near, right at the door.” And that is what happened. The earliest believers were right not to expect the Lord immediately (Acts 3:21); because none of the signs had taken place.⁴² But quite soon—during the transitional Acts period—they began seeing the signs. For this reason, New Testament writers from the earliest to the latest expected the Lord to return soon. Here are some examples, beginning with the writer usually considered the first:

- James 5:8, 9 – “The Lord’s coming is near.... The Judge is standing at the door!”
- 1 Peter 4:7 – “The end of all things is near.”
- 1 John 2:18 – “This is the last hour... we know it is the last hour.”

⁴¹ Apparently only the Father knows that time: “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32).

⁴² Certainly none of “these things” happened before Pentecost. Therefore, it is evident that the kingdom was not near and did not come on that occasion.

- Revelation 1:3; 22:12, 20 – “The time is near.” “I am coming soon!” “Yes, I am coming soon.”

These writers all expected the Lord to establish His kingdom when He comes: “Messiah Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead...in view of his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1, cf. v. 8). Apparently they considered the signs (“these things”) of Matthew 24:33 to have been fulfilled enough for His coming and kingdom to be near.⁴³ How could they think so before the Abomination of Desolation had taken place (Matt. 24:15)? Or before the sun and moon are darkened and the stars fall (24:29)? Probably because “all these things” did not mean every detail or that everything predicted would be literal.

However we interpret it, Jesus’ prophecy was more complex than it seemed. Like Old Testament prophecies, it could hide gaps of time and be fulfilled in stages. Thus, no one should set dates. We do well to heed Jesus’ warning that no one but the Father knows exactly when Messiah will come (Matt. 24:36). Most will be completely surprised (vv. 37–41).

7. Be ready for Him to come, 24:42 to 25:30. See also Mark 13:32–37 and Luke 21:34–36. With several comparisons and parables the Lord exhorts us to be prepared for His return. Be ready

- like a homeowner expecting a thief (24:43–44)
- like a faithful and wise servant left to care for others (24:45–51)
- like wise virgins prepared in advance for the inevitable (25:1–13)
- by investing for the Lord the means He has given (25:14–30)

Faithfulness will be rewarded with joyful responsibility, unfaithfulness with utter loss.

8. The judgment by which the King inaugurates the kingdom, 25:31–46. In previous lessons we have often referred to the great prediction in these verses. In it once more the Lord reminds us that He will return to earth to rule in glory. Once more it says that the King will judge. Once more, that the eternal life He will give is to inherit the kingdom. Once more, that the criterion for entering is faith in Him demonstrated in deeds. How have the heirs showed that faith? In love—without even realizing it—that cared for the King’s brethren.

- end of Prophecy Keys -

MORE QUESTIONS

10. To summarize, what is the main subject of this prophetic discourse?
- 11.√ Review. What two questions did Jesus’ disciples ask Him that prompted this discourse? Remember the two parts to the second question.

⁴³ Remember, however, that the kingdom could be “near”—and remain near—without being “present.”

Lesson 13 Matthew 26–28

*What refrain does Matthew use at the ends of five major discourses?
As shown at the last Passover, what did Jesus' sacrifice inaugurate?
For what claim was He executed? Can you identify facts about the
two appearances of the risen Messiah in Matthew? What great
commission did He leave us? (Include four verbal forms.) What
great presence did He promise?*

This lesson covers the last section of Matthew, in which the King is crucified, then triumphant. This section has two parts, each of which revolves around Jesus' kingship. The first part (chs. 26–27) can be called "The Passion." In it He is publicly set apart as the New Covenant Sacrifice, tried, and sacrificed. The second part (ch. 28) can be called "The Triumph," which quickly reaches its culmination in the Great Commission. Look at the chart.

The first part, Matthew 26–27, has four focal points: Jesus' being anointed for death, the last supper, the betrayal and trial, then the crucifixion itself. In the supper Jesus affirms that He will not drink with them again until the kingdom comes. In both the religious trial before the Jews and the civil trial before Pilate, the question is whether or not Jesus is the King of the Jews (26:63; 27:11). He clearly affirms that He is. This charge is placed above His head when He is crucified (27:37); all the scorn and abuse center on this very theme of His kingship. Even the tomb is sealed to prove that He is a "deceiver."

The King Crucified & Triumphant, Matthew 26–28						
The Passion (chs. 26–27) The New Covenant Sacrifice is publicly set apart, tried, and sacrificed.				The Triumph (ch. 28) The New Covenant is put in operation.		
Preparation for the Passion		The Passion Itself		Evidence for Jesus' Triumph "Marching Orders"		
The Sacrifice Set Apart	The Last Supper	Betrayal & Trial of the King of the Jews	Crucifixion & Burial of the King of the Jews	A Sample Appearance	A Cover-up	Great Commission & Great Presence
26:3–16	26:17–35	26:36—27:31	27:32–66	28:1–10	28:11–15	28:16–20

Matthew 26:1–2 forms a bridge from Jesus’ last discourse to this final section of the book. In verse 2 Jesus refers to two main focuses of the final section: His final Passover and the passion itself. Verses 3–16 go back a few days earlier to show the Sacrifice being set apart.⁴⁴

1. Read Matthew 26:1–16, which gives the setting for the sacrifice.
 - a. ✓ What refrain in verse 1 have we seen at the end of five major discourses?
 - b. Who made the official decision to kill Jesus? (vv. 3–5)
 - c. How was His body publicly prepared for burial? (vv. 6–13)
NOTE: “I tell you the truth, wherever **this gospel is preached throughout the world**, what she has done will also be told in memory of her” (v. 13). The bolded words remind us that the Gospel of Matthew contains—or is—the gospel we should preach everywhere. It perfectly agrees with the preaching in Acts. Nowadays, however, some think they find a better gospel in John or Romans.
 - d. “One of the Twelve—the one called Judas” hatched an evil plan quite in contrast to the woman’s lovely action. He went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Jesus (vv. 14–16) for a price fulfilling Scripture. For what price?

Matthew 26:17–29 tells about the final Passover meal. On this occasion Jesus prepares the disciples for His sacrifice—and explains its meaning to all of us. By keeping the place of the meal secret (vv. 17–18), He keeps the traitor from acting too soon. At the end of the meal He institutes the Lord’s Supper, by which we celebrate His death and what it accomplishes (vv. 26–29). The key words about the wine, in Greek, are *to haima tes diathekes* (the blood of the covenant). These words come directly from Exodus 24:8, where they referred to the blood of animals inaugurating the covenant between God and Israel.⁴⁵ It is obvious that the Lord’s death was designed to inaugurate a new covenant.

2. Read Matthew 26:17–29, then answer.
 - a. Where did they eat this Passover together?
 - b. Jesus startled His disciples by announcing that one of them would betray Him (vv. 21–25). Apparently none of them expected this, or imagined that Judas could do such a thing (though Jesus knew it “from the beginning,” John 6:64). What did He say about “that man’s” condition?
 - c. What did He call the Passover bread? the cup of wine?

⁴⁴ There is a question about chronology, which we will show by bolding certain words. In Matthew 26:2 Jesus says, on Wednesday, “the Passover is **two days** away.” The next verses tell about the official decision to kill Jesus (vv. 3–5) and His being anointed for death at Bethany (vv. 6–16). John 12:1 (cf. 12:12), however, tells us that the anointing happened on the previous Sabbath/Saturday, “**six days** [not two days] before the Passover.” Apparently Matthew has moved the story to this place in time because of its relationship to his last section. The Jewish council had also made an earlier decision to kill Jesus (John 11:47–53) but possibly revised it during Passion Week (vv. 3–5).

⁴⁵ See the commentary Hebrews 9:18–28 makes about these same words.

- d.√ What did His sacrifice inaugurate?
 e. When will the Lord drink with us again?
3. Read Matthew 26:30—27:10, which tells of the Lord’s arrest and Jewish trial. It was all illegal and unjust, seeing that He was the innocent Lamb.
- In everything Scripture had to be fulfilled. For example, the “sheep” would be “scattered” (26:30–35, especially v. 31), fulfilling Zechariah 13:7. When Jesus predicted this, He did not expect to prevent it. Instead, His prediction would help in their later restoration. What did Peter think he was ready for?⁴⁶
 - Peter and his companions could not keep watch while the Lord prayed in Gethsemane (26:36–46). What were the two sides to the Lord’s prayer there?
 NOTE: “This cup” (v. 39) probably refers to all His final suffering and death, especially the spiritual aspects.
 - The Lord was arrested and taken to trial (26:47–56). How did Judas signal who Jesus was?
 - Seeing his Master in the enemies’ grasp, one disciple began to use the sword. What two reasons did Jesus give not to use it?
 - √ The trial before the Jewish authorities is recalled in 26:57–68. Vainly they sought a legitimate reason to kill Him until He gave them one. What?
 - What a contrast between self-controlled Jesus and fearful Peter! Peter’s three denials were in response to several accusations during several hours. Each Gospel gives only part of the story. By the details he chooses to tell (26:69–75), Matthew shows that Peter had little basis for His manly courage. Specifically, how does he show this?
 - A nighttime trial was illegal.⁴⁷ In Jesus’ case, the same Jewish council met again at daybreak (27:1–2). Why do you suppose they did this?
 - Matthew 27:3–10 concludes the sordid story of Judas. Judas may have observed all the Jewish trial. Seeing Jesus condemned, he felt remorse and tried to give back the betrayal money.⁴⁸ What did he say he had done wrong? How did he end his life?
4. Read about Jesus’ Roman trial, Matthew 27:11–31. One would expect to benefit from the famous Roman justice. But it was not so for the King of the Jews.
- √ At the beginning and end of this section, we are reminded that Jesus was crucified for His claims. Jesus accepted a certain title when Pilate first questioned Him (v. 11). The soldiers called Him by the same title when they scourged Him and mocked Him (v. 29). What was this title?

⁴⁶ Toussaint notes that by this attitude Peter refused “to accept his place as a sheep in the flock.”

⁴⁷ It was also illegal for Jesus to be (1) tried on a capital charge (one permitting a death penalty) on the day before the Sabbath, (2) questioned directly by the high priest, (3) sentenced on the first day of the trial. Most Bible Encyclopedias discuss these and other illegalities in His trial.

⁴⁸ Matthew 27:9 quotes the ancient prophecy in Zechariah 11:12–13, attributing it to Jeremiah. *The Ryrie Study Bible* note for Matthew 27:9 explains that Jeremiah was at that time the first book of the prophets.

- NOTE: Pilate also called Him by this title when trying to release Him (Mark 15:9, 12). Here Matthew uses the equivalent title *Messiah* (Matt. 27:17, 22).
- b. Pilate’s inquiry emphasized Jesus’ innocence. Yet, he delivered Him up to be killed. When Pilate washed his own hands to avoid guilt, what did “all the people” answer?

Matthew 27:32–56 tell about Jesus’ crucifixion and death. He was killed by being nailed to a cross of wood. Crucifixion was so horrible and shameful that it was outlawed for Roman citizens. Before being crucified, a person was mercilessly flogged (Matt. 27:26, KJV scourged), even on the face. This ripped open the skin and sometimes caused death. Yet, the weakened and suffering person usually survived many hours nailed to the cross. After two or three days he died mostly from thirst and the inability to breathe. Jesus refused to drink the “wine...mixed with gall” (27:34), which would have dulled His senses.

This offer of wine was foreseen in Psalm 69:21. Several other Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus’ death, such as, these from Psalm 22:

- Verse 35: “divided up...clothes by casting lots” (Ps. 22:18)
- Verse 39: “shaking their heads” (Ps. 22:7)
- Verse 43: half the verse (Ps. 22:8)
- Verse 46: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps. 22:1)

5. Read about Jesus’ crucifixion and death, Matthew 27:32–56, then answer.
- a. The “written charge” attached above Jesus’ head is probably the best statement of the theme of Matthew. What did that charge say?
 - b. What did “the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders” call Him in scorn?
 - c. Matthew reports only one of Jesus’ seven sayings from the cross. During the three hours of unusual darkness, what first words of Psalm 22 did He cry out? (Give them in English.)
 - d. Matthew 27:50 says that just before He died, He “cried out again in a loud voice.” This is probably when He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). At His death, what happened at the temple that seems to symbolize the end of the sacrificial system?
 - e. “Many women...who had followed Jesus from Galilee” (27:56) did not abandon Him as the men did (26:56). Which three women are mentioned in 27:56?
NOTE: Some of them also observed where Jesus was buried (27:61) and returned on Sunday “to look at the tomb” (28:1) and “anoint Jesus’ body” with spices (Mark 16:1).
6. Read about Jesus’ burial, Matthew 27:57–66, then answer.
- a. What rich man boldly asked for Jesus’ body, wrapped it, and placed it in his own new tomb?
 - b. To make the tomb secure, what did the chief priests and Pharisees do with Pilate’s permission?

There would be no Christianity were it not for the truth of Matthew 28. By raising Jesus from the dead, God showed His complete approval of Jesus' life and sacrifice. The new and eternal covenant became a reality. Jesus "gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days." Then "he was taken up into heaven" (Acts 1:2–3). However, each Gospel gives only a part of the evidence that He rose. Matthew records two post-resurrection appearances plus a pathetic attempt by Jesus' enemies to explain the empty tomb.

Matthew hurries to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20). In it the risen Messiah announces that He has received "all authority in heaven and on earth" (v. 18). He sends forth His servants, this time to all the world, not just to Israel. By baptizing and teaching, they are to make disciples who will keep His commandments.⁴⁹ He will be spiritually present with His servants until they finish their task at the end of the age. At that time, as He has repeatedly promised, He will physically return. Then He will usher in the "coming age," the eternal kingdom.

- 7.√ Read Matthew 28, then fill out the chart below. It is designed to help you get acquainted with, then memorize, facts about Messiah's two resurrection appearances in Matthew. For example, under "TO WHOM" for the first appearance, you could write, "to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary."

The Two Resurrection Appearances of Jesus in Matthew 28				
Refer. in Matthew	TO WHOM (persons)	WHEN (time & circumstances)	WHERE (place)	WHAT (what was said & done in general)
First Appearance 28:1–10				
Second Appearance 28:16–20				

⁴⁹ As you have often seen in this Gospel, genuine disciples show it by obedience. Some who dislike this emphasis deny that the gospel we should believe and preach is even found in Matthew. They think that, instead, it is found in John and Romans. They assign Matthew to the Jews. (In effect, if not consciously, they do the same to much of Mark, Luke, and even Acts.) See my note on 26:13.

8. The resurrection is the strongest evidence that Jesus is Messiah, appointed by God to rule the world. Even the flimsy attempt by Jesus' enemies to explain His empty tomb shows that He must have risen.
 - a. What false story were the guards paid to tell?
 - b.√ What great commission did Messiah leave us to fulfill "until the end of the age"? (Be sure to include its four verbal forms.)
 - c.√ What great presence did He promise?

- 9.√ Now test your memory of the two resurrection appearances narrated in Matthew. Label each of the following statements *true if it is the way Matthew reported it*, otherwise false. Then change each false statement so that it will be true.
 - a. The Lord's first resurrection appearance was to all the women.
 - b. This happened on Sunday morning after they had seen an angel.
 - c. This happened between the tomb and where the disciples were staying.
 - d. They kissed Jesus' feet.
 - e. Jesus told them to tell the disciples to go to the Mount of Olives.
 - f. Jesus' second appearance was to over five hundred disciples.
 - g. Jesus' second appearance took place later that Sunday.
 - h. This time He appeared on a mountain in Galilee.
 - i. Since it was difficult to accept this miracle, some doubted.

Now, prepare for unit 4 examination. Do so by learning to answer all the checked questions in lessons 11–13. For example, practice telling the facts about Jesus' resurrection appearances in Matthew. You will be asked about them. Test yourself by answering the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. Then take the examination without looking up any answers.

ANSWERS

*Multiple answers to a single question are labeled in parentheses.
For example, question 8 in lesson 1 has two answers, labeled (a) and (b). Question 3c in lesson 2 has two answers, labeled (1) and (2).*

Unit 1

Lesson 1

2. The same two words are used in the Greek version of Genesis 2:4 and 5:1, where they mark some divisions in that book. This suggests that Matthew continues the history of redemption begun in Genesis.
4. “David” and “Abraham” each had important, eternal covenants that God will fulfill.
5. a. Jesus b. Joshua (*Yehoshua* in Hebrew)
6. It literally means “anointed,” referring to the king.
7. a. to show Jesus’ right to the throne of David and the blessings of Abraham
b. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the one who “had been Uriah’s wife” (that is, Bathsheba). At least the first three were non-Jews. Each woman had something abnormal about her marriage.
8. (a) to keep Mary as his wife though she was pregnant with Someone else’s Baby
(b) to name the Baby
9. a. the King of the Jews (= the Christ)
b. Daniel, who had written his prophecies in Babylon and Persia (where they were possibly from), had foretold the exact number of years from a certain decree to “the Anointed One, the ruler” (KJV, “Messiah the Prince”).
c. They came from the East, as Balaam did, and honored God’s Israel, speaking of the star and the Ruler.
10. in 5 B.C. (or earlier)
11. He relived parts of the history of Israel, including the Hosea 11 reference to coming out of Egypt.
12. (a) Archelaus was ruling in Judea. (b) God warned Joseph in a dream. (c) The prophets said that Messiah would be called a Nazarene.

Lesson 2

2. a. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near. (3:2)
b. the kingdom promised through the prophets, which will descend from heaven but fill the earth
c. to prepare the way for the LORD (for Him to come in blessing)
3. a. in the desert, dressing with rough clothes and eating desert food
b. because they weren’t bringing fruit in keeping with repentance (that is, evidence of changed attitudes)
c. (1) baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (2) judge between “wheat” and “chaff”
NOTE: In the Greek of verse 11 a single preposition (*en*=with or in) ties together “Holy Spirit” and “fire.” This probably indicates one baptism, with the “fire”

- referring to its purifying effect (Acts 2:3–4; cf. Isa. 4:4–5). But some think it refers to the future judgment of v. 12 (see 13:40–42; 25:41).
4. a. (1) the Holy Spirit descending and lighting upon Him
(2) a voice from heaven acknowledging Jesus
 - b. The Messiah has all the fullness of the Spirit.
 - c. Psalm 2:7—“You are my Son” Isaiah 42:1—“in whom I delight”
 - d. because at this time (1) the Spirit in His fullness came to abide on Him and (2) the Father acknowledged Him as “Son”
 5. a. Yes
NOTE: There is debate about this, since as God He could not sin. But as true Man He did have weaknesses that are part of human nature and that could attract Him to wrong. By definition, “tempted in every way, just as we are” (Heb. 4:15) means He was attracted to wrong as we are. This is the reason He can be an example for us.
 - b. (1) Making stones into bread would have kept Him from fear of starving.
(2) Casting Himself down from the highest point of the temple would have forced the angels to rescue Him, and apparently would have convinced many to believe in Him.
(3) Falling down to worship the devil would have made the devil an ally and given Him the kingdoms of the world (without suffering).
 - c. Here are some suggestions:
(1) despair (fearing that God was not caring for Him and might let Him die unnecessarily)
(2) presumption (forcing God to act contrary to His will)
(3) idolatry
 - d. the Scriptures NOTE: Those He quoted were all from Israel’s book of “wilderness lessons,” Deuteronomy.
 - e. (1) despair He had confidence in God’s goodness and listened to every word God said.
(2) presumption He would not insist that God act at once.
(3) idolatry He would worship only God.
 6. a. after John had been put in prison, in Capernaum, the land of Zebulun and Naphtali
b. the prophecy in Isaiah 9 about the light shining in the region of darkness
 7. You have just studied **Introduction (1:1 to 4:16) Preparation for the King’s Ministry**. The main division that follows is **The King’s Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)**.

Lesson 3

1. a. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”
b. It says He “began” preaching this, which means that He continued.
c. He told them to preach the same thing He had been preaching.
2. a. because the stone of Daniel 2, from which the Jews got this title, became a kingdom filling the earth
b. This was the description the prophets gave of it.

3. a. Simon, Andrew, James, John
b. fishers of men
4. teaching, preaching, healing
NOTE: Much or most of His teaching was done in Jewish synagogues. His preaching no doubt emphasized the nearness of the kingdom.
5. a. The Sermon on the Mount
b. Perhaps you noticed that these verses all speak of entering the kingdom or belonging to it, and show requirements for doing so.
6. by going up on a mountain (and sitting there to speak, a position of authority)
8. a. blessing for “all peoples on earth”
b. Each beatitude begins with “blessed.”
c. that the kingdom would begin soon and that they would enter it
d. the blessings of the kingdom, including comfort, inheriting the earth, complete righteousness
e. repentance
9. a. salt (of the earth) and light (of the world)
b. Perhaps you said that salt should be **different** from what it salts. Light must be **visible**.
10. a. everything, including the smallest letter, the least stroke of a pen
b. Without it no one will enter the kingdom.
11. Your answers are probably similar to these.
(a) Don’t be angry with a brother—but be reconciled.
(b) Don’t look at a woman lustfully.
(c) Don’t divorce except because of marital unfaithfulness.
(d) Don’t swear (make oaths)—but tell the truth.
(e) Don’t retaliate—but respond with kindness.
(f) Love your enemies and do good to them.
12. a. giving to the needy, prayer, fasting
b. that these deeds be secret, for the Father to see
c. (1) not to keep on babbling (v. 7)
(2) be sure to forgive others (vv. 14–15)
13. a. because those in heaven cannot be ruined or stolen, as those on earth can (vv. 19–20); and because our heart is where our treasure is (v. 21).
b. It determines whether the light that enters will give light to all or darkness to all (vv. 22–23).
c. (1) Life doesn’t consist primarily of such things (v. 25).
(2) The Father will see that such needs are met (vv. 26, 32).
(3) Each day has enough concerns without adding those for the future (v. 34).
d. God’s kingdom and righteousness (v. 33)

Lesson 4

1. a. You probably called it pride.
b. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.

ANSWERS

- c. You probably stressed the positive requirement of showing love to others because we want to receive love ourselves.
2. a. Here are some possible titles: The Two Gates (vv. 13–14), The Two Trees (vv. 15–23), The Two Houses (vv. 24–27).
b. by their fruit (vv. 16, 20)
c. because they do evil instead of the Father’s will (vv. 21, 23)
d. The wise man—whoever hears Jesus’ words and puts them into practice.
The foolish man—whoever hears Jesus’ words and does not put them into practice.
3. the fact that Jesus taught with authority
4. a. Your answer should include some of these in your own words.
(1) They have a leader whom God marvelously preserved as a child and set apart to save them.
(2) They expect God soon to fulfill the promises to their forefather Abraham.
(3) They expect the kingdom of God to begin soon.
(4) They have been seeing God’s miracles of deliverance.
(5) They have been washed in anticipation of hearing God’s Word.
(6) They have been led to a mountain.
(7) At the mountain they will hear God’s authoritative laws teaching them how to be righteous.
(8) These laws will be part of a covenant later ratified with blood.
b. (1) disciples who professed to accept Jesus’ authority
(2) crowds that the disciples came from
c. (1) the message that the kingdom had drawn near
(2) Jesus’ authority and power (teaching and healing)
5. a. They promise the same blessings that were promised to him.
b. repentant
c. blessings of the coming kingdom
6. a. true righteousness as the requirement for entering the kingdom
b. We must show the same love to others that we want to receive ourselves.
c. by the Holy Spirit, who writes the laws into our hearts
7. a. 3 b. 1 c. 2

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. d | 6. c | 11. a | 17. b |
| 2. b | 7. a | 12. b | 18. c |
| 3. b | 8. b | 13. a | 19. d |
| 4. a | 9. c | 14. c | 20. c |
| 5. d | 10. d | 15. d | 21. d |
| | | 16. a | 22. b |
23. (in any order) teaching, preaching, healing
24–25 in either order
24. The Father acknowledged Him as “Son.”
25. The Spirit in His fullness came to abide on Him.

Unit 2**Lesson 5**

1. Here is a complete list of scenes with possible titles:
SET I
8:1–4 – Jesus Cleanses a Leper.
8:5–13 – Jesus Heals the Centurion’s Servant.
8:14–17 – Jesus Heals Peter’s Mother-in-law and Many Others.
SET II
8:23–27 – Jesus Calms the Storm.
8:28–34 – Jesus Sends the Demons out of Men into Swine.
9:1–8 – Jesus Forgives the Paralyzed Man’s Sins.
SET III
9:18–26 – Jesus Raises the Girl and Heals the Woman.
9:27–31 – Jesus Gives Sight to Two Blind Men.
9:32–34 – Jesus Gives Speech to a Dumb Man.
2. a. before it b. after it
3. a. Set I—healing Set II—power Set III—restoration
b. to show that Jesus is the Messiah, with power to bring the kind of kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament
4. a. tear his clothes, leave his hair unkempt, cover the lower part of his face, cry out “Unclean, unclean,” and live alone (outside the camp)
b. unclean
c. He touched him (though touching a leper would usually make the toucher unclean) and said, “I am willing; be clean” (v. 3).
d. go to the priest (at Jerusalem) and offer the gift prescribed in the law, as a testimony to them (v. 4)
e. to the right ear, the right thumb, and the right big toe (consecrating his hearing, his doing, and his going)
f. by saying the word (to invisible servants, who would go and do what He said)
g. of people “from the east and the west” (that is, godly Gentiles)
They “will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom.”
h. by touching her hand (with which she proceeded to serve them) (8:14–15)
5. a. by telling him that He had no sure place to lie down (8:20)
b. that he should follow Jesus and let the dead bury their own dead (8:22)
6. a. (1) The waves swept over the boat. (2) The disciples were so afraid that they told Jesus, “We’re going to drown.” (8:24–25)
b. They lived in the tombs; they were so violent that no one could pass that way; they had enough demons to make a whole herd of pigs rush into the sea. (8:28, 32)
c. They pleaded with Him to go away. (8:34)
d. by having him get up, take his mat, and go home (9:6–7)
e. over nature, over demons, and over sin
7. a. Matthew (9:9)

- b. The “healthy” didn’t need help; God wanted “mercy” and not sacrifice. (9:12, 13)
- c. The bridegroom was with them (9:15); His “unshrunk cloth” and “new wine” required new garments and new wineskins—probably meaning new practices (9:16–17).
- 8. a. The girl had just died (9:18); the woman had been subject to bleeding for twelve years (9:20).
- b. from blindness to sight (9:27–30) and from dumbness to speech (9:32–33)
- c. They said He was driving out demons by the power of the prince of the demons (9:34).
- 9. a. demonstrate His power to establish the promised kingdom that had drawn near
- b. “powers of the coming age”
- 10. a. They were harassed and helpless—like sheep without a shepherd (9:36).
- b. that the Lord of the harvest would send workers into His harvest field (9:38)

Lesson 6

- 1. a. to cast out demons and heal all kinds of sickness
- b. Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John
- c. to “the lost sheep of Israel” (10:6)
- d. “The kingdom of heaven is [has drawn] near” (10:7)
NOTE: It is important to remember that this was the same message He had been preaching—4:17.
- e. If rejected, they should shake the dust off their feet; the judgment will be more severe for such a town than for Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 2. a. because the Spirit of their Father would speak through them (vv. 19–20)
- b. he who stands firm (that is, does not forsake Jesus) to the end
- c. that they would not finish all the cities of Israel before the Son of man would come (to reign)
- d. because
 - (1) the disciple will be treated like his master (10:24–25)
 - (2) all that is concealed will be disclosed (10:26–27)
 - (3) men can at worst kill the body but not the soul (10:28)
 - (4) the Father knows and permits what happens (10:29–31)
- e. the messengers’ reward (10:41)
- 3. a. whether Jesus was “the one who was to come” or whether they had to look for someone else (11:3)
- b. (1) the works (of the kingdom) that He was doing
(2) that he was blessed who did not fall away on account of Jesus
NOTE: This beatitude on the one who does not fall away is appropriate for every believer. But here it was directed to John.
- c. because he was the messenger predicted to prepare God’s way before Him (11:10)
NOTE: In Malachi 3:1 “the LORD Almighty” promises, “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before **me**.” Then He continues, “the Lord...will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant....” In other words, it was God’s messen-

- ger who would prepare God’s way for God the messenger of the covenant to come. When Jesus quoted from this verse, He changed “me” to “you,” showing that the promise was from God to Him.
- d. he who is least in the kingdom of heaven (11:11)
NOTE: This means (a) NOT that the kingdom began and John missed it but (b) that the kingdom was still future—and more marvelous than anyone can imagine.
4. a. It had suffered violence.
b. that John had a demon (that is, was a bit crazy, 11:18)
that Jesus was a glutton and a drunkard (11:19)
c. that of children playing in the marketplace and complaining that one companion (John) would not dance and that another (Jesus) would not mourn
NOTE: To paraphrase verses 16–19: “Though John was greatest of God’s servants, he was unacceptable to you. When you played the flute, he would not dance. Neither is the Son of Man (that is, Jesus) acceptable. When you sing a dirge, He will not mourn.”
d. (Your answer is probably similar to this.) That generation had done violence to the kingdom by rejecting both John and Jesus.
5. a. refusal to repent (11:20)
b. because it didn’t see the great works that Capernaum saw (11:23)
c. apparently the disciples
d. (1) the Son and (2) those to whom the Son reveals the Father (11:27)
e. rest; work to learn
NOTE: “A *yoke* is a wooden bar or frame that joins two animals like oxen or horses so that they can pull a wagon, plow, etc. together. Here it is used figuratively of the restrictions that a teacher or rabbi would place on his followers.” (NET Bible, p. 39)
6. a. because
(1) Jesus’ work was greater than the Sabbath (12:3–6).
(2) God is more concerned with “mercy” than with sacrifice (12:7).
NOTE: “Mercy” refers to covenant-love, whether shown to men or animals. This, rather than getting sacrifices, was the purpose of God’s laws. Pharisees had quite missed the point. They thought that laws of mercy, such as, the Sabbath, were designed to make men suffer for God’s sake.
(3) Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath (12:8).
b. It was always right to help needy people on the Sabbath (12:11–12).
c. They met to determine how to kill Jesus (12:14).
d. He will bring justice (moral order) to earth. (This is the meaning of “proclaim justice” and “leads justice to victory” in 12:18, 20.)
7. a. casting out a demon and thus restoring a blind and mute man (12:22)
b. 1. against the Spirit of God (12:28)
2. not against the Son of Man (Jesus, 12:32)
c. that the kingdom of God had come upon them (12:28)
NOTE: His power over Satan, rather than proving alliance with Satan, proved that God’s kingdom had come **upon** them. This statement does not mean that the

- kingdom, being proclaimed as near, had finally begun. Instead, it means that in His own Person and works, the Messiah embodies the kingdom. The kingdom was still only near with respect to being established, but it had touched earth in the Person of the Messiah. This is also the meaning of Luke 17:21: “Behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst” (NASB). It was there as long as the King was there.
8. a. It referred to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection (12:40).
NOTE: His resurrection was implied by (a) Jonah’s apparent return to life and (b) the fact that Jesus’ burial would be limited to three days.
 - b. The unclean spirit would return with seven more wicked spirits, to live (stay) there, making its last state worse than before (12:43, 45).
NOTE: In fact, some of the very people baptized by John and healed by Jesus took part in delivering Him to be shamed and killed. Yet all of this was by “God’s set purpose and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23).
 - c. You probably realized that they emphasize the importance of spiritual relationship (doing the will of the Father) over blood relationship (being a Jew).
 9. a. (1) the works (of the kingdom) that He was doing
(2) that he was blessed who did not fall away on account of Jesus
 - b. It had suffered violence.
 - c. He will bring justice (moral order) to earth.

Lesson 7

1. Here is one set of titles for them: The Sower, The Wheat and the Weeds, The Mustard Seed, The Yeast, The Treasure, The Pearl, The Net, The House Owner.
2. to reveal the secrets (mysteries) of the kingdom to His disciples while hiding them from others
3. The Wheat and the Weeds – the conditions after the harvest
The Mustard Seed – the full-grown tree
The Net – the conditions after the judgment (after the good and bad fish were separated)
4. a. the present age, separating the two comings of Messiah
b. It was “postponed.”
5. a. In it Jesus says He will come (again) in glory to sit on His throne of glory and permit others to inherit the kingdom.
b. in the grand conclusion
6. “Here is a parable about the kingdom.”
9. d 10. d 11. a 12. c

Unit 3

Lesson 8

1. The King Confessed
2. He often retreated from His enemies.
3. that He was no more than the “carpenter’s son”
4. that He was John the Baptist risen from the dead (to haunt him)
5. a. Jesus’ feeding the 5000

- b. by having them participate throughout
- 6. a. by announcing His presence
 - b. A believer can make superhuman accomplishments if he keeps his attention on Jesus rather than on circumstances.
- 8. a. Pharisees and teachers of the law
 - b. that Pharisees exalted their traditions above God's Word
 - c. It does not come from outside but from inside.
- 9. a. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."
 - b. "Lord, Son of David"
- 10. 4000
- 12. He reminded them that they had gathered basketfuls of bread after each of the feeding miracles.
- 13. a. 16:14
 - b. the Messiah, the Son of the living God
 - c. the promised King, who would fulfill God's promises and bring His everlasting kingdom
- 14. God's royal heir
- 15. a. build His church
 - b. authority in the future kingdom (Believers will reign.)

Lesson 9

- 1. a. Part I, the need to repent because the kingdom had drawn near
 - Part II, the Lord's coming death and resurrection
- b. following Jesus to death
- c. that He would later come in glory and give out rewards
- d. that they would see Him "coming in his kingdom"
- 2. a. They saw the "majesty" of the Lord's "power and coming."
 - b. Did you notice some of the following? the high mountain, people present from the Old Testament and New Testament, Jesus' glory, the bright cloud of God's presence, God's voice affirming the Son
- 3. Apparently they show what a constant trial it was for Him to live among people so lacking in faith.
- 5. a. We should not insist on them if that would unnecessarily offend.
 - b. Does it remind you that there is divine help available in such cases?
- 6. a. 1. Matthew 8:11. People from the east and the west will come to feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - 2. Matthew 11:11. The least in that kingdom will be greater than John the Baptist.
 - 3. Matthew 13:32, 43. The kingdom will be like a tree in which the birds perch. The righteous will shine like the sun.
 - 4. Matthew 16:27, 28. Jesus will come in His Father's glory with His angels—and will reward each person according to what he has done.
- b. to enter that future kingdom (vv. 2–3), to be great in that kingdom (v. 4)
- 7. (a) to avoid offending others who have humble faith (vv. 5–14)

ANSWERS

- (b) to discipline and restore offenders (vv. 15–20)
NOTE: The purpose of showing the brother his fault is to win him over (v. 15), not to win an argument. Only a humble spirit can pursue this goal (Gal. 6:1–3). Pride will take pleasure in spreading bad news about someone (Prov. 17:9).
- (c) to forgive those who want forgiveness (vv. 21–35)
- 8. (a) Go to him and show him his fault privately.
- (b) If he will not listen, go to him again with one or two more witnesses.
NOTE: This does not say “two or three more” witnesses.
- (c) If he will still not listen, tell it to the church.
- (d) If he will still not listen, treat him like a non-believer (church action).
- 9. a. (1) When his servant begged for patience, the king canceled the servant’s huge debt.
(2) When a fellow servant begged for patience over a small debt, the servant was violent and unforgiving.
(3) The other servants told the king what the servant had done.
(4) The king took back the servant’s pardon and put him in jail to be tortured until he paid.
- b. If I refuse to forgive my brother, God will take back my pardon.
NOTE: At least this story shows that a person who does not show God’s love must not count on His forgiveness.

Lesson 10

- 1. that Jesus left Galilee and went into the region of Judea east of the Jordan River, followed by large crowds
- 2. a. no divorce except in the case of immorality (v. 9)
NOTE: The Old Testament “permission” (vv. 7–8) was really a protection for a divorced woman. She could not be handed away, then retrieved, as simple property.
- b. from birth, manmade, or as God’s response to one who would dedicate his life to work for the future kingdom
- 3. The future kingdom belongs to such.
- 4. a. “what good thing” he could do to ensure his getting “eternal life” (v. 16)
- b. to give all to the poor and follow the Lord (vv. 21–22)
- c. Memorize all six of these (but not the references) as equivalents. Three of them use the word *life*. Two use the word *kingdom*.
“get eternal life” (v. 16) “enter the kingdom of God” (v. 24)
“enter life” (v. 17) “be saved” (v. 25)
“enter the kingdom of heaven” (v. 23) “inherit eternal life” (v. 29)
- 5. in the future kingdom: rulership (v. 28) and eternal life (v. 29)
in the present: great abundance (v. 29)
- 6. a. the same amount
- b. right
- c. generous
- 7. that He would be raised back to life
- 8. a. (1) They were among the first disciples chosen (Matt. 4:21).

- (2) He took only them and Peter to the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1).
- b. that they sit at His right and left in His kingdom (20:21) NOTE: These were the places of greatest importance next to the King.
- c. (1) Such people must first follow Jesus in suffering (vv. 22–23a).
(2) It is the Father who will award high positions (v. 23).
(3) Truly seeking greatness will lead to ministering, as in Jesus’ example (vv. 25–28).
- d. “to give his life as a ransom for many”
- 9. a. Jericho
b. “Lord, Son of David”
- 11. b

Unit 4

Lesson 11

- 1. a. to fulfill the prophecy (in Zechariah 9:9) that the King would come in that manner
b. bring peace for all nations and rule (Zech. 9:10)
c. They spread their cloaks and branches on the road. They said, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!”
- 2. a. by putting a stop to the buying and selling in the temple, making it a house of prayer (vv. 12–13)
b. His healing the blind and lame; children calling Him “Son of David”
- 3. a. Learn these three:
(1) All four Gospels record it.
(2) It took place at the beginning of Passion Week.
(3) It climaxed months of deliberate progress toward Jerusalem.
b. He saw that Jerusalem would lose its golden opportunity, would reject Him, and consequently be judged.
c. Jesus’ death, which provided eternal life
- 4. a. that by faith without doubt we can not only curse a fig tree but can have a mountain moved
NOTE: “Faith” does not mean convincing ourselves but coming to know God’s purposes. The Lord’s promise about what faith can accomplish aims at glorifying God, not at exalting or enriching ourselves.
b. Israel
- 5. if they had told where John’s baptism came from

ANSWERS

6. Your summaries should be similar to these:

Reference	The Parable's Content	Its Teaching
21:28–32	The first son told his father he would work, but did not. The second son told his father he would not work, but did.	The tax gatherers and harlots were like the second son; the leaders, like the first son.
21:33–46	Vine growers rejected or killed all the owner's messengers, including his son. The owner would punish the growers and give the vineyard to other growers.	Because Israel rejected the prophets and killed God's Son, God would punish them and give the kingdom to others.
22:1–14	Those previously invited to the wedding feast for the king's son refused to come or mistreated his servants. The king destroyed those murderers and had the feast filled with others. Even then, one guest was thrown out for refusing to wear the special clothing.	God would punish Israel for refusing His invitation—and would fill His kingdom with others (who must accept the righteousness He offers).

7. Your summaries should be similar to these:

Reference	Question	Answer
22:15–22	The Pharisees and Herodians asked whether it was right to pay taxes to the emperor.	It is right to pay to Caesar what is his and to God what is His.
22:23–33	The Saducees asked how a complicated marriage situation could be worked out if people rise from the dead.	The Scriptures support resurrection, and God has the power to make a new world.
22:34–40	A Pharisee law expert asked which commandment is the greatest.	Love God with your whole being—and love your neighbor as yourself.

8.
 - a. (1) Whose son did they think the Messiah was?
(2) How did David call Him (his own descendant) "Lord"?
 - b. the fact that they didn't know that Messiah would also be divine
 - c. You can if you believe that He is both human and divine (both David's Son and David's God).
9.
 - a. doing everything for men to see (v. 5)
 - b. humility, chapter 18
10. (a) 13–14 They refused to enter the kingdom and closed its doors to others.

- (b) 15 After much effort to make a convert, they made him worse than themselves.
 - (c) 16–22 They required truth only under certain conditions.
 - (d) 23–24 They gave tithes of unimportant things but neglected much more important considerations.
 - (e) 25–26 They were careful about outward appearance but not inward reality.
 - (f) 27–28 They beautified their public acts to cover up their wickedness.
 - (g) 29–32 They acknowledged their murderous forefathers but did not realize they were just like them.
11. “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD”
 12. a. The leaders’ question about Jesus’ authority, Jesus’ three parables, the leaders’ three questions, Jesus’ question about the Messiah
 - b. began: Where did Jesus get His authority?
ended: How did David call Messiah “Lord”?
 - c. 2
 - d. the wicked hypocrisy of the leaders
 - e. the destruction of the temple, His own absence (until their conversion)
 13. See the answer to question 3a.

Lesson 12

1. a. “Your house is left to you desolate” (23:38).
 - b. (1) when that [destruction and return] would happen
(2) what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age
2. a. (1) false Messiahs (2) wars (3) famines (4) earthquakes
 - b. persecution
 - c. preach the gospel of the kingdom in the whole world (v. 14)
3. a. “standing in the holy place **the abomination that causes desolation**” (v. 15)
 - b. because otherwise no one would survive (v. 22) (You may have answered, “for the sake of the elect.”)
 - c. because His coming will be as visible as the lightning (v. 27)
4. a. failure of the sun, moon, and stars (v. 29)

NOTE: In the Old Testament such celestial phenomena are often part of descriptions of events both historical and future. They cannot always be taken literally. See Prophecy Key 5 later in this lesson.

 - b. “gather His elect” from the whole earth (v. 31)
5. a. It would be near again when “all these things” took place (v. 33).
 - b. They will follow their usual patterns (eating, drinking, marrying) without concern, until it is too late.
6. a. keep watch, be ready (vv. 42–44)
 - b. “cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites” (v. 51)

NOTE: This shows that he is a servant in name only—not a genuine believer, who looks for the Lord to come.
7. a. because they took no “oil in jars along with their lamps” (vv. 3–4)
 - b. “I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.” (v. 12)

8. a. He dug a hole and hid it, whereas the others put the money to work (vv. 16–18).
NOTE: As in the case of the man in 24:45–51, this man was a “servant” in name only. He served only himself.
- b. (1) The faithful servants: He commended them, promised to put them “in charge of many things,” and let them share his happiness.
(2) The lazy servant: He commanded to take the talent from him, give it to the one who had ten talents, and throw him “outside, into the darkness.”
9. a. (1) It is about the Son of Man coming “in his glory” to “sit on his throne” (v. 31).
(2) “All the nations will be gathered before him” for Him to judge (v. 32).
(3) He is called “the King” (vv. 34, 40).
(4) To the “sheep” He gives “the kingdom” as inheritance (v. 34).
- b. The evidence is whether or not they ministered to Him in need by ministering to His “brothers” in need (vv. 35–45).
- c. “eternal punishment” and “eternal life” (v. 46)
NOTE: To inherit the kingdom (v. 34) is the same as to go to eternal life (v. 46). In earlier passages this was called to “inherit eternal life” (19:29), “enter the kingdom of heaven” (7:21), or enter “life” at the end of the “narrow road” (7:14). In one sense a believer already “has eternal life” and “has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24). But in other aspects “eternal life” is still a **future** gift (see, for example, Rom. 2:7).
10. the delay before the Lord finally comes back to set up His kingdom
11. (a) when the predicted destruction [and return] would happen
(b) what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the age

Lesson 13

1. a. “When Jesus had finished”
b. the chief priests and the elders (that is, the supreme council)
c. A woman poured very expensive perfume on His head. (vv. 7, 12)
d. thirty silver coins (v. 15)
2. a. in the house of a man in the city (Jerusalem, v. 18)
b. It would have been better for him if he had not been born (v. 24).
c. He called the bread “my body” (v. 26). He called the cup “my blood of the covenant” (v. 28).
d. the New Covenant
e. in the kingdom (v. 29)
NOTE: Matthew records, “in my Father’s kingdom”; Luke 22:18 has the equivalent: “until the kingdom of God comes.”
3. a. to die for the Lord (v. 35)
b. that the cup might be taken from Him but that the Father’s will might be done (v. 39)
c. by kissing Him (vv. 48–49)
d. (1) They that use it die by it (v. 52).
(2) Jesus must fulfill the Scriptures, in this case, about His death (v. 54).

ANSWERS

- e. that He was Messiah (“the Christ, the Son of God”), and that He would sit at God’s right hand and come on the clouds of heaven (vv. 63–64)
NOTE: Jesus accepted this title as it was proposed to Him (“Yes, it is as you say”; simplified in Mark 14:62 to “I am”). He also accepted it under oath.
- f. His first two denials were in response to accusations by maids (vv. 69–72).
- g. to make legal its decision taken the night before
- h. He had betrayed innocent blood (27:4). He hanged himself (27:5).
- 4. a. King of the Jews (27:11)
- b. “Let His blood be on us and on our children!” (27:25).
- 5. a. “THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS” (27:37)
- b. “the King of Israel” (27:42)
- c. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (27:46)
- d. “The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” (27:51)
NOTE: This indicated that the way was now open to approach God (Heb. 10:19–22).
- e. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons (called Salome in Mark 15:40)
- 6. a. Joseph from Arimathea (27:57)
- b. put a seal on the stone in front of the entrance and posted a Roman guard (27:65–66)
- 7. You should have written the facts about as follows. Except for the references, learn all these facts well!

The Two Resurrection Appearances of Jesus in Matthew 28				
Reference in Matt.	TO WHOM (persons)	WHEN (time & circumstances)	WHERE (place)	WHAT (what was said & done in general)
First Appearance 28:1–10	to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary	on Sunday morning as they were hurrying from the tomb to tell the disciples what the angel had said about risen Jesus	between the tomb and where the disciples were	Jesus said, “Greetings.” They clasped His feet and worshiped Him. He told them not to be afraid but to tell the disciples to go to Galilee to see Him.
Second Appearance 28:16–20	to the eleven disciples	some time after Jesus appeared to the women	Galilee, on a mountain to which Jesus sent them	When they saw Him they worshiped Him, but some doubted. He gave them the Great Commission and promised His presence.

- 8. a. “His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.” (28:13)
- b. Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them. (28:19–20)
- c. “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (28:20)
- 9. Statements b, c, h, and i are true. For the others, the following restatements are true.

ANSWERS

- a. The Lord's first resurrection appearance was to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.
- d. They clasped (took hold of) Jesus' feet.
- e. Jesus told them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee.
- f. Jesus' second appearance was to the eleven disciples.
NOTE: The appearance he refers to was probably on the same occasion as to over five hundred (1 Cor. 15:6), but Matthew did not report that.
- g. Jesus' second appearance (recorded in Matthew) took place after they had all gone to Galilee.
NOTE: This was the second appearance Matthew reported but later in the full list.

Appendix A: Resume of Matthew Outline

Introduction (1:1 to 4:16) Preparation for the King's Ministry

I. The King's Ministry until the Great Confession (4:17 to 16:20)

- A. The King's Message (4:17 to 7:29) Repent because the kingdom has drawn near.
First Discourse (chs. 5–7): *The Righteousness Required to Enter the Kingdom*
- B. The King's Works (chs. 8–10) Proof that He is the Messiah
Second Discourse (ch. 10): *The King's Servants Sent Forth*
- C. The King Rejected (chs. 11–13) "His own did not receive him."
Third Discourse (ch. 13): *The Secrets about the Kingdom*
- D. The King Confessed (13:53 to 16:20) Faith amid unbelief
THE GREAT CONFESSION & THE GREAT PROMISE (16:13–20)

II. The King's Ministry until the Great Commission (16:21 to 28:20)

- A. The King's Disciples Challenged and Encouraged (16:21 to 18:35)
Fourth Discourse (ch. 18): *Christian Humility and Meekness*
- B. The King Formally Presented and Rejected (chs. 19–25)
 - 1. The Trip to Jerusalem (chs. 19–20)
 - 2. The Royal Entry and Resultant Opposition (chs. 21–22)Fifth Discourse (ch. 23): *Woes upon the Religious Leaders*
Sixth Discourse (chs. 24–25): *Events Leading to the Future Kingdom*
- C. The King Crucified and Triumphant (chs. 26–28)
THE GREAT COMMISSION & THE GREAT PRESENCE (28:18–20)

Appendix B: The Beatitudes

Heirs of the Kingdom, Matthew 5:3-12 (James 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:3-6; Rev. 11:13)			
Description of Jesus' Repentant Followers	Equivalent	Other References	Their Coming Inheritance
Negative (defining repentance)			
1 poor in spirit	realize spiritual bankruptcy	Isa. 66:2	the kingdom of heaven
2 mourn	beg God to pardon & cleanse	Isa. 61:2; 2 Cor. 7:9-10	will be comforted
3 meek	surrender selves to God for Him to control	Ps. 37:11; Phil. 2:5-11	will inherit the earth
4 hunger and thirst for righteousness	seek to be like God & help others to do so	Isa. 55:1; John 7:37-39	will be filled (with righteousness)
Positive (emphasizing results of God's grace)			
5 merciful	seek good for the helpless and lost	Ps. 41:1-3; James 2:13	will be shown mercy
6 pure in heart	a) are honest with God & others, meditate on all He says b) are cleansed	Ps. 24:3-6; 73:1; Matt. 6:20-21; 12:34-35	will see God
7 peacemakers	are committed to resolving conflicts & making peace	Matt. 5:38-48; 2 Cor. 5:19-20	will be called sons of God
8a persecuted because of righteousness 8b people insult you, persecute you, falsely say...evil against you because of me	willing to stand for God & the right at any cost	Matt. 10:16-42; 1 Peter 4:12-16	the kingdom of heaven great is your reward (stored up) in heaven

These eight descriptions and eight promises are known as “beatitudes.” Much of their content came from Old Testament Scriptures, such as, Psalms 24:4; 37:11; 41:1-3; 73:1; and Isaiah 55:1; 61:2. In them Jesus spoke to and described repentant Jews who followed Him. All eight descriptions were true of each one—and are true of His sincere followers today. They were responding to two great realities they were witnessing: (a) a constant message and (b) convincing miracles.

- a. They were hearing this message repeated constantly by John the Baptist and Jesus: “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has drawn near” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; literally). The same message was later widely announced by Jesus’ apostles (Matt. 10:7), even on His final and deliberate journey to Jerusalem (Luke 10:1-2, 9, 11).
- b. They were seeing miracles Jesus was doing, and later His disciples (Matt. 4:23-25; see chapters 8-10; Luke 10:9). These miracles were the sort that could bring the predicted kingdom.

What was this “kingdom of heaven” that had drawn near? Certainly not God’s universal kingdom nor His rule over individual hearts; those have always been present and cannot draw near. None of the heralds defined it, confident that the Jews already knew what it will be. The Jews called it “the kingdom,” “the kingdom of God,” and “the kingdom of heaven.” They knew about it from many Old Testament prophecies, which described it as spiritual, material, and political (e.g., Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-16; 35:1-10). It will be a kingdom forever covering the earth. When they called it “the kingdom of heaven” (used only in Matthew because confusing to Gentiles), they reflected Daniel 2:35, 44-45. The kingdom will **not** be **in** heaven (location) but **from** heaven (origin). The Old Testament descriptions were ratified in passages such as Luke 1:32-33, 67-79; 19:11-27; and Acts 1:6; 3:19-21. Though Jesus did not inaugurate that kingdom in His first coming, He promised to do so when He comes again (Matt. 25:31). We have no right to change its meaning. It should be the great goal of our lives.

Appendix C: Wise & Foolish Builders

A Wise Man DOES What Jesus Says (Jesus' words from Matthew 7:24-27 KJV)		J HEPP
A Wise Man	A Foolish Man	
²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine,	²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine,	
and <i>doeth them</i> ,	and <i>doeth them not</i> ,	
I will liken him unto a <i>wise</i> man,	shall be likened unto a <i>foolish</i> man,	
which built his house upon <i>a rock</i> :	which built his house upon <i>the sand</i> :	
²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,	²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,	
and beat upon that house;	and beat upon that house;	
and it <i>fell not</i> :	and it <i>fell</i> : and great was the fall of it.	
<i>for it was founded upon a rock.</i>		

Thus Jesus ends His “Sermon on the Mount” by describing two kinds (wise and foolish) who hear Him. Each builds his house, which the storm attacks; but only the wise man’s house survives. What distinguishes him as wise? Jesus does not point to the man’s faith but to his works. He **does** what he hears; the foolish man does not. (“Doeth them” cannot mean just faith, as some suppose from John 6:27-29.) The following is from my “[Keys](#)” to this sermon:

The conclusion to the sermon makes use of three principal contrasts: two gates (opening to two roads), two trees (bearing two kinds of fruit), and two houses (built on two foundations). These illustrate the Lord’s exhortations, especially for the crowds, to find the narrow way to life (that is, to the kingdom), not to follow false teachers (nor depend on false profession), but to build strong lives by obeying His teachings. Hearing His teachings is not enough; only by obeying can one withstand the storms of life (7:24–25).

This does not mean that our works save us. “God credits righteousness *apart from works*” (Rom. 4:6). We must come to Jesus not good but repentant: “poor in spirit,” those who “mourn” (Matt. 5:3-4). Yet, saving faith seeks more than pardon; we “hunger and thirst for righteousness” and “will be filled” with it (5:6). God certainly sanctifies every believer: “without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). Every real disciple is learning “to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:18-20). In every case good works result and “every person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone” (James 2:24). *So don’t miss the Lord’s emphasis:*

- Matthew 5:19-20: “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments... will be called least in the kingdom...but whoever practices and teaches these commands will

be called great....For...unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees...you will certainly not enter the kingdom....”

- Matthew 7:17-19: “every good tree bears good fruit”
- Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom ...but only he who does the will of my Father....on that day...I will tell them...Away from me, you evildoers!”

Appendix D: Does the Church Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom?

*The church (Greek ekklesia) is the **assembly** Messiah is preparing for His coming kingdom. Hebrews 2:12 quotes Psalm 22:22 with this meaning. In this appendix “us” and “our” refer to the church. Emphasis is sometimes added to quotations.*

“This gospel [good news] of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world” (Matt. 24:14).⁵⁰ That message should interest the nation of Israel, because God is going to “restore the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6). He will fulfill all His promises to that nation. But does the same message concern the church? Some interpreters say no. They wrongly see too much difference between

1. the church as Messiah’s body and redeemed Israel of the future
2. what they consider a “heavenly” hope for the church and an “earthly” kingdom for Israel

These two distinctions contradict the Gospel of Matthew—and the rest of the New Testament.

1. Consider the first wrong distinction—in regard to Messiah’s body. The apostle Paul explains that Messiah forms His body by baptizing men in/with the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12–13). Yet, this great work of Messiah was promised to Israel. In Matthew 3:11, as in all the Gospels, it was to **Israel** that John the Baptist promised “He will baptize **you** with the Holy Spirit.” This simply restated such prophecies as Ezekiel 36:27 (“I will put my Spirit within you”) and Joel 2:28 (“I will pour out my Spirit”). Just as by His Spirit God changes us into His children and heirs (Rom. 8:16–17), so He promised for Israel. Jesus alluded to such prophecies when talking to “Israel’s teacher.” Nicodemus should have known from such prophecies that no one can “enter the kingdom” without being “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5–10). All of Messiah’s future kingdom assembly will have been so born/baptized.

To say the same thing from the perspective of Hebrews 9:15: Israelites could never receive their “eternal inheritance” if they remained under the Old Covenant. They must be forgiven, then transformed by God’s Spirit under the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6, 18).

Messiah began this work at Pentecost (Acts 2). Both before and after that event, what happened then was identified as His baptizing in/with the Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:15–17). However, on that day itself Peter explained by using Joel’s terminology: “Messiah” (Acts 2:31), he said, “received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and **poured out**” that heavenly Gift (2:33). Thus, “pouring out the Spirit” is the same as “baptizing in/with the Spirit.” And by this action Messiah began to build His body, the church. When Israel finally repents (Zech. 12:10; 13:1; Rom. 11:26–27), will He not, as promised, baptize them too? On what basis should we doubt that Spirit-baptized Israel will become part of Messiah’s body?

Therefore, redeemed Israel will not be basically different from the *ekklesia* (church) but part of it. Restored to God’s favor, they will receive the eternal inheritance.

⁵⁰ As to the fact that the gospel is in Matthew, see my notes on 26:13 and 28:20.

2. Consider the second wrong distinction mentioned above: between an “earthly” kingdom for Israel and a “heavenly” hope for the church. There is no such distinction in Matthew. That book constantly refers to the future kingdom as our hope (for example, Matt. 5:3, 10, 20; 7:21). When it records the Lord’s clear promises to come back to earth in glory to reign, it always assumes that believers will share in that rule. For whom did Matthew write these promises? Certainly for members of the church, whether Jews or not. Books for the church do not and cannot present distinct hopes for its members. “In the church there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Gal. 3:28).

Furthermore, a “heavenly” hope can be on earth. Right now our inheritance is “kept in heaven for [us]” (1 Pet. 1:4) but will be “given [to us] when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Pet. 1:13). As Jesus showed often in Matthew, that will be when He comes to reign (Matt. 13:41–43; 16:27; 19:28; 25:31, 34). The rock that Daniel saw coming from God “became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35). That will be the kingdom of heaven on earth, the same picture as in Revelation 21–22. A heavenly hope to be enjoyed on earth.

Jewish hopes were heavenly in the same way. It was originally to Jews that Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth....But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:19–20). Why should we think that their heavenly treasures are any different from ours? Passages like Hebrews 6:13–20 and 11:8–16 show that they are identical. Hebrews 11 tells us that Abraham’s hope was both earthly and heavenly. Earthly: He “made his home in **the promised land** like a stranger” (v. 9). Yet, he “did not receive the things promised” (v. 13). Why not? Because he was looking for a “**heavenly**” country (v. 16) and “the city with foundations” (v. 10). That city is “the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22), his goal and ours.

After descending to the renewed earth (Rev. 21:1–2, 10), that heavenly Jerusalem will have “the throne of God and of the Lamb [Messiah]” (Rev. 22:3). It will be the capital city of the eternal kingdom. It will be Abraham’s city, enabling him to inherit his promised land. And saved Gentiles will “take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 8:11), not on a neighboring star. God’s “servants will serve him....And they will reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:3, 5).

In other words, the church and restored Israel have basically the same hope. It is both heavenly and earthly—the coming rule of heaven on earth. This does not erase the distinctions between saved nations, which will persist even into the perfected form of the kingdom (Rev. 21:24, 26; 22:2). And Israel will finally be the head of the nations, rather than the tail (Deut. 28:13).⁵¹

⁵¹ “The names of the twelve tribes of Israel” on the gates (Rev. 21:12) will forever remind us of God’s grace in and through those tribes. “The names of the twelve apostles” on the foundations (v. 14) will remind us how people worldwide came to be included. Do the “twenty-four elders” John saw in heaven (Rev. 4:4) combine Jews and Gentiles? It is unclear, because the Jewish Sanhedrin itself—with no Gentiles—included twenty-four elders and twenty-four chief priests.

Accordingly, the Apostle Paul saw no contradiction in preaching to Gentiles both God's grace and the future kingdom. Far along in his ministry, he summarized his message in Ephesus as "testifying to the gospel of God's grace" (Acts 20:24). In his next sentence he summarized his message as "preaching the kingdom." Indeed, it is good news that by God's grace both Jews and Gentiles can participate in Messiah's coming kingdom "for ever and ever" (Dan. 7:18, 27).

The apostle Paul discussed these matters in his Epistle to the Ephesians. See my [commentary on Ephesians](#).

Appendix E: The Meaning of Matthew 11:12

Theology affects translation. Notice how their theology affected NIV translators in Matthew 11:12. Convinced that the kingdom began and could be entered in Jesus' day, they took unusual or mistaken meanings for certain words in Matthew 11:12.

Matthew 11:12 in Two Translations			
Greek for Bolded Words	NIV (has unusual meanings)	NASB (has normal meanings)	Comments
<i>biadzetai</i>	From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing,	And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence,	This verb means rape in Deut. 22:25, 28. In Matt. 11:12, Louw & Nida translate, "suffers violent attacks"; NET, "has suffered violence."
<i>biastai</i>	and forceful men	and violent men	Never used elsewhere of good men.
<i>harpadzousin</i>	lay hold of it.	take it by force	Elsewhere NIV always translates this verb as take quickly or forcibly: see Matt. 12:29; 13:19; etc.

We can conclude that Matthew 11:12 does not speak of men entering the kingdom but plundering it.⁵² The same argument applies to the parallel passage in Luke 16:16. There both NIV and NASB say that "everyone is forcing his way into" the kingdom. But the nearly identical form of *biadzetai* should be translated "uses violence." That raises the question of how "everyone" (people in general) or "violent men" could use violence against the kingdom or plunder it? By their selfish treatment of its representatives: John the Baptist, Jesus, and Jesus' own representatives. Instead of submitting to it humbly, they tried to use it for their own purposes. What is your attitude toward the kingdom?

⁵² For the same theological reason, the NIV misinterprets Matthew 21:31. I will now summarize the argument I make there. The NIV states that to chief priests and elders Jesus says that wicked people "**are entering** the kingdom of God **ahead of** you." However, the Greek expression represented by bold letters (*proagousin eis*) says nothing about arriving or entering, as seen in NIV's translation of the same expression in 14:22 and 26:32. Matthew 21:31 means that wicked people were ahead of the leaders on the way to the kingdom.

Appendix F: Matthew Mountain

MATTHEW: BEHOLD THE KING General Structure

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