

The book of
Matthew



A Verse by Verse Study Guide

Prepared for the Safe Haven Berean Fellowship, Ministry of the Word
by Pastor David Braden

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

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Preface

This document is prepared as a study guide for the book of Matthew. As such, it is designed for the facilitator who leads the study and the student who will walk through the pages of this gospel.

The abbreviations, OT and NT, are used for Old Testament and New Testament.

Towards the end of his life on earth, the apostle Paul wrote to the churches that he wanted to get to know Jesus better (Phil 3:7-11). This was written some 25 years after his conversion experience and a myriad of trials and sufferings for the kingdom. Amazing, after all of this time, he acknowledges his desire to know Jesus better.

Can we also say: "I want to know Jesus better?"

My hope in this study is that, as you work through the pages of this book, you will get to know Jesus better. As you study the life and ministry of Jesus, you will begin to understand the great heart of this amazing God-man as he pours out his life for those who have rebelled against the all-wise, all-kind, loving heavenly Father.

May God richly bless you as you study this treasured book.

INTRODUCTION

Outline of the Introduction:

Four great themes of the Bible

- I. Studying a book of the Bible
- II. Background (Context)
- III. Guidelines for interpreting the gospels: (Preparation for the Journey)

Four great themes of the Bible:

1. The Redemption and Salvation of Mankind
2. A People (see Rev. 21) – How it all ends up
3. God's great love
4. Christ (is found in all of the books)

I. Studying a book of the Bible

- A. Prayer
- B. Background (Context)
- C. Survey of the book
- D. Observation
- E. Interpretation
- F. Correlation (Other applicable scriptural passages)
Other sources, e.g. commentaries
- G. Application

II. Background (Context)

A. Author:

1. The Scriptures do not specifically say that Matthew wrote this book. (not like Paul who very quickly identifies himself in his letters)
2. Read 2 passages:

Matt. 10:3; Mark 2:14-17

What do we learn about Matthew in these verses?

He was a _____.

He was _____ by Jesus to be one of his intimate disciples.

He was, therefore, an eye-witness of the events of Jesus' earthly ministry.

How does the writing of the gospel of Matthew differ from the writing of the gospel of Luke? Luke was not one of the 12 apostles and therefore, not a day-to-day witness of all the things Jesus did.

Additionally, we know that Matthew, a Jew, was writing to Jews and a major goal was to demonstrate from the OT that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.

Luke was a doctor and is the only known Gentile author of the New Testament books. His writing includes many medical terms that were in use during his day.

What was Matthew's Jewish name? _____ (Mk 2:14-17)

How do we know who the author is? The tradition of the early church was that Matthew was the author of this gospel.

B. Who were the original readers for whom this book was written?

Answer: Jews

C. Date and Place Written:

1. Date: Jensen ~ 58 A.D.
Wayne House Chronological Chart - 60s

There are predominantly 2 opinions regarding the sequence of the writing of the gospel accounts.

- a. Matthew was written first, before the other gospels.
- b. Mark was written first before Matthew.
Some believe that Matthew and Luke used materials from Mark in their writings.

Luke was written after Matthew and Mark were written and John followed thereafter, some 30 years.

Regardless of the date of writing, Matthew has been placed first in the NT canon. (for reasons which will become obvious)

2. Place written: Unknown, although some suggest either in Jerusalem or Antioch in Syria.

D. Theme and Purpose:

The Bible is the story of God's redemptive actions through Christ Jesus. As such, the story of the gospel is the centerpiece of the Bible's master story.

Matthew is the first author to record the story of the atonement of Christ.

To think about: Suppose you know someone who has just become a Christian by attending a revival or through the testimony of a friend. Also, suppose that this person has never opened the pages of the Bible.

What would be their response if instructed to get a Bible and begin reading the New Testament? Try it by reading Read Matt. 1:1-6.

Let's see if we can provide some helps for this new Christian.

Review Chart (at end of this chapter): "God's Plan of the Ages – Creation to the End of the NT Period"

See also the chart on "God Prepares for the Messiah." (p. 16)

What do we know about the book of Matthew, the 1st book a new believer will encounter?

I. Theme of Matthew:

- A. Jesus, the Messiah, and his promised kingdom
- B. The life and ministry of Jesus, the Messiah

II. The purposes of Matthew:

- 1. The book of Matthew is the _____ link between the OT and the NT.

How do we know this?

- a. numerous references to:
the son of _____ See Matt. 1:1 (This would be of significance to the Jews. see John 5:17-18)
Jewish Holy _____.
Old Testament Scriptures.
Jewish c_____.

the Law of _____.
OT pr _____.

2. The author is demonstrating from the _____ that the Christian's Savior is the _____ long awaited by the Jews.
3. Provide us a record of Jesus' early life, public _____ and teachings.

In doing so, it will be a historical witness to the _____ and _____ of the Christ.
4. Introduce the "kingdom of God" and show us how to enter it. Explain what the kingdom of God is.
5. Provide an important NT source of information on the last times (see Olivet discourse chapters 24-25).
6. Identify and record the fulfillment of OT prophecies.
7. Other _____

E. Language: Greek/Aramaic

Greek and Aramaic were the primary languages in this culture. Greek came from the reign of Alexander who tried to "Hellenize" the people of this land they had conquered.

Aramaic was a "mixed" language spoken by those who had returned from captivity. It had come from Assyria who had taken many Jews captive and dispersed them throughout their realm in the centuries preceding Christ.

Jesus spoke Aramaic and this was the language he used in his 3 ½ years with his disciples.

Many scholars today believe that the New Testament was originally written in Greek with only an occasional word or phrase included in Aramaic. There are no known existing "autographs" of the NT in Greek.

Some believe that the NT was first written in Aramaic and later translated into Greek. The eastern Christian church believes that they have the autographs of the NT in Aramaic, retained in a document called "the Peshitta."

F. Literary Style: Gospel

III. Guidelines for interpreting the gospels: (Preparation for the Journey)

1. The Gospels are historical accounts that are literally true, having occurred with real people at real places and at real times.
2. Context:

Each writing recorded in the Scriptures is a part of 3 story levels:
 - a. immediate context of the chapter,
 - b. the higher context of the book in general, and
 - c. the position of placement in the Bible itself. (Where is this passage in God's overall plan of redemption?)
3. Parallel accounts:

Be familiar with the other gospel accounts (Mark, Luke and John) that record the same story or teaching. This will often provide additional details not recorded in the gospel you are reading. e.g. Of the "seven last sayings of Christ on the cross," Matthew only provides one.

Note: I have found it to be very useful to have a synoptic of the gospels which shows the text side-by-side.
4. Golden Rule of Biblical Interpretation: Look for the plain meaning of the text.

"When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, look for no other sense. Accept every word for its primary, usual, literal meaning unless the information provided in the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and fundamental truths, clearly indicates otherwise." e.g. "Jesus taught them a parable..."
5. Search for the meaning intended by the author who wrote the original manuscript to the original audience. A passage cannot mean something it did not mean to the original audience.
6. Observe the context of the passage.

“A text without its context is a pretext.”

7. Author Comments and Clues:

Take notice of author explanatory comments inserted in the text. Look for the clues that an author sometimes provides at the beginning or end of their text.

A good example is John 20:30-31 in which John tells the reader his purpose in writing: “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ...”

Also Matt. 16:6, 12 “leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees”

8. Repetition:

Authors sometimes provide clues to the meaning of their gospels by the use of the repetition of words, phrases or themes.

An example of repetition is seen in the book of Luke by repeated comments regarding the involvement of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is involved in the conception of John the Baptist, (Lk. 1:15), in the conception of the Messiah (Lk.1:35) at Jesus’ baptism (Lk. 3:22) ‘He is led into the wilderness by the Spirit when He is “full of the Spirit (Lk. 4:1), etc.

A second example: Matthew uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven” 33 times in his gospel. Throughout his gospel, the kingdom is in the heart and on the lips of Jesus.

9. Key Dialogues/Direct Discourse

An author uses direct conversation, usually signified by the use of quotation marks, as a means of making a point.

An example of this occurs in John1:29 when the author provides the words spoken by John: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” and in Jn 1:34: “And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

John, the author, wants his readers to know who Jesus is. His speech in quotes provides the sure definition.

In the story of the Samaritan woman in John, chapter 4, at the very conclusion of the story, John records the words of the Samaritan people who resided in the town near the well: "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

10. Pay attention to the questions asked.

Many of Jesus' discourses are given in response to inquiries by his disciples and others who were in the crowd listening to his teaching.

"Good Samaritan" - seeking to justify himself he asked: "Who is my neighbor?" (Lk. 10:29)

11. Identify and Study Key Topics

- the Kingdom of Heaven (occurs 33 times in Matthew)
- Jesus' attitude and handling of the Scriptures

G. Geographical (Location): Review a Map of Palestine (Bible Atlas or from the back of your Bible)

H. Cultural/Political

Jesus' life and ministry are conducted in the area of Palestine with largely a Jewish audience. There was also a strong (ruling) Roman presence in this area.

The nation of Israel had been under Roman rule since 63 B.C. when Pompey invaded and ransacked Jerusalem.

There was bitter resentment (hatred) towards the Romans and this heightened the Jewish hope for a Messiah/deliverer who would overcome this oppressive rule and establish his kingdom which would be forever.

There had been 400 years of prophetic silence in Israel.

III. Outline of Matthew

- Themes:
- A. Jesus, the Messiah, and his promised kingdom
 - B. The life and ministry of Jesus, the Messiah

Top Level Outline:

1:1-16:20 Who Jesus Is
16:21-28:20 What He Came to Do

2nd Level:

1:1-4:11 The Birth and Preparation of the King
4:12-25:46 The Message and Ministry of the King
26:1-28:20 The Passion of the King – His trial, death and resurrection

Note: Jesus gives 5 major discourses during his public life.
These are interspersed among 7 narratives.

1:1-12:50 Mainly topical
13:1-28:20 Mainly chronological

Key words: behold, father, fulfilled, kingdom, “kingdom of heaven,”
righteous, then, worship

Jesus uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven” and similar phrases (e.g. kingdom of God, eternal life, the kingdom, the gospel of the kingdom) more than 50 times in the gospel of Matthew. This is a key focus of his ministry. (“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”) He came to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on the earth. It is now present, but it is also coming.

3rd Level outline:

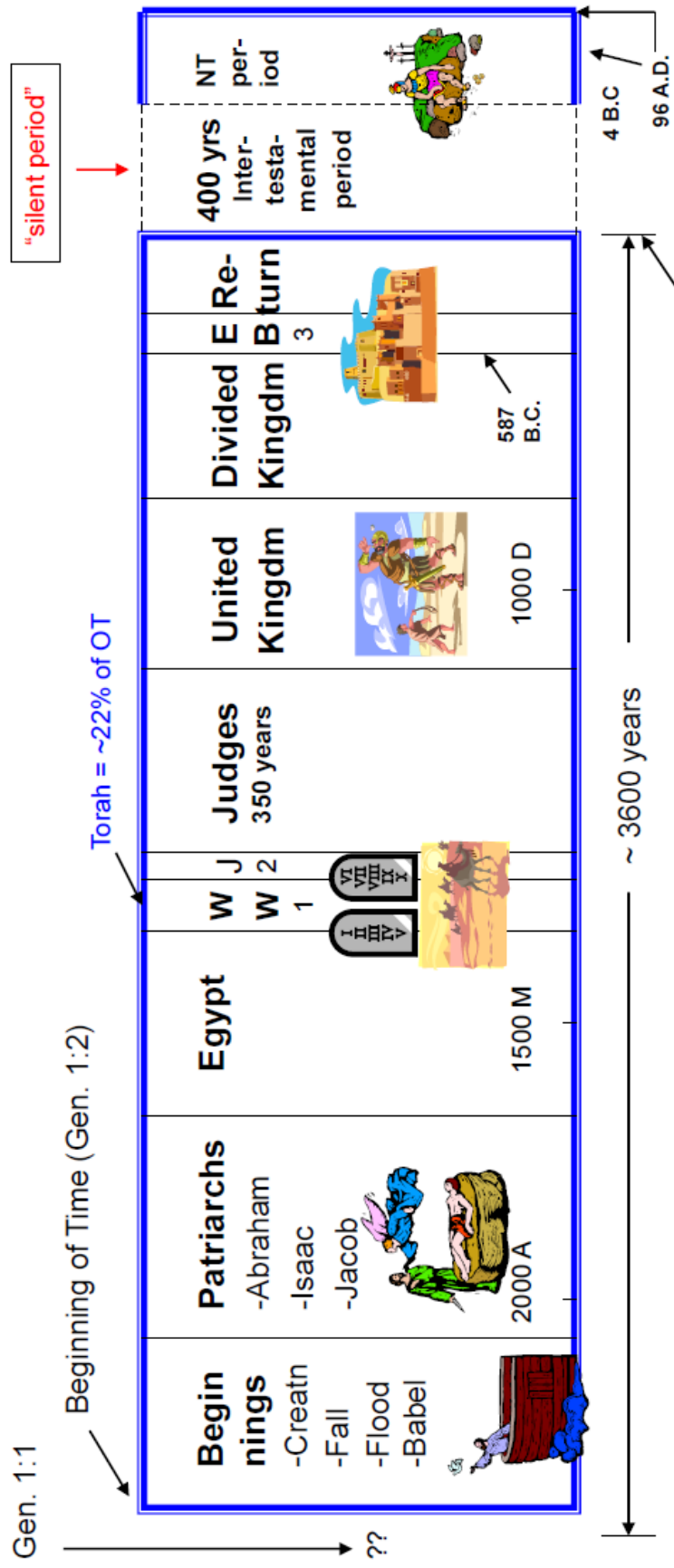
This outline shows the alternating pattern of narratives and discourses in Jesus’ public ministries as presented by Matthew.

Scripture	Narrative	Discourse
1:1-2:23	Birth and Infancy	
3:1-4:17	Preparation of the King	
5:1-7:29		Sermon on the Mount
8:1-9:34	The Power of the King	
9:35-11:1		The 12 disciples are commissioned
11:2-12:50	The King is Rejected.	
13:1-52		The Kingdom Parables

13:53-17:27	The Mission of the King	
18:1-19:1a		Relationships
19:1b-23:39	Final Ministries of the King	
24:1-25:46		Olivet Discourse on the End times
26:1-28:20	The Death and Resurrection of the King	

God's Plan of the Ages – Creation to the End of the NT Period

Note: Vertical lines separate distinguishable eras in Israel's History.

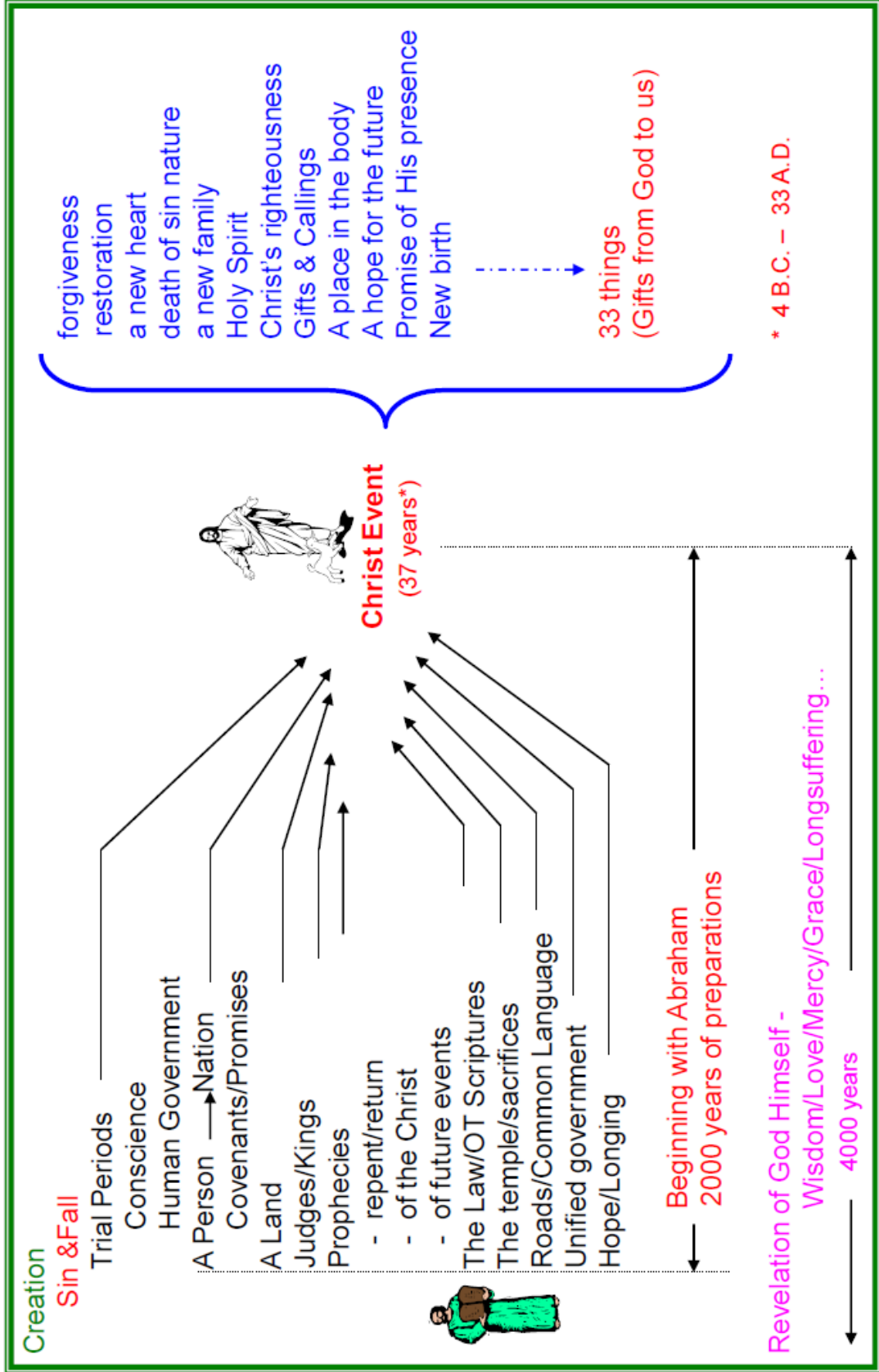


- 1. WW: Wilderness Wanderings – 40 yrs
- 2 J : Joshua Leadership – 25 years
- 3 EB: Exile in Babylon – 70 years
- * Not to scale/Dates are approximations

- * Other key dates:
- 985 B.C. David dies
- 945 B.C Solomon dies
- 722 B.C. 10 northern tribes taken captive to Assyria and dispersed
- 587 B.C. Judah - captive to Babylonia
- ~ 845-425 B.C. OT. Writing prophets

GOD PREPARES for the MESSIAH

“The Wisdom, Sovereignty and Ability of God Displayed”



Matthew 1

Outline of Chapter 1:

- vs. 1-17 A. Genealogies
- vs. 18-25 B. The birth of Jesus

Observation and Interpretation:

A. v. 1-17 Genealogies

v.1 What is the significance of each of the following phrases in verse 1:

“Jesus Christ” _____

(Christ means “anointed one”)

What does it mean “to be anointed?” _____

What is the corresponding word for Christ in Hebrew? _____

What was He anointed to do? see Isa. 61:1-3

“the son of David” _____

Why is it important for Matthew to identify the relationship of Christ to David? _____

“the son of Abraham” _____

Why is it important for Matthew to identify the connection to Abraham?

What is the very first thing Matthew wants us to know about Jesus?

_____ (see v.1)

Note in v.1 Matthew outlines the genealogies of vv. 2-17 but in reverse order.

vv. 2-6a This period of time from Abraham to David can be described as The kingdom established.

Did you notice anything of interest or “peculiar” in this segment of verses? _____ (peculiar as in strange or unusual)

vv.6b-11 This period of time from David to the deportation can be described as the kingdom lost.

Where were they deported to? _____.

Anything unusual within this segment? _____

vv. 12-17 This period of time from the deportation to the time of Jesus can be described as the kingdom regained.

Note the phrases in “the father of Joseph the husband of Mary of whom Jesus was born.”

What is Matthew telling us in these phrases? _____

B. vs. 18-25 The birth of Jesus

v.18 “betrothed to Joseph”

In Jewish culture, a man betrothed (or covenanted) with a family to marry their daughter. When the “bride price” was given, she was now officially his wife. But, the husband was to wait a year to take her into his house and “know her.”

However, he was now officially and legally responsible for her. And in the cases of immorality or other serious misbehaviors, he was responsible to deal with her according to the Scriptures, not her parents.

In the Scriptures, “betrothed” means that they were legally husband and wife.

What was the penalty in the Jewish culture for the marital unfaithfulness of a wife? see Lev. 20:10 _____

In the case of adultery, the husband of the unfaithful wife could put her away either publicly or privately. In the case of Mary, Joseph was trying to protect her from the scrutiny of the public. (see verse 19)

How did Mary become pregnant? (v.18) _____

Had this ever happened before? _____

How was Joseph’s mind about Mary changed? _____

Does God still speak to us today in this manner? _____

If yes, demonstrate it from Scripture. _____

What does the name Jesus mean? (see v.21) _____

What happens in v.24? _____

In summary, what do we learn about Jesus in this introductory chapter?

1. He is the _____.
2. His genealogy is traced back to _____ and _____.
3. His father was _____.
His mother was _____.
4. His conception was _____.
5. He will _____ His people from _____.
6. His birth was _____ in the OT.
7. He will be “_____ with us.” (Immanuel)
8. _____
9. _____

Now, after this review, how would you summarize this opening chapter?

How does: “The beginning of the life of Jesus the Messiah on earth” sound?

Other thoughts:

Application:

How can we apply what we have learned in this chapter to our own lives?

1. It is Jesus who saves us from our sins. Therefore, we go to Him to receive forgiveness for our sins and restoration to God.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How should knowing that He is “God with us” affect our lives? _____

Matthew 2

Review of Chapter 1

Last week, we studied chapter 1.

We looked at the first 17 verses which, except for verse 1, are summarized by the word “Genealogies.”

In verse 1, we saw 3 main identifiers that Matthew used to introduce Jesus:

- A. Messiah
- B. the son of David
- C. the son of Abraham

The first thing Matthew tells his readers is that Jesus is the Messiah.

Secondly, he makes a direct connection to 2 key figures in the history of the Jews...to David and to Abraham.

He makes these connections because he wants his readers to know that Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenants made by God to Abraham and that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise made to David that he would have a son sitting on the throne of his kingdom forever.

The 42 genealogies were divided into 3 segments of 14 generations each:

Abraham to David: the kingdom established

David to the deportation: the kingdom lost

the deportation to Jesus: the kingdom regained

In the genealogies, we noted the presence of some unique names:

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and “the wife of Uriah”.

We also noted that, in the genealogy leading to Jesus, Joseph is identified as the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. Matthew is telling us that Joseph is not the biological father of Jesus. This is important because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit which tells us that God is His Father.

Later, we will see that the Jews crucified Jesus because He claimed to be “the son of God” which was, in truth, the literal reality of His conception. (see Lk. 22: 70-71)

We also read the passage regarding Jesus' birth and recognized that Joseph had "paid the bride price" for Mary and therefore, was in a legal, binding covenant with her. She was his wife. But he could not take her into his home and "know her" for 1 year.

Themes of chapter 1: Genealogies and the birth of Jesus

Observation and Interpretation:

Outline of Chapter 2:

- 2 : 1-12 The magi from the east
- : 13-15 Flight into Egypt
- : 16-18 The massacre of the innocents
- : 19-23 Jesus moved to Nazareth

Look also for dreams (5) and the fulfillment of prophecies (3).

Exposition:

2:1-12 The magi from the east

Estimates from various sources suggest that the distance these men traveled was anywhere from 700-900 miles.

How long would this trip have taken? _____

This narrative shows that the Magi knew something that we don't know because the signs they were following led them to the specific person they had determined in advance that they would find.

Question: Is this an accurate statement? Why or why not?

They actually got within 5 miles of their goal being guided by the star. (Bethlehem is only 5 miles from Jerusalem.)

vv1-2 wise men – "magoi" = a unique group of business men from the east (likely Babylonia) who focused on astronomy/astrology, medicine and the natural sciences.

Is there anything in the Scriptures that might indicate a connection between the stars and the things that occur on the earth with mankind? (see Gen. 1:14)

vv.3-8 Why was Herod troubled? _____

Why would “all Jerusalem” be troubled with him? _____

How did he know about “the Christ?” _____

Why would the birth of Christ be a concern to him? _____

Why would he think that this baby might be the Christ?

Note that he gathers the priests and scribes together and they appear to answer him “on the spot.” There is no indication that they had to go home and do some research to find out about the Christ.

What was Herod’s true motive in trying to find the Christ? (We’ll see the answer to this question later when we observe Herod’s actions.)

Did he really want to worship Jesus? _____

vv.9-12 What was unique about the star? _____

How does this compare with the behavior patterns we know from astronomy about stars? _____

v.9 Note “young child”

What does this tell you? _____

v.10 What do you make of the Magis’ response when they saw the star? _____

v.11 What does “house” indicate? _____

How would you characterize their acts of worship? _____

v.12 How did God communicate with the magi regarding Herod? _____

How would you characterize the magis’ trip? a trip of faith.

2: 13-15 Flight into Egypt

There is another supernatural event in v. 13. What was it?

What was Joseph's response to the angelic visitor? _____

The trip from Jerusalem to Egypt was approximately 200 miles.

What preparations would Joseph have had to make for the trip? _____

How would he fund such a trip since it seems that he would have had to leave everything in a rush? _____

In v.15, Matthew is careful to record the fulfillment of another prophecy from the OT. What is it? _____
(See Hos. 11:1)

The prophecy of Hosea refers initially to Israel as God's son whom He brought out of Egypt. This would be the first Exodus under Moses.

Matthew, under the inspiration of the Spirit is now quoting the passage giving it a fuller meaning in God's Son, the Messiah.

2: 16-18 The massacre of the innocents

Why did Herod put to death all of the male children 2 years old and younger? _____

In this segment, a third prophecy from the OT is shown as fulfilled.

In Jer. 31:15, Rachel, who had been entombed some 13 centuries before the Babylonian captivity, is seen as weeping for her children who were being led away to Babylon in 586 B.C.

In this passage, we again see Rachel weeping for her children who are being violently taken away.

These 2 prophetic fulfillments illustrate that OT prophecies can have more than one fulfillment, usually an early fulfillment during or near the life of the prophet and another fulfillment centuries later.

How can God do this? _____

2: 19-23 Jesus moved to Nazareth

Note 2 more dreams providing the guidance needed by Joseph.

What are the differing sources of the dreams? _____

How can we summarize chapter 2? _____

Themes of chapter 2:

How about: The first years of Jesus' life on earth

Or: Jesus, as a child, and God's divine protection

A sub-category based on the material of this chapter could be: Dreams and Prophecies fulfilled.

Note the five dreams providing divine guidance during the perilous times of Jesus' early life on earth. (1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22)

III. Application

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

IV. Looking Ahead

If we turn the page to the next chapter in Matthew, we see the coming of John the Baptist. There is no more information from Matthew regarding Jesus' life from His move to Nazareth until the coming of John the Baptist.

In general, we find very little in the Scriptures regarding Jesus' life as He was growing up.

Matthew 3

Review of chapter 2:

In chapter 2, we saw 4 short narratives:

- the Magi from the east
- *the flight into Egypt – see Hos. 11:1
- *the massacre of the boys 2 years old and under in Bethlehem
- Jesus moved to Nazareth

The last 3 of these narratives demonstrate the fulfillment of OT prophecies regarding the Messiah.

Two of these prophecies* were the “more greater fulfillment” which was found in Christ. Which ones? _____

Chapter two summary: “the early days of Jesus’ life on earth

Introduction:

Biblical Interpretation:

In today’s lesson, I want to mention three important principles of biblical interpretation that are essential in interpreting narratives:

1. When studying a passage in a gospel, be sure to look at the corresponding passages in the other gospels. e.g. Jn. 1:6-7 Here John (apostle) gives important information regarding John’s purpose that is not contained in other gospels..
2. Don’t build your doctrine on a single verse of Scripture.
e.g. repent See Mt.3:2
3. Be sure to research and clarify key words in a sentence.
e.g. remission

The 4 Gospel beginnings:

A short survey of the beginnings of the 4 gospels shows the following:

Matthew:	genealogies
Mark:	John the Baptist
Luke:	Zacharias and Elizabeth
John:	In the beginning was the Word and...

Each gospel has its own unique beginning, but shortly, they converge in reporting the appearance and ministry of John the Baptist.

This is by Divine design as John’s ministry identifies the beginning of Christ’s public ministry. See Acts 1:21-22 where Peter speaks to the disciples about choosing another witness to replace Judas “beginning with the baptism of Jesus by John.”

OT Prophecies about John the Baptist:

The appearance of John as the forerunner to Jesus had been prophesied in Isa. 40:3, Mal. 3:1 and Mal. 4:5-6.

Note that the last verses of the OT tell of the coming of Elijah the prophet. In Lk. 1:17, the angel tells Zacharias that John would fulfill this prophecy.

And in Mt. 17:10-13 Jesus identifies John as the Elijah that Malachi had spoken about. This is not an issue of “reincarnation” but a reference to the OT prophetic ministry. (We have a clear reference to the natural birth of John via Zacharias and Elizabeth.)

So, Matthew, who in chapter 1 took us back to Abraham and David, now rightly ties the coming of John to the end of the Old Testament.

He picks up where the OT (Malachi) left off.

And, in doing so, reinforces his gospel as the bridge to the OT.

John, a great man

John the Baptist was a great man. We don’t often think of him in this regard because his ministry was overshadowed by the presence of Jesus.

We know that Jesus commented that “there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.”

If Jesus had not been present during his time, we likely would be thinking about John in the same breath as some of the OT prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah and Daniel. (although the length of his ministry was much shorter)

But John wasn’t looking for acclaim or recognition. When informed by his disciples that “Jesus was increasing,” he simply said: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” Jn. 3:30 Note also his amazing statement in v.29: “Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled.”

They were not in competition for disciples. Each was doing what God had given them to do.

What an amazing display of meekness and humility, certainly an extraordinary testimony and witness to us today.

Observation and Interpretation:

Outline of Chapter 3:

1. vs. 1-12 the ministry of John the Baptist
2. vs. 13-17 the baptism of Jesus

In this chapter, we will see three important focal points:

1. A command – repent – a radical change of life (Leave your life of sin and follow after the paths of righteousness); v.2
 2. A warning - because when the kingdom is present, the King is also present and His reign will include judgment; v.2
 3. A promise - after me will come one mightier than I...”
- A. Theme: “Preparation of the King” (continues from chapters 1 and 2)
 Note: This theme continues to chapter 4:11 where Jesus begins His public ministry.
- B. Timing:
 In Lk. 3:1, we see that the ministry of John began in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar which would have been in AD 26. So, at that time, both John and Jesus would have been about 30 years old.

vv. 1-6

John and his message

Why did John come? (example of utilizing other gospel accounts):

Mk. 1:4 _____

Lk. 1:17 _____

Jn 1:7 _____

Witness: a declaration which not only informs but also corroborates a testimony borne by a witness who speaks with authority.

What was John’s authority to preach the message of remission of sins? (Mk. 1:4) See Jn. 1:6 _____

So...whose testimony did John represent? _____

Remission → to remit → to pardon or forgive

Therefore: John’s message was designed to help sinners find forgiveness and release from their sins.

It was a preparation for the things to come and not an end unto itself.

v.1 Why was John preaching in the wilderness? Why not the synagogues where Jews regularly met?

v.2 What is John’s message? _____
 What does it mean to repent? _____

Using context, and cross reference with other scriptures using the Greek words metanoieo (repent) and metanoia (repentance), we see that repentance signifies a change of mind resulting in action. (Consider Ac. 2:38, 3:19, 8:22, 17:30, 26:20, Mk. 1:15)

Therefore, it is clearly seen that repentance (metanoieo) is a change of mind which results in a change of heart towards God. While the heart change is a part of true repentance, the stress of metanoieo is on the mind.

Compare this with Jesus' message:

Mt. 4:17 _____

Mk. 1:14-15 _____

What words or phrases characterize entry into the kingdom of God?

unless you R_____ (Lk. 13:3)

Important Note: When doing Biblical Interpretation, don't build your doctrine on a single verse of Scripture. Review all relevant verses. For example Jn. 3:16 gives important information but it doesn't provide the whole gospel.

for the new birth, you must be B_____ Jn. 3:3

that whoever B_____ (Jn 3:16) (same root word as faith, also Rom. 10:9-10)

C_____ with your mouth (Rom. 10:9-10)

Humility Mt. 18:3-4 See also "*poor in spirit*" (Mt. 5:3) and meek (Mt. 5:5), meaning lowly, expressed as an inwrought grace of the soul, first and chiefly directed towards God.

Also: That attitude of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist. It expresses gentleness, not in weakness but in power.

As many as R_____ him Jn. 1:12

Decision to "follow me" Mt. 4:19

In Mt. 3:2, why does John exhort people to repent?

Why does Matthew refer to the Kingdom of heaven and not of God?

The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are the same thing. The Jews were reluctant to say the name of God and so this was their way of referring to the kingdom without pronouncing the "holy name."

v.3 Why does John quote Isa. 40:3 here? _____

What does it mean to make His paths straight? _____

See also Lk. 3:4-5 for a description of John's meaning.

Is "make His paths straight" a figure of speech? _____

If yes, what does it literally mean? _____

v.4 John's clothing was typical of that worn by Old Testament prophets. As a result, people seeing him dressed this way would associate him with the Old Testament ministry of the prophets. See II Kgs. 1:8 Who does it remind you of? _____

v.5 "Jerusalem" is a figure of speech. (anthropomorphism – attributing human characteristics to something or someone not human) Obviously, the city didn't lift up its feet and go out to see John.

What is Matthew saying by using this figure of speech?

v.6 Verse 6 tells us why the baptism was called for. What is it?

see also Mk.1:4b and Lk. 3:3 for additional information

Note: There are 4 baptisms in the NT. Can you name them? _____

v.7-10 John rebukes the self-righteous

v.7a What happened as John preached in the wilderness? _____ and _____ came for baptism.

Why would the Pharisees and Sadducees come to John for baptism? _____

Note that Matthew's account says they "came to his baptism." This seems to suggest that they may have been curious to see "what was going on." But Lk. 3:7 clearly says that they came to be baptized by him.

How did John refer to them? _____

What is he saying? (clue: who were they the brood of) _____

vv.7b-10 What was John's message to them? _____

What argument were they apparently thinking or saying to justify themselves? _____

Note: Prior to the time of John, there were two kinds of baptism:

1. Essenes baptism of purification
2. Proselyte baptism signifying the conversion of a Gentile into Judaism.

This may be why, in v.8, that John rebukes the Pharisees for thinking that they had Abraham as their father, in essence saying, this baptism isn't for us. In fact, this baptism was primarily for the Jews but John would not have excluded a Gentile from also being baptized.

What spiritual ability might John have had in this instance?

A word of knowledge

What had they not done? _____

What does it mean to bear fruit in keeping with repentance?

What does "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees" mean?

John is using a figure of speech to liken his ministry to that of a vinedresser who clears his orchard of dead wood.

So...in this case, he was clearing out the dead wood.

This indicates that the ministry of John is already at work clearing out that which does not bear fruit. What a startling statement to be made about those who immersed themselves in God's Word but bore no real fruit.

What is John's strong message about bearing fruit? _____

How could the Pharisees and Sadducees alter the judgment that was coming upon them? by true _____.

v.11 How does John show his humility in v.11? _____

What will Jesus do? He will baptize with the _____
_____ and _____.

What does "fire" signify? _____

v.12 Another figure of speech:

Who are the wheat and the chaff? _____ and
_____.

Chaff – another word for chaff is darnel. (See Mt. 13 parable of the wheat and chaff) Darnel is a weed that has the appearance of wheat in its early stages. However, as it continues to grow, it becomes apparent that it isn't truly a wheat but is a weed.

Here we see fire shown to have 2 results. What are they?

1. _____ the repentant.
2. _____ the unrepentant.

vv. 13-17 The baptism of Jesus

v.13 What was Jesus doing when he came to John with reference to John's ministry?

1. showing His approval of John's message and ministry
2. In Christian baptism, the new believer is identifying with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. In this process His death becomes ours and His resurrection also becomes ours.

When Jesus came to John for baptism, He was identifying with us in our humanity and, in this action, was taking on Himself the obligation to fulfill all righteousness so that He could be our substitute and Savior.

3. Anything else? _____

v.14 What does verse 14 indicate about John? His humility

v.15 What was Jesus' answer to John's question in v.14?

Explain each of the following:

Permit it at this time. allow it now
for in this way in this manner
it is fitting it's the right thing to do
to fulfill all righteousness His outward act of obedience
completed His inner righteousness.

One writer put it this way: “He who was to take the sinner’s place came to be baptized by John, that He might be identified with sinners for whom He was to lay down His life.”

A parallel: us. Our first step is to repent and believe. This is an inner work.

Our second step is to publicly identify with Jesus.

v.16 What happened to Jesus when He came up out of the water? _____

2064 Alighted *erchomai* – to come upon

“straightway” = immediately

“heavens opened” = indicating communication with God

v.17 Why was God pleased with Jesus?

1. He had just identified Himself with humanity for whom He would die, giving evidence of His commitment to the work God had called Him to.
2. God was pleased with His preparations for the work He had now committed to do...sinless life, resisted temptation, etc.
3. _____

Who was present at Jesus’ baptism?

All three persons of the Trinity...Father, Son, Holy Spirit

Application

What applications can we make from this chapter for our own lives?

1. Our repentance must be genuine.
2. Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.
3. John had an important ministry and still exhibited an unusual humility.
4. Jesus’ baptism was an example for us to follow.
5. We must bear fruit worthy of Christ.
6. We should aim to be pleasing to God.
7. When witnessing to someone, be careful to give the whole story (including the need for appropriate repentance.)
8. Don’t be misled by false repentance. (see John’s rebuke of the Pharisees and Sadducees)
9. _____
10. _____

Matthew 4

Review of chapter 3:

In chapter 3, we examined the ministry of John the Baptist and then the baptism and Holy Spirit filling of Jesus. During this time, we are still in the days of Jesus' preparation for His work as the Messiah.

This theme continues through chapter 4:1-11. From that time (4:17) Jesus began to preach saying: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

As a way of keeping in touch with the context of Matthew, let's review the 3 levels of context that we find in the Scriptures:

1. Top level: What is God doing in his master plan at this time?

2. Book level: What is occurring at the book level?

3. Verse level: What is occurring at the verse level? _____

Jesus' moral qualifications to be the Messiah:

One of Matthew's main purposes in writing his gospel is to show the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. To this end, he has given us genealogies and fulfilled prophecies to show that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Scrolls.

Another qualification of the Messiah is his moral qualification. The OT types for the sacrificial lambs (to take away sins) point to an unblemished lamb, without spot or wrinkle. This indicates that God's sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world must be without blemish, without sin. He must be morally perfect.

Recall that the first Adam failed the moral test miserably.

So, allowing Satan to test and try Jesus, will demonstrate His moral qualifications to be the Messiah.

Note: This is consistent with our goal of keeping the Scriptures Christ-centered. This passage is about Jesus and not about us. We make it "about us" when we focus strictly on how we can resist temptation. This application is certainly there, but it is an application and not the main point of the passage.

Luke's account of the temptations:

Again we find the importance of reviewing all of the gospel accounts of a particular narrative.

In this narrative, Luke's account in chapter 4 says that Jesus was tempted for 40 days. After this he records the 3 temptations that Matthew provides.

Matthew simply says that Jesus was “led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted 40 days...”

The important distinction is that Luke tells us Jesus was tempted for forty days and then came the three temptations recorded in both Matthew and Luke. Luke closes his account by saying: “And when the devil had ended all temptation...”

The point is that Jesus was tempted in many ways besides the 3 recorded by Matthew. And, in all of the temptations, He did not sin. He thus demonstrated His moral qualifications to be the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Who is Jesus?

As we study the gospel of Matthew, one of our key goals is to learn “more about Jesus.” It is fitting, therefore, that, at this stage of our study, that we ask the question: “Who is Jesus? What have we learned about Him so far in the chapters we have just studied?”

A quick summary is as follows:

1. 1:1 son of _____, son of _____
2. 1:21 the One who will save His people from their _____.
3. 1:23 Immanuel = God _____.
4. 2:2 King of the _____
5. 2:11 the Magi worship Him as _____.
6. John identifies Jesus as the _____.
7. At His baptism, Jesus is revealed as “God’s beloved _____” * and that God is pleased with Him.”
8. He is the One who fulfills _____.

* Note that this acknowledgement by God will be a source of temptation when Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the desert to be tested by Satan.

But, is He really God, is He really the Messiah?

This next section in Matthew will answer these questions.

Outline of Chapter 4:	4:1-11	Jesus is tempted (tested) by the devil.
	4:12-17	Jesus begins his public ministry.
	4:18-22	Jesus calls men to be His disciples.
	4:23-25	Jesus ministers in Galilee.

To begin, it’s important to note that the word for “tempt” in 4:1 is the word “*peirazo*” **3985** which means to try, to test, to prove in a good sense, much the same as when we test precious metals to prove their quality.

This word can also mean “to tempt” in a bad sense. You will need to check the context to determine the appropriate application. See Ja. 1:13-14

So, we can say that God allowed Satan to tempt Jesus in order to test Him, to demonstrate that He was all things that were being revealed about Him.

He allowed Him to be tested to confirm that He was the Messiah and that He would follow the path laid out for Him by God.

His tests also demonstrated His moral qualifications to be the Messiah.

The devil's goal for this time of testing was to get Jesus to sin, to question God's Word, misuse His promises and try to get Him to align with himself to save the world without going to the cross.

Satan's methods:

It's not entirely clear how the temptations were presented. In some cases, turn stones to bread and throw yourself from the temple, the temptations appear to be physical in nature.

When Satan showed Him the kingdoms of the world from a high mountain, there are no mountains in Palestine from which all of the kingdoms could be viewed. This may have been a vision.

What we can say is that the temptations came from outside of Himself. For Jesus had no sinful nature with which He could be tempted.

Not so for us. We are tempted both from within and without. We are tempted by the flesh as well as the devil and the world.

Observation and Interpretation:

- 4:1-11 Jesus is tempted by the devil.
What had just happened in Jesus' experience preceding the temptations? _____
What did God say about Him? _____

What does "beloved Son" indicate? _____
What can we learn from His experience? _____

Who led Jesus to the place of temptation? _____
Who did the actual tempting? _____
Does God tempt anyone? See Ja. 1:13-14 _____
(same word in Greek as Matt. 4:1)
What preparation did Jesus have for the temptations?

Note that two of these temptations ("if you are the Son of God...") are related to what Jesus heard from the Father at His baptism: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The 3 Temptations:

The importance of this event is shown in the fact that Satan, himself, took on the task of tempting Jesus. He did not relegate this task to a lower minion of his.

Note that in the 1st temptation, Satan says: “If you are the Son of God...”

This temptation is to _____ what God had told Him at His baptism. The temptation was hidden under a pretended concern for Jesus’ physical hunger. Is God really your Father?

You can take care of yourself.

Note: The Sadducees tried this deception on Jesus with their story of the woman and the 7 brothers. They were trying to trick him into saying there was a resurrection which they didn’t believe in. But, they focused their attention and conversation on the marriage of the woman to the seven brothers.

4:3-4 What was the first temptation?

1. Prove that God is your _____.
2. Use your own _____.

What was Jesus’ physical need which Satan preyed upon?
_____to sustain life

Is there anything morally wrong about turning stones into bread?

In reality, what was this temptation?

A. to doubt the Word of God by _____it

(keep in mind the “if-then” nature of this temptation) – to question God’s Word that Jesus was His Son. If you are God’s son, prove it.

Satan suggests that Jesus may not actually be God’s Son, or, if He really is, then He should settle the matter by testing it. Show me something that demonstrates you are His son.

But God had just called Him “His beloved Son.”

B. to use His own _____to supply His need.

Jesus quotes from Deut. 8:3.

His answer: “It doesn’t matter if I have bread to eat since God will preserve my life as long as He desires.

Review Deut. 8:3 context = wilderness – complaining about lack of water.

Jesus, by quoting this verse, is showing His dependence on God’s Word. Just as God provided manna in the desert for His children, so also will He provide for my need when He chooses to do so.

Note that Deuteronomy says that God humbled them and allowed them to hunger so that they would know that man shall not live by bread alone...

Is this not the same thing that Jesus is experiencing?

Will not this God, my Father, also provide for me just as He did for them?

What did Jesus use to resist the devil? _____

Can we also do what Jesus did? _____

In times of testing, where do we get the Word of God?

4:5-7 What was the 2nd temptation? _____

Note that, in this temptation, Satan seizes upon the fact that Jesus quoted the Word, so he decides to use a little “word-quoting” of his own. (see Ps 91:11-12)

Let’s go up to the “pinnacle of temple” and you jump off.

People will see this amazing feat and realize that you are the Messiah and follow you.

In reality,

1. he was tempting Jesus to test (tempt) God’s faithfulness to Him.
2. he was tempting Jesus to use a shortcut to gain ministry fame.

How did Jesus resist this temptation? _____

Jesus is saying that God is not the One who is to be tested.

See Deut. 6:16 See actual account in Ex. 17:7 people murmur for want of water – Massah = tempted
Not long after leaving Egypt

4:8-10 The 3rd temptation:

In this temptation, the devil throws off any subtleness and just outright asks Jesus to worship him. I think he realized his little games of trickery and deceit weren’t going to work with Jesus.

It was time to play his “trump” card.

In reality, what was Satan doing here? Offering Jesus a _____ without a _____.

This tells me that Satan had some knowledge about Jesus’ ministry on earth. Where would he have gotten this knowledge?

4:11 What can we learn from this verse? _____

Satan's 3 temptations: bread, assistance from angels and earthly kingdoms

In reality, he was tempting Jesus to doubt God's Word, test God's faithfulness to Him and give Him a shortcut to the goal God had designed for Him, a shortcut which would exclude the cross.

The Sword of the Spirit:

Let's stop for a few minutes and review what Jesus has just done. Each time the devil tempted Him, how did He respond?

Note that He used the only offensive weapon that we have. All of the other weapons are defensive...shield of faith, helmet of salvation, _____, _____, _____

Heb. 4:12 "*The Word of God is living and powerful (1756 energies – capable of doing, active, powerful), and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit (innermost area of human personality) and of joints and marrow (innermost part of the physical being), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Rev. 1:16 John's vision of the Son of man: "*He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a two-edged sword.*"

We just saw Jesus using the Word of God to resist Satan. The two-edged sword coming out of His mouth in Rev. 1 is the sword of the Spirit. See Eph. 6:17

Since Matt. 4 shows Jesus using the "sword of the Spirit," what can we learn from this passage about this offensive weapon?

1. Every time He encountered Satan, this was His only _____. Jesus did not alter or vary His method of dealing with the devil.
2. Note also, that in this passage, no one ever questioned the authority of the Scriptures. In fact, when Jesus quoted a verse, the passage shows that, for this specific attack of Satan (skirmish,) it was over and he was defeated.
3. The basis of Satan's attack is usually _____. (vv. 3, 6) Isn't that what Satan did in the garden. "Has God indeed said..." Gen. 3:1

In the cases of the first 2 temptations, what was Satan attacking? God's Word to Jesus at His _____.

4. Note also that Satan has some knowledge of the Scriptures. In the 2nd temptation, he tried to use it against Jesus. What was the actual temptation in this 2nd skirmish? To test God's _____ to Him.
5. Another important element of the temptations is that Satan was tempting Jesus to operate _____ of His Father.
6. Eph. 6:17 "*And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying always...*" In this passage, the Greek word for Word is *rhema* which means a spoken word.
A review of the 3 temptations of Mt. 4 show us that this is exactly what Jesus did. He audibly spoke the word.
You can't just whisper the Word to yourself and expect results.
And, He didn't give Satan a scripture reference and tell him to look it up for himself. So ought we to follow Jesus' example.
7. Notice that Eph. 6:17 indicates a cooperation between the Spirit and the believer (sword of the Spirit.) We, ourselves, need to "take up the sword." The Spirit will not do this for us. We must, in faith, take up the sword. When we do, the Spirit will give us the wisdom and power to use it.

In what ways does the devil tempt us? _____

In reviewing the 2 previous segments, what 2 major preparations have occurred in the life of Jesus?

1. Mt.3:13-17 _____
2. Mt. 4:1-11 _____

Now, He is prepared for the public ministry that God has called him to embrace.

4:12-17 Jesus begins his public ministry

Where did Jesus begin his public ministry? _____
 See Isa. 9:1-2
 Why would He begin here? _____
 See Isa. 9:1-2 _____

"Galil" means "a circuit" and refers to the circuit of 20 cities given to King Solomon by Hiram, king of Tyre.

Galilee was not a large area, approximately 25 X 50 miles but it included over 200 cities that had populations of more than 15,000 persons. (15K Xs 200 = 3 million)

- v.13 Note that He dwelled in Capernaum which means “city of Nahum.” Nahum means comforter. Therefore, the Comforter from God lived in the city of comfort. (note parallel with the town of Bethlehem (house of bread).

Also, Capernaum was centrally located and so became an ideal “center of operations” for Jesus. It was from here that Jesus spent the greater part of his three years of ministry.

- v.14 Again , Matthew quotes an OT verse (this time from Isaiah 9:1,2) to show the fulfillment of OT prophecy.

Note that: the way of the sea,
beyond the Jordan, and
Galilee of the Gentiles,

Each of these were distinct areas that had been defined by the Romans.

- v.17 The phrase “from that time” occurs twice in the book of Matthew. Each time it does, it marks a crucial change of direction in the life and ministry of Jesus

In this case, He is now leaving the days of His preparation and entering into public ministry.

In Matt. 16:21 (the other case), Jesus begins to show the disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed and then raised the third day.

In v.17, what is the primary content of Jesus’ preaching?

4:18-22 The calling of disciples

Jesus now begins to call individuals into a unique, personal, discipling relationship with Himself.

What were the occupations of those first called? _____

What does it mean to be “a fisher of men?” _____

Fishermen were central to the Galilean economy and made a good living by the standards of their culture, far better than the large numbers of peasants who worked the land through much of the Roman empire. (from The IVP Bible Background Commentary on the NT)

How long did they take to decide to follow Jesus? _____

What can we say about those He chose to be His disciples and eventually the 1st apostles? _____

See Acts 4:13 Peter and John “*agrammar*” (illiterate) and “*idiotes*” (a common person)

Note that the words “follow me” occur 13 times in the gospels.

What is significant about these two words:

1. They are a command.
2. If they were to follow Him, the first command He gave was to repentance. Since He is the sinless, holy Son of God, then we too must confess our sins and turn to God.
3. Submission If they are to follow Him, then there is an implied submission. Submit – from Latin *sub* – under and *mitto* – to put or place...hence “to place under the authority of another.”
4. Trust – If they are to follow Him, then they will need to trust Him. He will take them places they’ve never been and do things they’ve never seen nor done themselves. I wonder how they must have felt when he touched and healed lepers or when He cast out demons?
5. Perseverance – Following Jesus is not a once and done operation. It is a lifetime experience. A true disciple of Jesus will follow Him to the end.
see Ps 119:112

With these things in mind, you can understand why I’ve included “follow” in my criteria for entering the kingdom of God in my new study on “Entering the Kingdom of God.”

“Receiving and following” Jesus isn’t a “once and done” experience. We get to live the rest of our lives, both here and now and in eternity, with Him.

4:23-25 Jesus ministers in Galilee

v.23 What were Jesus’ main ministries? (3) _____

What is the difference between preaching and teaching?

Matthew has now come to the place in his narration of the gospel to begin recording the first of 5 great discourses by Jesus. It is fitting that, during

the early stages of His ministry, He should teach one of the “Greatest Sermons Ever Preached”...the Sermon on the Mount. This message will lay out the basics of “life in the kingdom of God.”

As people are transferred out of this present evil age into “the kingdom of God,” He now shows them what their new life will look like.

Something to think about: Matthew’s narrative makes a quantum leap from the 1st or 2nd year of Jesus’ life to the ministry of John the Baptist...perhaps a leap of 25 or more years.

A review of the early chapters of John’s gospel show how much of his early years in ministry are excluded from Matthew’s gospel.

Why doesn’t he give us more information about Jesus’ childhood years?

Application: What applications to our lives can we make from this lesson?

1. We can use Jesus’ pattern of resisting the devil in our own lives.
2. Being “filled with the Spirit” and resisting temptations are preparatory for ministry.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Matthew 5

Part 1: vv. 1-16 “The New Kingdom Citizens”

Review of chapter 4

Biblical Interpretation: 4 guidelines for this lesson

1. Context: (One of my top five biblical interpretation guidelines)
2. What did it say to the original hearers?
3. Lexicology – the study of the meaning of words
4. A correlate to item 3: be sure to look up the word to be examined in the original language. (Spiros Zodhiates “The complete Word Study New Testament” is a good tool for this task.)

Context: In Matthew chapters 1-4, we have seen Jesus’ preparation for and the beginning of His earthly ministry. This was the beginning of “The Main Event” in God’s overarching plan of the Ages.

- Initially, Matthew has given us evidences that Jesus is the Messiah. Name some from our previous lessons.
- Now, we will hear His first sermon, and in it, we will see the wisdom and character of God, certainly another evidence of Jesus’ qualifications to be the Messiah. For no one ever spoke like this man.
- And, keep in mind, that, as He teaches, He not only will present truth, but He will also expose and correct false teachings by the leaders of Israel.

Chapter 4 outline:

4:1-11	Jesus is tempted by the devil.
4:12-17	Jesus begins his public ministry.
4:18-22	Jesus calls men to be His disciples.
4:22-25	Jesus ministers in Galilee.

In chapter 4, we finished the introduction and preparation stage of Jesus’ life on earth.

Jesus had been water and Holy Spirit baptized at the end of chapter 3. After that, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Matthew records 3 temptations brought to Jesus by the devil. Each time, He resists the temptations with the Word of God. (see Lk. 4:1-12)

Recall that Luke 4:2 tells us that during the 40 days of fasting, Jesus was also being tempted. After the 40 days of fasting and tempting, then began the 3 temptations recorded in Matthew 4: 1-11.

Starting with verse 4:12, Jesus begins His public ministry.

He began His public ministry in Galilee, preaching: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” We will see a continual focus on the kingdom of God in Matthew.

Matthew uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven” and its corresponding phrases more than 50 times in his gospel.

What is the kingdom of heaven? It’s more than a get out of hell free card.

The kingdom of heaven is the reign of God in the lives of His people.

He also began to call men to be his close disciples. They will eventually become the first apostles.

Do you recall anything unique about their responses to Jesus?

1. _____
2. _____

A cultural note: In Israel, to leave your family and your business suddenly, as they did, would be a cause for disgrace and dishonor in the community. However, there were similar stories such as this, both Hebrew and Greek, and people would recognize that a sudden departure could be the evidence of radical discipleship.

Jesus begins to teach in Jewish synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing the sick and casting out demons.

Great multitudes followed Him. His popularity among the common people was increasing while the religious leaders began to oppose Him.

Why was His popularity increasing? _____

How many people came to Jesus who just wanted to worship Him or get to know Him? _____

Recall the lessons of the Magi: find Jesus, worship Jesus, give Him gifts.

Chapter 5 Introduction and Outline:

In a book of great sermons by Dr. Clarence Macartney – The Sermon on the mount is the very first sermon. It is the best known and most extensively studied sermon ever written. Numerous books have been written about it. Now there are even books about the books.

That’s amazing considering that the sermon can be read in as little as 10-15 minutes.

Certainly, people didn’t travel for days to hear Jesus speak for just 10-15 minutes.

On one occasion, the feeding of the 4000 in Mt. 15:32ff, Jesus’ ministry to the people lasted 3 days.

How then can we explain the brevity of the sermon?

I believe that Matthew's "Sermon" is a shortened account of what Jesus must have consistently taught as He traveled from city to city.

The Purpose of the Sermon:

But, what are we to make of it?
Who is it for and how is it to be regarded?

If I read the sermon, I quickly realize that its teachings are the opposite of what I've been taught in the world:

- poor vs. rich
- mourn vs. be happy
- meek (weak?) vs. strong

1. Some say that it is a teaching on the principles of the coming Messianic kingdom when Jesus will rule on the earth for 1000 years.

2. A second opinion is that it is a social gospel. Let's just all live according to the Sermon on the Mount and the kingdom of God will come as people embrace its teachings. Anything wrong with this?

This has its problems because it tries to impose Jesus' teachings on those who don't know Him. And without Him, living the sermon is impossible.

3. Still others maintain that it is an exposition of the OT and is designed to drive us to grace. While this contains an element of truth, it doesn't give us the complete picture.

4. What else is there? How about:

- A. the teachings force us to acknowledge our deep need, and
- B. to turn to Jesus in faith; and
- C. in receiving Him, we can now live as He lived in the world.

Other thoughts: _____

The sermon is about life in the world for those who are Jesus' disciples.

This is what our new life in Christ will look like as we embrace His teachings.

In this sermon, Jesus gives His disciples a description of the kingdom of God and the character of its residents.

The theme of this sermon could be:

"The character and life of God's people in His kingdom"

Any other suggestions _____

Important to note: The sermon on the mount is not provided as "the way of salvation." Instead, it is the way of life for the true children of the kingdom. It was instruction for those who were His disciples." See Mt.5:1-2

Since the early believers were mostly Jews, they likely had a confused perception of what true righteousness was. If they watched the life of the “righteous ones” (i.e. the scribes and Pharisees), they may have thought righteousness in one’s life was achieved by meticulous, careful observance of a set of rules and regulations. But Jesus referred to these people as white-washed tombs.

The Pharisees had focused on the letter of the Law and not the Spirit of the Law. They had lost the “heart” of the Law.

Jesus, in His sermon, clarifies both the heart of the Law and the nature of true religion. In essence, He changed their understanding of the Law from a very negative perception of rigorous, meticulous outward obedience to show them the positive, internal elements of the Law.

Outline Chapter 5:

vv.1-2	the setting	}	Part I: Citizens of the New Kingdom - their character and effect
vv. 3-12	The beatitudes		
vv. 13-16	Salt and light		
vv. 17-20	The Law	}	Part II: The Laws of the New Kingdom
vv.21-26	Murder		
vv.27-30	Adultery		
vv.31-32	Marriage		
vv.33-37	Vows/oaths		
vv.38-42	Retaliation		
vv.43-48	Love		

Observation and Interpretation:

vv. 1-16 The citizens of the New Kingdom vv.1-2

Setting

These verses provide the setting for the sermon.
 Note a similar message to His disciples in Luke 6:17-49 “the sermon on the plain.” As an itinerant preacher, Jesus preached the “message of the kingdom” in many locations including similar teachings. In each case, he would have modified his messages to the needs of His audience. This would account for the differences between the 2 accounts of His teaching in Matthew and Luke.

When He sat down...style of teaching during Jesus’ day

vv. 3-12 The character of the new kingdom citizens

The 8 beatitudes are composed of 3 main elements:

1. the pronouncement of blessing
2. a virtue extolled
3. the kingdom reward that comes as a result of the possessed virtue

Now...at first glance, without looking at the notes below, what can we say about these 8 beatitudes?

1. The virtues proclaimed are resident in a person, perhaps a particular kind of person. (but not in everyone nor automatically there.)
2. Who are these people?
Note the shift to a personal pronoun in v.11 from theirs, those and they to you.
Note also, that v.10 ties to v.11 regarding persecution.
So...who are these people? _____
3. Can these verses be applied to born-again believers? _____
Note: We have just asked the question regarding the message to the original hearers. (#2 from introduction)
4. Note that the verbs in verses 3 and 10 indicate present possession (theirs **is**) while the other verbs in these beatitudes have the promise of something yet to come (they **shall**).
5. Is there a deliberate progression to the beatitudes? _____
6. Can a person have only a few of the blessings? _____
7. Can we say that all of the blessings identified can apply to all of the people? _____
8. So...who are these people? _____
9. What do these beatitudes picture for us? _____

My Answer: A picture of the progression of inward growth of a disciple of Jesus

10. Note the “bookmarks” or “brackets” at the end of verses 3 and 10. This is a Hebrew writing style that indicates that all of the verses between the “bookmarks” will also enjoy the blessings of the “brackets.” (theirs is the kingdom of heaven)

v.3 “Blessed” – Strong’s 3107B *makarios* to be fully satisfied. The believer is indwelt by God because of Christ and, as a result, is fully satisfied.

It is not “happy” which is a temporary, circumstantial benefit. Happy comes from the root “hap” which is based on external circumstances.

Makarios is the one who is in the world yet not dependent on the world; his satisfaction comes from God and not favorable circumstances.

What does it mean to be “poor in spirit?” _____

Suggestions: recognize your _____.
spiritually _____.

In this verse: "poor" – Strong's 4434B *ptochos* poor and helpless
one who needs lifting
one who has fallen from a
better estate
one who can only obtain
his living by begging

The "ptochos" has nothing at all. (The Complete Word Study NT)
A ptochos recognizes that they are spiritually bankrupt.

What do the "poor in spirit" have? the _____ of _____.

Note the verb tense indicating present possession.

v.4 "Mourn" – Strong's 3996B *pentheo* to mourn, grieve, to sorrow,
be sad, grieved

What do the kingdom dwellers mourn? _____

What is their blessing? _____

What is this comfort? _____
See Isa. 40:2

v.5 "Meek" – Strong's 4239B *praus* meek, lowly, gentleness, humility
4240 *prautes* meekness, expressed not in a man's outward
behavior but as a work of grace in the soul, first and chiefly
directed towards God.

The attitude of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as
good and do not dispute or resist. From Zhodiaties "The Complete
Word Study NT."

enduring injury with patience and without resentment (M-W
dictionary)

having the capability of showing deference from the position of
strength or authority. e.g. Abraham with Lot choosing the best
pasture lands

"strength under control"

What is the blessing of the meek? _____

When will they receive this blessing? _____

v.6 "hunger and thirst after righteousness" – Strong's 1343B *dikaiousune*
essentially means conformity with the claims of higher authority
- opposite of lawlessness

Note: The righteousness expressed here is most likely not the divine, imputed righteousness that the mourners desire. The idea of imputed righteousness comes from Paul's writings.

Matthew doesn't use righteousness in this way.

This is most likely the righteousness that expresses itself in right deeds. See Mt. 6:1 These are people that want to do right and want to see righteous actions in others.

Where do these who hunger and thirst get their righteousness?

How does Jesus comment: "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20) fit in here? _____

- v.7 "merciful" 1655 *eleemon* compassionate, benevolent, merciful one who grieves within for the condition and needs of another
"The merciful" indicates that they have received some measure of mercy.

Mercy first comes to us from Jesus in redeeming us from our empty way of life. Once we have received mercy, we are then positioned and equipped to show mercy towards others.

What do those who show mercy receive? _____

- Notice, as we move through the description of those blessed, that we are dealing with issues and qualities of the heart, something that the scribes and Pharisees were ill-equipped to deal with or teach.

- v.8 "pure in heart"

"pure" – Strong's 2513B *katharos* clean, pure, clear; also: from the pollution and guilt of sin.

See Ps. 24:4 "He has clean hands and a pure heart"

From Ps. 73:1ff: "The pure in heart in Israel were those whose hearts were "clean" or "undefiled," those who recognized that God alone was their help and reward."

The Scribes and Pharisees were concerned for external, ritual purity while Jesus' concern was for the inner heart of the person.

What is the blessing of being "pure in heart?" _____

When does this occur? “We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” I Jn. 3:2

Note that, in the OT, “to see God” was referred to as the “beatific vision.”

- v.9 “peacemakers” 1518B eirenopoios - one who makes peace
between two parties.

Note: Their true identity will be made known. (called “sons of God”) This beatitude calls God’s people not to merely be peaceful persons but also to work actively for peace on the earth. This includes sharing the gospel and also extends to reconciliation efforts between those “not at peace.”

- v.10 “persecuted for righteousness sake”

This beatitude is stated initially in v. 10 and then elaborated upon in vv. 11 and 12. It moves from the general to the specific.

God is pleased when His children demonstrate that they value Him above everything else in the world. This occurs when they remain faithful in the midst of opposition to their life and message.

- v.11-12 What is the reward for those who are “reviled and persecuted” because of their faithfulness to the name of Jesus? _____

If we are faithful during persecutions, who are we like? _____

What are we to do when persecution comes? _____

Why will persecutions come to us?

1. _____
2. _____

Persecution for righteousness sake demonstrates that we belong to Jesus.

It also provides evidence, and therefore confirmation, for the things that we will receive after we leave this life.

What do the beatitudes do?

The BEATITUDES:

1. Provide a standard of conduct/a code of ethics for the believer.
2. Provide a sharp, distinguishing contrast between the teachings of the Pharisees and Jesus.
3. Provide the promise of rewards and a hope for the future.

4. Provide a description of the development of character within those who are disciples of Jesus.
5. Show the contrast between the values of the world and the values of the kingdom.
6. Give us a clear picture of the character of the inhabitants of the kingdom demonstrating that this is a desirable place to be.
7. Provide a clear warning regarding the attitude and response of those in world to the inhabitants of the kingdom.
8. The Beatitudes display the wisdom of God (“No man ever spoke as this man does.”) and therefore, provides further evidence of His qualifications to be the Messiah.
9. _____

vv. 13-16 The effect of the new kingdom citizens

Jesus first shows the disciples (in vv. 3-12) the character of the new kingdom citizens. He now shows them the effect that they will have on the world (old kingdom or kingdom of this present age)

v.13 What metaphor does Jesus use in this verse for the new kingdom citizens? _____

What 3 things does this do?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What does this metaphor tell us the effect new kingdom citizens should have on the world? _____

Note: “lost its taste” can also mean: “become a fool”

v.14-16 What metaphor does Jesus use in these verses? _____

What is the effect that light should have? _____

What should we do with our light? _____

What result should “letting our light shine” have on the world? _____

What will happen at the rapture when the salt and light of the world is removed? _____

Application:

So, having reviewed the character qualities of Jesus' 1st century disciples, how can we apply this lesson to our 21st century disciples of Jesus?

1. Ja. 4:8 "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."
2. Follow the instructions in the sermon.
 - rejoice when persecuted
 - let your light shine
 - be reconciled to your brother
 - don't lust or steal
 - love your enemies
 - etc.
3. Ps. 37:1-8 (The "do not fret" Psalm.)
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Matthew 5

Part 2 vv. 17-48

Review of Part 1: “The Beatitudes”

In Part I of chapter 5, we began our review of the “greatest sermon ever preached.” In this first part, Jesus describes the character of the new citizens of His kingdom and then tells of the effect (salt and light) that they will have on the world. This is not a “salvation” message but a message of how the “saved” person should live.

The character of the new kingdom citizen should display, humility, meekness, a hunger and thirst after righteousness, they should be “showers of mercy”, peacemakers and pure in heart.

It was noted that this new kingdom life is not without troubles and difficulties. If we are going to be like Jesus, then we too, will share in sufferings similar to His. We will be persecuted because of our likeness to Christ.

It is important to note at this point that, according to Paul, (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14) we have the down payment (guarantee) of our inheritance in Christ. We don't have the “whole package.” Completing our likeness to Christ will be an on-going process for the rest of our days on earth.

Observation and Interpretation: Part 2: vv. 17-48:

In this part of chapter 5, Jesus clarifies and intensifies the meaning of the OT Law. The scribes and Pharisees had a very legalistic approach to the Law and had lost its true meaning.

To begin, Jesus tells them that He is the fulfillment of the Law. (v.17)

Next, He tells them that His disciples must fulfill the Law in a much deeper way than the scribes and Pharisees.

He then shows them what “keeping the law” really is by using several illustrations (e.g. murder, adultery, divorce, etc.) to illustrate the true fulfillment of the Law.

In each illustration, Jesus shows them the true “spiritual” application of the Law as opposed to the Scribes and Pharisees’ “letter of the Law.”

The final verse of this segment (v.48) summarizes the true application of the Law, i.e. “...be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (a word meaning complete.)

vv. 17-20 Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

What is a "jot" _____ and a "tittle" _____?

What is Jesus saying by using these words? _____

What is the significance of heaven and earth passing away?

What does it mean when He says "till all is fulfilled?" (What is He talking about?) _____

What happens to those who break the Law and teach others to "do as they have done?" _____

v.20 How can our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees? _____
In reality, what was their righteousness? _____

In the segments remaining in chapter 5, Jesus begins by saying: "You have heard that it was said."

Who or what is He referring to? _____

What is He, in essence, doing? _____

Why was this necessary? _____

vv.21-26 Murder

What reason can we have for anger? _____

What judgment is He referring to? _____
(see Num. 35:31)

What does "raca" mean? _____

What does Jesus say we must do with a gift for the altar if we remember that a brother has something against us?

If a person is thrown into jail and cannot work, how will he get the money to pay his debt so he can be released?

(We would hope that he had a compassionate family.)

vv.27-30 Adultery

What does Jesus do with respect to adultery? _____

How would you contrast Jesus' teaching with those of the Pharisees and scribes? _____

How can we explain Jesus' teachings on plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand? _____

What is the source of these sins? _____

Would taking either of these actions change the source of this sin? _____

What is He teaching in this segment? _____

vv.31-32 Marriage

Why was it necessary for Him to correct the traditional teaching on divorce? _____

What valid reason does He give for divorce? _____

Are there any other permissible reasons for divorce? _____

vv.33-37 Vows/oaths

What is Jesus' teaching on oaths in this passage? _____

Why was it necessary? _____

What does "yes be yes and no be no" mean? _____

vv.38-42 Retaliation

Where does "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" come from? _____

Is it ever right to fight/use force against an oppressor?

What about our civil law and the institution of a local police force?

What might be achieved by turning the other cheek?"

Can you think of any NT passages that might indicate that there is a time to use force?

What would happen to our civil police forces if no one were allowed to use force?

What are the primary duties of a shepherd? lead, feed, heal and _____.

Who are the shepherds in our modern-day society?

What does Rom. 12:17-21 counsel us to do when facing evil or an enemy?

Summarize Jesus' teaching in this passage on retaliation/the use of force.

vv.43-48

Love

Key word: 25B *agapao* to love - deepest form of love used of God's love towards man

Key word: "perfect" 5046B
teleios goal, purpose, full-grown
as opposite of a child
fully completed growth
one who has attained his moral end, i.e. to be an obedient man in Christ

How is it possible to love those who are your enemies, bless the ones who curse you and do good to those who spitefully use you?

Jesus has now addressed the heart of the Law. In the next section beginning in chapter 6, he will address 3 religious practices that flow out of the heart into external religious practices. He will show the disciples the effect the kingdom of God should have on these external practices.

Application:

Identify 5 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Matthew 6

Review of Chapter 5:

In chapter 5, Jesus describes the character of the new citizens of His kingdom and the effect (salt and light) that they will have on the world.

The character of the new kingdom citizen should display humility, meekness, a hunger and thirst after righteousness, they should be “showers of mercy”, peacemakers and pure in heart.

It was noted that if we are going to be like Jesus, then we too, will share in sufferings similar to His. We will be persecuted because of our likeness to Christ.

In vs. 17-48, Jesus clarifies the meaning of the OT Law. This was needed because the scribes and Pharisees had a very legalistic approach to the Law and the Pharisees had lost the true meaning of the Law.

Jesus tells them that He is the fulfillment of the Law. (v.17)

He tells them that His disciples must fulfill the Law in a much deeper way than the scribes and Pharisees.

He then shows them what “keeping the law” really is by using several illustrations (e.g. murder, adultery, divorce, etc.) to illustrate the true fulfillment of the Law.

In each illustration, Jesus shows them the true “spiritual” application of the Law as opposed to the Scribes and Pharisees’ “letter of the Law.”

The final verse of this segment (v.48) summarizes the true application of the Law, i.e. “...be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Chapter 6 is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount which began in chapter 5.

Outline of Chapter 6:

- vv. 1-18 Instructions on religious practices
- vv. 19-24 Choosing right values
- vv. 25-34 “Do not be anxious”

Observation and Interpretation:

A. vv. 1-18 Instructions on religious practices

Jesus begins by stating a principle and then following this statement with specific illustrations.

What is the principle? (v.1) _____

vv. 2-4 What is the practical application of this general principle in this passage? _____

What does: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" mean? _____

(This is a Hebrew idiom.)

If you violate this instruction, what reward will you have? _____

Is this reward of any value? _____

vv. 5-15 What is the practical application of the general principle in this passage? _____

What two directives does he give them?

1. _____ v.6

2. _____ v.7

v.8 If God knows what we need before we even ask Him, then why do we still need to pray? _____

In v.9, Jesus says: "Pray then, like this:"

What does this mean? Are we to simply repeat His prayer?

vv.9-12 Note that personal pronouns are in the plural.

What does this suggest? _____

In this prayer, what does Jesus do first? _____

How soon do we get to start "asking for our stuff?" _____

v.13 This should be translated: And don't allow us to be lead into temptation." (God doesn't tempt anyone. James 1:13)

List several insights you can gain about personal prayer from this passage:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

vv. 14-15 What is the stunning conclusion we should draw from vv. 14-15 about forgiveness? _____

vv. 16-18 What is the practical application of the general principle in this passage? _____

How can we summarize Jesus' instruction about fasting in this passage? _____

B. vv. 19-24 Choosing right values

Summarize Jesus' instructions about choosing "right values" in this segment: (What are we to do?)

vv. 19-21 _____

vv. 22-23 _____

vv. 24 _____

C. vv. 25-34 "Do not be anxious"

What three basic needs does Jesus address which people get anxious about in their life?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Why does Jesus say we should not be anxious? _____

What attitude should we take towards life in general? (v.34)

Application:

Identify 3 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Matthew 7

Review of Chapter 6:

In chapter 6, we reviewed 3 segments as follows:

- vv. 1-18 Instructions on religious practices
- vv. 19-24 Choosing right values
- vv. 25-34 "Do not be anxious"

Now, after an extended discussion on anxiety, Jesus switches to a series of topics giving specific instructions on each area:

judging, pearls before swine, persevering in prayer, the "golden rule," and

- 3 contrasts: wide and narrow gates
false prophets
houses built on rock and sand

Observation and Interpretation:

vv.1-5 Judging

What is it that we are not to judge? _____

We make judgments about many things that are legitimate.

- e.g. - A father judges the trustworthiness of a suitor interested in his daughter,
- We make judgments about the company we keep

Verse 3 employs a figure of speech using a speck and a log.

What do these represent? _____

What persons during Jesus' time were prone to make judgments?

What are some things in which we are to exercise judgment/discernment?

- leaders are to judge words that are spoken in meetings
- _____
- _____
- _____

v.6 Pearls before swine

What are the pearls? _____

Who are the swine? _____

Why would "the swine" turn on you if you gave them pearls?

vv.7-11 Persevering in prayer

The Greek verbs indicate present, continuous action. So these verbs can be translated: keep on asking, keep on seeking, etc.

What 2 topics does Matthew address in this segment?

1. _____
2. _____

See James 4:2-3

Last week, we asked the question: "If God knows what we need before we ask, why then do we need to ask."

In the passage above, we see a reinforcement of the understanding that we must ask in order to receive. (Although, at times, God may give us something that we haven't asked for.)

Can you think of something God gave you that you didn't ask for?

When to stop praying:

- A. When the prayer is _____.
- B. When you have a confident faith that the prayer is _____.

v.12 The Golden Rule

State the golden rule in your own words? _____

vv. 13-14 The 2 gates

What do the gates symbolize? _____

Explain "wide." _____

Explain "narrow." _____

Is it fair to have a narrow gate? If yes, why? _____

Where do we find the "wide gate?" _____

vv. 15-20 False Prophets

What comparisons does Jesus use for the following?

1. False prophets:
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

2. True prophets:
 - A. a _____

What key does Jesus give us for guarding against evil-doers?

vv. 21-23 Entering the kingdom of heaven

v.21 What is the secret of entering the kingdom of heaven?

What is God's will? _____
See John 6:28-29

How is it possible that people can call Him Lord and prophesy and cast out demons in His name, and Jesus says: "I never knew you?"

vv. 24-27 Two Foundations

What can we say that the sand and the rock represent?

Sand _____
Rock _____

Who is the fool? _____
Who is the wise man? _____

How does this relate to our salvation? _____

Are we to “do Jesus’ words” to obtain our salvation? _____

What does the image of “house” represent? _____
(I think Jesus must not be talking about our physical houses.)

vv. 28-29 Concluding comments

What impact did Jesus’ teachings have on his listeners? _____

Why was his teaching “impactful?” _____

What does this mean for us? _____

III. Application:

Provide one personal application for each of the segments discussed in this lesson.

vv. 1-5 _____

v.6 Don’t give your wise sayings to those who have no regard for them.

vv. 7-11 In my prayer life, I need to pray until I receive the answer or pray until I have a confident assurance by faith that my prayer has been/will be answered.

v.12 I need to treat others the same way that I want them to treat me.
It might be a useful exercise to list or define how you want to be treated.

vv. 13-14 _____

vv. 15-20 _____

vv. 21-23 _____

vv. 24-27 _____

vv. 28-29 _____

3 Messianic Miracles

Purpose: This brief study is presented to examine historical accounts that we read in Matthew chapters 8:1-4 (also Lk. 5:12-14) and 9:32-33 which provide pertinent information regarding Jesus' claim and witness to be the Messiah. It will also prepare us for the chapter 12 study in which the Pharisees publicly reject Jesus' claim, by His miracles, to be the Messiah and attribute his works to being in league with Beelzebub. In this accusation, the Jews are rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. God will now set them (the nation) aside for a period of time and the door of salvation will be opened to the Gentiles.

Introduction:

Prior to the coming of the Messiah, the rabbis of Israel were concerned to have a system in place that would assist them in validating the true Messiah when He came.

The process they constructed consisted in separating miracles into 2 categories:

1. miracles that could be performed by someone (such as a prophet) who was empowered by the Holy Spirit
2. miracles that could only be performed by the Messiah

So, if a "Messianic" miracle were performed, it would be a "red flag" and would elicit a different response from the rabbis than their response for miracles which were considered "general" miracles.

I. The Messianic Miracles Defined:

The rabbis identified 3 kinds of Messianic miracles:

1. Healing a leper

From the time of the Law of Moses, the only time a person could be defiled by a living human body would occur when a "clean" person came into contact with a leper.

There were no cures for leprosy. (even though Lev. 13-14 gave instructions if a leper were cured.) Note: 116 verses regarding leprosy.

If a leper were cured:

- The priest would give an initial offering of two birds.
- Next was 7 days of extensive investigation...had he really been leprous? How was he cured? Who was instrumental in the cure?

These were some of the questions they would ask.

- on the 8th day, if it were determined to be a true healing, the priest would offer up :
 - o a trespass offering
 - o a sin offering
 - o a burnt offering

- o a meal offering
- Next came the application of the blood of the trespass offering on the person who had been healed.
- Then came the application of the blood of the sin offering upon the person healed
- Finally, the person healed would be anointed with oil.

And, even though all of these instructions were well- defined, from the time the Law was given until the time of Christ, no Jew had ever been healed of leprosy. So no priest had ever been required to complete this process.

2. Exorcising a person who was dumb

The Jewish exorcism process consisted in 3 steps:

- A. Establish communication with the demonized person.
- B. Identify the demon's name.
- C. By using the name, cast the demon out.

An example...Mark 5:1ff where Jesus used this process with "Legion."

But, if a person were dumb, then the rabbis would be unable to communicate with him and discover his name. (The demon would not be able to use his vocal chords to speak.) Therefore, deliverance could not be achieved because the name could not be discovered.

But...the Messiah would be able to accomplish this deliverance.

3. Healing a person born blind

In the Jewish system, it was one thing to heal a person who had had sight but somehow lost it. It was a whole new ball game for someone who had been born blind. This would necessitate a miracle of a whole new kind (creative.)

But...the rabbis believed that the Messiah would be able to do this.

II. The Miracles Accomplished:

In chapters 4 through 12 of Matthew, Jesus is seen proclaiming the kingdom of God and performing many miracles. Regarding the miracles, one of the main purposes of these miracles was to authenticate His person and His message. The miracles were signs designed to bring Israel to a place of decision regarding the Messiah, who He was and His message.

1. The leper cleansed – Mt. 8:2-4 (see also Mk. 1:40-45 and Lk. 5:12-16)

In Luke's account of this miracle healing, he says the man was full of leprosy. (v.12) His leprosy was now fully developed indicating that he would soon die.

Note that the man came in faith and worshipped Jesus calling Him Lord saying: "If you will, you can make me clean."

How could he make this statement except that:

- A. he knew the teaching of the rabbis that the Messiah could do this, and
- B. he believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

Then Jesus touched him and he was healed.

Observe what Jesus told him to do: “Don’t tell anyone but go and show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

When the cleansed leper approached a priest with his “good news,” it activated the OT process for the cleansing of a leper.

First of all, the priest offered up 2 sacrificial birds and then began a 7-day investigation of the healing.

- (1) Had the man really had been a leper?
- (2) Was he really healed?
- (3) How did the healing occur?
- (4) Who was the one who healed him?

Since the rabbis taught that this kind of healing could only come from one person, the Messiah, then anyone who performed such an act of healing was, in fact, claiming to be the Messiah.

Jesus, in performing this miracle, was saying to the people, priests included, “I am the Messiah.

The response to this claim to be the Messiah was immense.

According to Sanhedrin (ruling council) law, any claim to Messiahship was to be investigated. There were 2 stages to this activity...investigation/observation and, if the claim was significant, a second stage of interrogation would be pursued in which the investigators were permitted to ask questions and interrogate. (Stage 1 was basically a “hands off” stage.)

In Mt. 9:1-8, we read the account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man.

Luke’s account of the paralytic in Lk. 5:17 says that “there were Pharisees and teachers of the Law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem.” Interest in this Messianic event had become enormous, as well it should have been. The fate of the nation was at stake.

Summary: The miracle of the leper’s healing had initiated the first “observation” stage.

2. Deliverance for a “dumb” person – Mt. 9:32-33 and Mt. 12:22-23

Matthew provides 2 occasions in which a demonized, dumb person was healed.

In the first occasion, the crowds responded: "It was never seen like this in Israel."

In the second occasion, the crowd responded with a question: "Could this be the son of David?" (a reference to the Messiah)

Note that this question had never been raised when Jesus cast out other demons. But this was different. They knew from the rabbinic teachings that this was a Messianic miracle.

This is a key turning point. The Jewish people consistently tended to follow those in leadership. See OT: If the king was good, they followed him. If he was bad, they followed him.

So too, in this situation, they saw the miracle, they knew the teaching. (Fast forward to the Triumphal Entry in Mt. 21:9: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.")

But they were also subservient to the judgments and rulings of the leadership.

The Jewish leaders were "in a pickle." They were now pressed into making a public decision and declaration regarding this uneducated, Nazarene carpenter who had done that which had never been done before.

And they did.

Their decision was monumental: They publicly rejected Jesus as the Messiah and attributed His miracles to Beelzebub. (Basically, they accused the Lord of Heaven and Earth of being demon possessed.)

This is huge!

We'll talk more about this when we do our Matt. 12 study. But, in summary:

1. Jesus defended Himself saying that this (His miracle being done by Beelzebub) could not be true because it would indicate a division in Satan's kingdom.
2. A condemnation: This generation is guilty of the "unpardonable sin, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit." Judgment was now set against this generation." (see AD 70, the destruction of Jerusalem.)

Jesus did continue to perform miracles but no longer were they done to demonstrate that He was the Messiah. Now they would be done as instruction for the 12 apostles.

The only sign the Jews would see was the "sign of Jonah"- the resurrection (which they would see 3 times...Lazarus, Jesus Himself, and the 2 witnesses.)

Note: From John 11, the account of Lazarus...the response of the Jewish leaders (Caiaphas account) to the raising of Lazarus from the dead (1st sign of the resurrection) was to decide that Jesus must die.

Summary: In this miracle, the Pharisees declared Jesus to be “demon-possessed.”

3. Healing a man born blind see John 9:1-41

Note the interesting question? “Who sinned this man or his parents that he should be born blind?”

According to the Pharisees’ teachings, a defect such as this would be caused either by a sin of the parents or by the person. This would imply that the baby in the womb could somehow sin.

The Pharisees believed that, in the womb, there were two principles:
yetzer hara – an evil inclination
yetser hatov – a good inclination

If, during a child’s struggles in the womb he should succumb to the yetzer hara and kick or strike his mother, he had sinned. The punishment for this sin could be his loss of sight.

Jesus dismisses the question. (v.3)

The Pharisees continued their interrogation of the man and his parents. They obviously had to reject his statement that Jesus had healed him. (Otherwise, they would have to bow before Him.)

So, they had no choice but to discredit him.

But the man would not relent. And he became a thorn in their side. In essence he said: You are the leadership of Israel. I learned from you that only the Messiah could do this thing. Now it has happened and you can’t explain it to me.

The Pharisees revert back to their original accusation: “You were born in sin.”

In essence saying: “Your opinion is of no value and is voided.”

Verse 34 says: “They cast him out.” This means they put him out of the synagogue.

III. Summary:

1. The first Messianic miracle initiated the observation process for a messianic occurrence.
2. The Pharisees response to the 2nd miracle was to declare Jesus “demon-possessed.”
3. In response to the 3rd Messianic miracle, the leaders decreed that anyone following Jesus would be put out of the synagogue.

Note: This would be a strong point drawing the crowds to follow the Pharisees even though they may have believed Jesus was the Messiah. (See Triumphal entry.)

But, the great tragedy of the responses of the leaders of Israel is their rejection of the Messiah and their committing of the unpardonable sin.

Because of their sin, the Jews were set aside for an extended period of time and judgment came upon Jerusalem.

It will now take the devastating, horrific judgments of the tribulation to restore Israel to their God.

An irony (or touch of humor depending on your perspective):

In Lk. 17:11-19, 10 lepers call out to Jesus to heal them. He told them to go show themselves to the priests and, as they went, they were cleansed.

This occurs just after Caiaphas, the chief priests and Pharisees had put Jesus to death. (see Jn. 11:53)

And now Jesus sends 10 lepers to these priests which meant that the priests would have to spend 7 days examining each of the 10 lepers, 10 times they would have to decree that the lepers were cleansed and 10 times they would have to decree that Jesus had healed them... 10 daily reminders (goads) for the better part of 2 weeks that Jesus was in fact, the Messiah.

Matthew 8 and 9

Review of Chapter 7:

Chapter 7 completed Jesus teachings to his disciples in the sermon on the mount. Since this sermon was foundational to his disciples' understanding of the kingdom of God, it is likely that He taught this sermon many times in different locations. (See Lk. 6 – sermon on the plain)

In this chapter, we looked briefly at the issue of judging, saw Jesus' exhortation to persevere in prayer and then the final thought of the first section of the chapter with the teaching of the Golden Rule, treating others the way you want to be treated.

In the 2nd half of the chapter we saw four contrasts:

- 2 gates,
- true and false prophets,
- true and false disciples, and
- 2 foundations, one on the rock and one on sand.

This short segment gave a very clear description of those in the kingdom and those not in the kingdom.

The result of these teachings is that the crowds were amazed, astonished at his teachings because he taught with authority and not as the scribes.

Observation and Interpretation:

Matthew now switches from teachings (“in the classroom”) to “on-the-job-training.” He goes out into the field and ministers to those in need. Shortly thereafter, he will commission and send out his 12 disciples giving them authority to do what they have seen him doing in chapters 8 and 9.

In chapter 8 and in chapter 9, Matthew reports a number of “miracle stories” and provides another approach to showing the people who Jesus was, by demonstrations of power and authority that could only come from God.

This chapter can very readily be entitled: “The Power of the King.” As we study these stories, it will be important to keep Matthew's primary goal in mind...to bring his readers to faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Note also the people that he ministered to in the first verses 1-17, a leper, a centurion's servant and Peter's mother-in-law. What do these 3 have in common, if anything? _____

Before beginning your verse-by-verse study of chapter 8, fill in the blank cells in the table for chapter 8 on the following page.

“The MIRACLES of JESUS”

Text	Who received the miracle?	What faith was involved?	What was Jesus' method of performing a miracle?	What was the effect of the miracle?	What do we learn from this miracle?
8:1-4	A leper	The leper had faith in Jesus.	Jesus touched him and spoke a word	The leper spread the news about his healing.	Jesus touched the untouchable. His purity took away the leper's impurity.
5-13 Lk.7:10	Centurion's servant		He spoke a word. (v.13)	Jesus used the centurion as a "faith" example. see Lk. 7	Jesus reached out to someone _____ the community of God.
14-17 Lk.4:38-39	Peter's mother-in-law	The disciples sought Jesus on behalf of her.	He touched her hand and rebuked the fever		
18-22	Discipleship				
23-27	His disciples		He rebuked the wind and spoke to the sea.	The disciples feared but it was because of who Jesus was.	Jesus is Lord over nature and therefore, is God.
28-34	Demoniacs		He commanded the unclean spirit to come out.		Jesus has authority over the evil spiritual world.
9:1-8	A paralytic	the faith of the people who brought the paralytic to Jesus	He spoke to the paralytic.	The crowds were afraid and glorified God.	Some physical issues people have are due to sin. Jesus is Lord over creation (the physical body).
9-17	Discipleship				
20-22	Woman with a flow of blood	Reached out, touched his garment, had faith	Power went out from him, even from his clothing	Jesus sent her on her way in peace.	
18-26	An official's daughter		He took her by the hand	News about the miracle spread throughout the district.	
27-31	2 blind men		He spoke a word.	Jesus' fame spread through all the district.	
s32-34	Mute demon-possessed man	Some who brought the man to Jesus	Jesus cast it out. (likely commanded it to leave)	The crowds marveled; the Pharisees _____.	

Comments on chapters 8:

vv.1-4. Jesus cleanses a leper

In the case of the leper, he was unclean and therefore, untouchable. Jesus touched the untouchable.

vv.5-13 The Centurion's faith

The centurion was a Roman soldier, a Gentile. Jesus reached outside of the community of faith (Jews) to an "outsider."

vv.14-17 Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law

Peter's mother-in-law, of course, was a woman. But women in the Jewish society were lower class citizens, often considered as property.

In essence, in these 3 miracle cases, Jesus reached out to the needy who were either outcasts or low-born, definitely not the "elite" of society.

vv.18-22 Discipleship

In this discipleship paragraph, Jesus teaches about the cost of following Jesus.

What 2 "costs of discipleship" did Jesus give to the inquirers?

1. _____
2. _____

In v. 21, one of his disciples wanted to bury his father. What does this mean? 2 Clues: It is a Hebrew idiom and the father is not yet dead.

vv.23-27 Jesus calms a storm or "the fearful disciples"

In the case of the fearful disciples, their fear of nature was replaced with a fear of Jesus.

Note that Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith during the storm indicating that they should have had enough faith to sustain them during the storm if not to rebuke it altogether. They had already seen some incredible miracles at the hand of Jesus who was with them. (Surely, in Jesus' presence, everything is going to work out okay.)

vv.28-34 Jesus delivers two men with demons

Jesus has just performed an amazing miracle which brought deliverance to a man.

Why did the people request Jesus to leave their district? _____

If you saw this, would you have asked Jesus to stay in your city? Why or why not? _____

Now, finish filling in the blanks on the table for chapter 9.

Observation and Interpretation: Chapter 9

Comments on Chapter 9:

In this chapter, we will see open opposition to Jesus for the first time. This hostility will increase so dramatically that, towards the end of his public ministry, they are seeking to kill him.

vv.1-8 Jesus heals a paralytic

Review Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 5:17-26 accounts of this miracle

Note especially the “Pharisees and doctors of the law...come out of every town.”

What is the significance of this “great crowd”? _____

Note also additional information provided by Mark and Luke.

The first words of Jesus to the paralytic were: “Be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven. Why did the scribes and Pharisees think that this was blasphemy?

Were they correct? _____

Explain Jesus’ question: “Which is easier to say “Your sins are forgiven or rise and walk.” _____

What did Jesus do to demonstrate that He had the authority to forgive sins?

But...wasn’t this the lesser deed? _____

Why would it be successful in achieving Jesus purposes? _____

What conclusion should the scribes reached when they saw Jesus heal the paralytic? _____

Why didn't they come to this "obvious conclusion?" _____

What lessons can we learn from this healing miracle?

1. Jesus is _____.
2. Jesus has the power to _____ and to _____.

vv.9-17 Discipleship

Who is Matthew telling this account about? _____

Matthew is giving His personal testimony about "following Jesus."

Note that Mark and Luke use Matthews Jewish name when identifying Matthew.

Discuss "cultural background" handout on "Tax Collectors."

Note the additional information provided by Luke that Levi made Him a great feast in his own home.

v.9 The Jews likely considered Matthew a traitor since he collected taxes for the hated Romans. In fact, many tax collectors used their position to increase their wealth by collecting taxes in excess of those required by the Imperial government.

Note the additional information provided by Luke on Matthew's response to Jesus: He left _____.

In verse 9, when Jesus calls Matthew to follow him, the text (Luke) says that he left all, rose up and followed him.

The sense of this passage leads me to believe that this was an instantaneous response.

How could a wealthy man do such a thing? _____

A suggestion: see John 17:6-12 "those you have given me"

vv.10-13 The Pharisees thought they were "not sick" because they kept the law. Also, they believed that if they ate with publicans (collectors of public revenue or tax collectors) and sinners, they would be contaminated (made unclean).

Jesus quoted from Hos. 6:6 ("I desire mercy and not sacrifice.") Jesus was saying to them: "You do not understand the God who is revealed in your own writings." They knew how to perform the temple sacrifices and "do the rituals" but they didn't know how to show mercy which is what Jesus was doing.

Mercy, in this passage, is the translation of the Hebrew word "*hesed*" which means steadfast love. (a big word for God's covenant love in the Old Testament.)

God is far more interested to show mercy than He is to receive an offering (or sacrifice) a man might bring to Him. "When you have learned this, then you will understand why I eat with publicans and sinners."

In this passage, Jesus speaks of a physician and those who are sick.

What kind of sickness is he referring to? (see v.13) _____

And again, Jesus is fellowshiping and ministering to social outcasts.

Matthew's testimony:

1. He left his tax station immediately and followed Jesus.

My special note: I believe modern evangelism is greatly remiss on several accounts. One of them is displayed in this text...following Jesus.

Salvation is not simply getting your “get out of hell free card” but is an issue of entering the kingdom of God. When one enters God’s kingdom, they come under a new law, a new king and a new reign/rule. Jesus is Savior and Lord and king and God. An appropriate discussion of evangelism should include embracing Jesus as all of the above and following Him.

2. He left everything (all).

3. He introduced his friends to Jesus.

v.14-17 New wine

What do the following figures of speech represent?

Old wineskin _____
Old garment _____
New wineskin _____
New garment _____

In the first segment of chapter 9, the opposition of the scribes surfaces in their accusation of blasphemy.

In the segment recording Matthew’s response to Jesus, the accusation is that he associates with the unclean (tax collectors and sinners). These associations would result in Him being unclean.

The next accusation brought against Him was that he didn’t fast (as they did) and was not, therefore, appropriately pious.

Feasting is appropriate because the bridegroom is with them. This shows that where the kingdom of God has come, feasting and celebration are appropriate.

The kingdom of God does not fit in the old wineskin of Judaism.

He is not patching up the tradition of the scribes and Pharisees within religious Judaism. Jesus has come to offer real growth in kingdom righteousness, and therefore, it needs to be poured into a new wineskin.

The old wineskin of inflated laws and legalistic righteousness will not do for the wineskin of the new covenant.

vv.18-26 A young girl is restored to life and a woman healed

Note: The name of the synagogue ruler is identified in Mk. 5:22 and Lk. 8:41.

vv.18-19, 23-26 A young girl is healed

Note: As a ruler of the synagogue, Jairus was coming to a man that was rejected by most of his contemporaries. With this action, he risked the ire and adverse reactions of his contemporaries.

So, why would he do this? _____

Even though Jairus was a ruler, he knelt before Jesus, the appropriate position to take before God. (Some translations say “worshipped him. – KJV, LB)

- SN 4352 *proskuneo* - to prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore) worship

“Even now dead” is an idiom which means “she is at the point of death, she is as good as dead.” (Lk. 8:42 says that “she is dying.”

Jesus has now arrived at the house of Jairus after a brief interruption on his trip there by the woman with the flow of blood.

What was the response of the crowd when Jesus said she was only asleep?

Why would they do this? _____

Why did Jesus put the crowd outside? _____

Note that the dead were unclean just as was the woman with the flow of blood and could not be touched.

When Jesus purposely took her by the hand, His cleanness and purity overcame her uncleanness.

vv.20-22 A woman is healed

This woman was just as desperate as was the ruler of the synagogue

By reason of her trouble (flow of blood, excessive menstrual bleeding), she was:

- ceremonially unclean (see Lev. 15:25-27) No one could touch her or her touch them without themselves becoming unclean.
- excommunicated religiously.
- She could not take any part or place in the worship of God.
She was, therefore, shutout from temple and synagogue worship.
- She was divorced by her husband by the same law.
- She was ostracized from society.
- She had spent her money for 12 years with nothing to show for it. Instead, she was worse off.

What a remarkable occurrence. She, in the middle of a crowd and along with other people who were also touching and brushing against him, touched Him and He knew immediately that virtue had gone out of Him.

What was the difference for her? (why did she get a healing) _____

Note that in Lk. 8:47. Luke says that, when she saw that she was not hid, she came trembling.

Why was she trembling? _____

Summary of these 2 “unclean stories:

We are sick with the uncleanness of our sin.

This sickness makes us unclean, isolated, without hope (apart from Jesus) and dead in our sins.

They show that, to be healed from the sickness of sin, we need the forgiving, merciful powerful grace of God which can be received only from Jesus Christ, God’s Messiah.

vv.27-31 Jesus heals two blind men

What can we say about the 2 blind men doing when they called out to the “Son of David?” _____

We know that the Messianic age would be an age in which the “eyes of the blind would be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” See Isa. 35:5-6

Note: this is the first use of this title in Matthew and its seems certain that its use carries strong messianic expectations.

Can you imagine the hope and joy these 2 men must have felt when they heard stories of the carpenter from Nazareth and the miraculous things he could do. They had no other hope of receiving their sight.

What was the reason for their healing? _____

Why did Jesus sternly warn the 2 blind men not to “let anyone know about their healing?” _____

vv.32-34 Jesus heals a man unable to speak

In the case of the demonized, mute man, why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub (the prince of demons?)

What was unique about this healing? _____

So, in just 2 short stories, 7 verses, we have powerful testimony regarding the Messiah.

Note, in these 2 stories the conversations that ensued:

1. the crowds gave amazing testimony about Jesus
2. the Pharisees spoke against Jesus in absolutely the worst way possible...He is in league with the devil.
3. The two, formerly blind, men spoke for Jesus. Even though told not to speak about their experience, they couldn't keep quiet about it.

vv.35-38 The harvest is plentiful

This segment shows the compassion of Jesus. He never turned the needy away.

“Sheep without a shepherd” indicates that the leaders of Israel have not done their job of leading, feeding, healing and protecting.

Application:

Why these stories?

Why did Matthew, by the Spirit, choose these particular stories to record? We know there were many other things Jesus said and did, but why these?

1. These narratives portray our spiritual condition...sinful, sick, unclean, isolated from God, hopeless, dead in our sins.
2. They also show that, in order to be saved from sin, we need the powerful grace and abundant mercy that can only come from God's Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

What applications can we make from the lessons learned in these chapters?

1. Jesus reached out to the needy regardless of their “society status.” So should we.
2. If we are sick, we should consider asking the question: Is this sickness due to sin?”
3. Note the different ways in which people approached Jesus:
 - A. Jairus, the ruler _____
 - B. the woman with the issue of blood _____
 - C. the 2 blind men _____

What does this tell us? _____

4. _____

5. _____

Matthew 10

Review of Chapters 8 and 9

In chapters 8 and 9, Matthew switches from teachings “in the classroom” (sermon on the mount) to “on-the-job-training.” He shows Jesus going out into the field and ministering to those in need.

In these chapters, Matthew reports a number of “miracle stories” and provides another approach to showing the people who Jesus was, by demonstrations of power and authority that could only come from God.

These chapters can be entitled: the Power of the King.” As we study these stories, it will be important to keep Matthew’s primary goal in mind...to bring his readers to faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Note Matthew’s literary pattern of presenting 3 healings, followed by a section on discipleship, 3 more healings, another section on discipleship and then finishing with 4 healing miracles.

Jesus, in reaching out to the needy, shows the disciples (soon to be apostles) how to minister in public situations. In fact, in chapter 10 when he sends the disciples out, he tells them to do the very things he has done in chapters 8 and 9.

Recall from our study of chapters 8 and 9 that Jesus responds to everyone that comes to Him. He heals a leper, a Gentile’s daughter, casts out demons and rebukes the wind and sea...all miracles of power that demonstrate that He is God. His purity, power and wholeness overcome every worldly illness.

Before proceeding into the chapter 10 study, review the table provided on page 13, 3rd Level Outline. On this chart we can see that we have completed our study of the first 3 narratives and are now moving into the 2nd discourse. In this discourse, Jesus commissions his disciples as apostles, gives them authority over unclean spirits and to heal every disease and affliction (v. 1).

Observation and Interpretation:

Context: We have just seen the power of the king in meeting every human need. This has served to show the disciples his heart toward the needy, his power over every affliction and served to give them an example as to how they are to minister as he now prepares to “send them out.”

Outline of Chapter 10:

- vv.1-15 Commissioning and Instructions to the apostles for the short-term ministry to Israel.
- vv.1-4 The naming and commissioning of the apostles
- vv.5-15 “The twelve” sent out to Israel

vv. 16-23 Instructions for the ministry to the Gentiles

vv. 24-42 Characteristics of all disciples as they reach out to the world

Note: Matt. 10:16-42 is found only in the gospel of Matthew.

vv.1-15 Commissioning and Instructions for the short-term ministry to Israel.

vv.1-4 The naming and commissioning of the apostles

Read Matt. 9:38 How does this verse relate to what Jesus does in 10:1-5?

Note that Mk. 3:16-19 and Lk. 6:14-16 also name the apostles, but not in exactly the same order.

What happens to the disciples in vv. 1-2? _____

For the most part, Matthew's list identifies family relationships among the disciples. What 3 apostles does he single out for special mention and what does he say about them?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Why are these 3 chosen for "special mention?" _____

vv.5-15 "The twelve" sent out to Israel

v.5-6 Where are the "apostles" to go? _____

Why, at this time, is Jesus specifying this audience? _____

See Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16

v.7 What are they to proclaim? The kingdom of _____.

What is this? The _____ of Jesus in the lives of His people.

Recall: Jesus, when beginning His public ministry proclaimed: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now, He is telling them to proclaim the same message. What does this mean for the apostles on a personal level relative to:

Jesus: _____

to themselves: _____

v.8a What are they to do in their travels? _____

v.8b-15 What specific instructions does Jesus give the apostles?

v.8b _____

v.9 regarding money _____

v.10 regarding clothing _____

v.11 where to stay _____

v.12-15 regarding people's response to them _____

Is this example of preparations for a missionary trip an example for us to follow today? _____

vv. 16-23 Instructions for the ministry to the Gentiles

In verses 5-15, Jesus tells his disciples to go only to "the house of Israel."

In this next section, he describes their treatment at the hands of the Gentiles. This indicates that this is a second mission for the disciples that is different than the mission to Israel as outlined in vv. 5-6.

Where does this ministry take them? to the _____.

v.16 What does it mean to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves?"

see Gen. 3:1 - shrewdness and intellectual cunning

Hos. 7:11- simple innocence

v.17-18 Note that not only was the synagogue a place of worship, it was also a place where discipline (flogging) was carried out.

What treatment will disciples of Jesus be given? _____

If Jesus' kingdom is a kingdom of peace and love, why then will his disciples be badly mistreated? _____

v.19 What instruction does Jesus give his disciples for the times when they are brought before rulers? _____

v.20 In this situation, what does Jesus promise us? _____

Note that, in other situations, e.g. teaching a Sunday school class, preparations in advance are needed.

vv. 21-22a What effect will "preaching the kingdom" have on family members? _____

v.22b "but the one who endures to the end will be saved." What does this mean? _____

v.23 What does the phrase “before the Son of man comes” mean?

Who is the Son of man? _____

A number of interpretations have been given for this phrase:

1. when Jesus comes back to the disciples after he is raised from the dead
2. His sending of the Spirit at Pentecost
3. His coming in judgment on Jerusalem when it was destroyed in 70 A.D.
4. the 2nd coming of Christ at the end of the age

Note: Many scholars consider this verse to be one of the most difficult in the New Testament to understand.

Following is a quote from the ESV Study Bible notes:

“Option 4 helps make sense of the larger fact that the mission to Israel must continue alongside the mission to the nations until Jesus returns.

But options 1 and 3 have significant arguments to support them and they give a more natural explanation for the need for haste in reaching all the towns of Israel. In the case of option 4, v.23 is understood in the light of the previous verses 16-22 as a reference to the widespread persecution that occurred prior to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in A.D 70. In this case, the judgment on Israel reflected in these events is pictured as a foreshadowing of the final judgment that will come upon all who reject Christ as their Savior, when he comes in power and great glory at the end of the age.”

vv. 24-42 Characteristics of all disciples as they reach out to the world

v.24-25 What do these verses guarantee the disciple of Jesus?

Why was the master of the house (Jesus) called Beelzebub? (Clue: Who called Him this?) _____

v.26-33 What is Jesus’ main exhortation in these verses?

v.28 Who is it who can “destroy both soul and body in hell?” _____

v.29-31 Why does Jesus tell us that we “should not fear?”

v.32-33 What is the penalty of denying Jesus?

What does it mean “to deny Jesus?” (Clue: What does it mean “to acknowledge Jesus?”) _____

vv.34-37 Who will our enemies be? _____

v.38-39 What does it mean to “take his cross and follow me?”

vv.40-42 This short segment talks about rewards.
What does the verse mean when it says “receives a prophet,
receives a prophet’s reward?” _____

According to v.42, what can we do to keep our reward?

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Matthew 11

Review of Chapter 10

In the discourse of chapter 10, Jesus commissions his disciples as apostles, gives them authority over unclean spirits and to heal every disease and affliction (v. 1). He commissions them to do the things that He has been doing and showing them in chapters 8 and 9.

In 10: 1-10, Jesus commissioned the 12 disciples for a short-term ministry to Israel.

In verses 16-23, He gave instructions for the ministry to the Gentiles

Verses 24-42 give the characteristics of all disciples as they reach out to the world.

Outline of Chapter 11:

- vv. 1-6 John's question and Jesus' response
- vv. 7-15 Jesus talks with the crowd about John
- vv.16-19 "this unresponsive age"
- vv.20-24 "Woe" to 3 cities
- vv.25-30 Jesus' prayer and encouragement to the weary

Observation and Interpretation:

- vv. 1-6 John's question and Jesus' response
- v.1 Jesus finishes his teaching of the disciples and moves on to the cities of the area.
- vv.2-6 What was John's question to Jesus? _____
Why did he ask this question? _____
How did Jesus answer him? _____

(see Isa. 35:5; 61:1)
Who was John's father? _____
What would he have taught his son? _____
So, when Jesus directed his thoughts to these signs, what would this have told John? _____
Why didn't Jesus say "yes?" _____

Important note:

When Jesus responded to John in this manner, He was interpreting the Old Testament Scriptures. This provides us an example and guideline for biblical interpretation. Since the NT is the perfect and complete fulfillment of the OT shadows and types, then we need to allow the New Testament to interpret the OT just as Jesus did here.

vv. 7-15 Jesus talks with the crowd about John

Note in this section the repetition of “What did you go out to see?”

Who is He referring to? _____

What do the following mean?

1. “a reed shaken by the wind” _____
2. “a man dressed in soft clothing” _____
3. “a prophet” _____

What does Jesus say about John? He is more than a _____.

He is _____.

What does He mean by this? _____

How can we explain Jesus’ comment that “He who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John?” _____

(certainly not a better person)

See interesting parallel gospel passage in Lk. 7:29-31.

What does Jesus mean when He says “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force?” _____

vv.16-19 “this unresponsive age”

From this short passage, how would you characterize this “age?”

What does Jesus mean by the statement: “Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds (works)?” _____

vv.20-24 "Woe" to 3 cities

A. Chorazin: What do we know about Chorazin?

Jesus had done _____ in this city.

Does it exist today? _____

B. Bethsaida: What do we know about Bethsaida? Jn. 12:21; Mk. 8:22-23

Jesus visited this city _____.

From Bethsaida came _____, _____ and _____.

Does it exist today? _____

Note: The biblical record does not record any of the mighty works done by Jesus in Chorazin. Were there other works done by Jesus that were not recorded? Explain your answer _____

C. Capernaum = "city of Nahum"

Nahum means consolation or comfort.

Jesus, the consolation of Israel, came from the city of consolation.

See Matt. 4:12-13 which indicates that Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum.

Jesus began his public ministry in this region by the sea (of Galilee).

What was the first message spoken by Jesus? (Matt. 4:17)

From vv. 20-24, what can we determine was the response of these 3 cities to Jesus' message? _____

In essence, Jesus was simply declaring to these cities the inevitable judgment that was to come upon them because they had rejected the message of the gospel.

A lesson for us: "the greater the light, the greater the responsibility"

Sodom and Gomorrah had been judged because of their immoral activities. But Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum received the greater judgment because they had the greater light, "the light of the world."

vv.25-30 Jesus' prayer and encouragement to the weary

vv.25-26 Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving

Note that here Jesus worships God in thanksgiving in the midst of the difficulties of his public ministry.

For what was Jesus thankful? _____

v.27 a proclamation concerning Jesus

What was Jesus' proclamation? _____

What are the "all things?" refer to v.26

the things of truth, the things of the kingdom, the things of faith and repentance, the things which the unrepentant cities would not accept, righteousness and love.

vv. 28-30 an encouragement to the weary to come to Him and receive rest.

What are the 3 things Jesus invites the weary to do?

1. _____ to him,
2. _____ his yoke upon themselves,
3. _____ from Him.

How does this apply to us today? _____

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Matthew 12

Review of Chapter 11

Chapter 11 began the 4th narrative consisting of chapters 11 and 12. These narratives could be entitled: "Opposition and Rejection of the King."

In chapter 11, John's disciples came to Jesus with a question from John: "Are you the one?" Jesus replied by pointing them back to Isaiah's description of the ministry of the Messiah which showed him healing the blind, deaf, lame and the good news preached to the poor.

Next, Jesus had some harsh but truthful words for the current unresponsive and unbelieving generation. His pronouncement of woes on 3 cities where he had performed mighty works was rightly justified because ancient, wicked cities such as Tyre, Sidon and Sodom would have repented had they had the light that was with the current generation.

He closed his comments with a prayer of thanksgiving, a pronouncement that all things had been given to him and an invitation to the weary to come to him for rest.

Observation and Interpretation:

Outline of Chapter 12:

- vv. 1-21 conflict regarding the Sabbath
- vv. 22-37 conflict concerning his power
- vv. 38-45 conflict concerning a sign
- vv.46-50 conflict with natural ties

Exposition:

- vv. 1-21 conflict regarding the Sabbath

1-8 eating grain on the Sabbath – the king's claim of authority

Note: Offering sacrifices, circumcision, the temple, etc. were found in the heathen in some form or another. But the Sabbath was peculiar to Judaism, the setting apart of themselves wholly on a single day to cultivate their spiritual life and demonstrate their relationship to their God. It was a sign to them of the deepest things in the life of the nation.

It is no wonder, then, that Jesus' claims in this passage particularly rankled them to the point that "they began to conspire against him, how to kill him."

What were the disciples doing that offended the Pharisees?

Is there any evidence from the disciples that they were doing anything wrong? _____ (This would lead one to believe that they had Jesus' approval for their actions.)

How long had they been plucking the grain? _____

Where were the Pharisees? _____

Who did the Pharisees attack? _____

How did Jesus respond to this attack? He _____ for them.

Note: In Jesus' response to the Pharisees:

1. He took responsibility for their actions.
2. He identified himself with the actions of the disciples.
3. He justified their actions.

Who did Jesus appeal to in their defense? _____ (v.3) and the _____ (v.5)

What were his justifications?

1. _____

2. _____

Keep in mind that the Pharisees were the rulers and teachers of the people.

His comment (twice) "have you not read": Their hidden response was likely "Of course we've read."

But, in essence, he was saying that their criticism of his disciples showed that they didn't understand the law. If you understand the Scriptures, you would know that a hungry man has to be fed regardless of the day of the week.

v.6 When he said: "One is greater here than the temple...the son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." What was he saying? _____

No wonder they were offended...a poor peasant from Galilee speaking with the authority of God.

9-14 healing on the Sabbath – his activity based on his authority

v.10 Why did the Pharisees ask the question regarding the lawfulness of healing on the Sabbath? _____

How did he answer them? with a _____

Note that he says: "Which of you who has a sheep..." So now he has reversed the tables. (They know that if they had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, that they would immediately rescue it.)

What was the bottom line of the discussion? It is _____ to do _____ on the _____.

It was at this point that the Pharisees began to conspire to kill him.

15-21 a quote from Isaiah 42:1-4

It appears that he left the synagogue in v.15 with people following him.

What did he do for them? _____

What could he have done with the Pharisees? _____

What do vv. 18-21 tell you about Jesus and his role as Messiah?

Some principle lessons of this segment:

Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath,

greater than the temple,

his character was consistent with the OT prophecies regarding the Messiah, and

he was a restrainer of judgment.

vv. 22-37 conflict concerning his power – a demon-oppressed man

What was the effect of the man's "demonization?" _____

What was the effect of the question asked by the crowd in v.23?

Why would the Pharisees be concerned about a man being healed of blindness and deafness? _____

Why did they answer the way they did? _____

How can we characterize Jesus' responses?

v.25-26 _____

v.27 _____

v.28 _____

Note that in this response, Jesus presumes that him partnering with Satan is out of the question.

v.29 Who is the strong man that has been plundered? _____

What is Jesus doing and demonstrating to us in this passage?

vv. 31-32 What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? _____

v.34 What does Jesus tell the Pharisees in v.34? _____

vv. 36-37 What is the importance of our “words?” _____

vv. 38-45 conflict concerning a sign

What obstacle to faith was in the heart of the Jews? (see I Cor.1:22)

What obstacle to faith was in the heart of the Gentiles (Greeks)?

What kind of sign were the Pharisees looking for? _____

What sign did Jesus give them? _____

What sign had he already given them? _____

How did Jesus expose their evil hearts and unbelief in the following examples:

1. the demon-possessed man _____
2. the men of Nineveh _____
3. the queen of the south _____

vv.46-50 conflict with natural ties

What was the concern of Jesus natural family? (see Mk. 3:21, 31-35 for Mark’s parallel account) _____

What was Jesus’ response in vv. 48-50? _____

Application:

Identify five applications for our personal lives that we can make from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

A Brief Introduction to Parables

The purpose of this segment is to provide a brief introduction to the subject of parables.

- Outline:
1. Introduction
 2. Parables: What are they?
 3. Guidelines for interpreting parables
 4. A chart comparing parables and allegories

I. Introduction:

God's amazing book, the Bible, is unlike any other book you will ever read. A corollary: You can't approach or read the Bible in the same way that you would read any other book.

It is a history lesson of the ages, a book of wisdom, a collection of songs for praise and worship.

It contains numerous passages (>25%) which accurately foretell historical events before they occur. It contains narratives which include hero stories, adventure stories, origin accounts, love stories, stories of treachery and deceit.

And these are only a few of the many varieties of literary styles (genres) that are included within the Bible's more than 2000 pages.

Some have categorized these literary styles into 10-12 major styles (e.g. narrative, poetry, wisdom) with sub-categories numbering in the hundreds.

It is, therefore, no mystery when I say that some beginning instruction into these literary styles will help us to understand the author's meaning and thereby be enabled to accurately apply its teaching to our own lives.

One of these literary styles, the parable, which was used by Jesus but certainly no mystery to the people of His time, is the subject of this brief introductory paper.

II. Parables – What are they?

There are two principle words in scripture for the parable:

Old Testament – *mashal*

New Testament - *parabole*

These two words encompass a large range of literary types.

They can refer to a proverb, a satire, a riddle, a figure of speech and a story (e.g. Good Samaritan) or example parable (kingdom of God is like).

There are several kinds of parables:

A parable can be:

- (1) a true-to-life story designed to teach a truth or answer a question.

It contains elements which make it life-like but have no particular application in the teaching. The details are there to make the story more life-like.

e.g. – the Good Samaritan – 2 denarii paid to the inn-keeper – no special significance to the number 2. It is there to make the story more life-like. (a denarii was a day's wage in that culture – see Lk. 10:25-37) Note that other details of this story, e.g. 2 robbers, the inn, etc. are not pertinent to the story's teaching but provide a life-like quality.

(2) A parable can be a comparison between two things that are different.

Something is likened to something that it is not.

“the kingdom of heaven **is like**... (simile) see examples in Mt. 14

Note: The kingdom of heaven is not literally a treasure buried in the field. However, it is a spiritual reality.

(3) A third parable form is a fictional literary form.

The picture does not describe a real event. It is a fictional creation which came from the mind of its author, in our case, Jesus. It is not to be confused with a historical narrative which is a real life event. This confusion occurs upon occasion due to the real-life quality of the parable.

In parables we sometimes find unusual exaggerations. (hyperbole – exaggeration for effect)

e.g. Matt. 18:24 “the servant who owed 10,000 talents” (Herod's annual income was 900 talents). In this case, the 10,000 talents represents a huge amount.

From this parable, we also see that some parables have details that are not designed to be technically precise.

Another feature about parables:

A parable is designed to obscure the truth from the unresponsive, while making it plain to the responsive.

Why would Jesus want to hide his truth from certain persons?

Matt.13:10ff provides an answer to this question:

- Their hearts have grown dull;
- Their ears can barely hear;
- They have closed their eyes.

These comments by Jesus refer to their capacity to receive spiritual truth.

These people are like the ones described by Paul in the 2nd half of Romans 1 which say no to God. Each time they say no they harden their hearts making it increasingly difficult to perceive the truth. (Note that this passage also tells us that God Himself hardens their hearts 3 times.

In essence, they are receiving in themselves the natural consequences of rejecting God...no light in the darkness of their souls.

III. **Guidelines for Interpreting Parables:**

1. Determine the kind of parable (from page 1 above)
2. Begin with the immediate context. (Use prodigal son story)

2 crucial elements can be discovered in the context:

- a. Look for the occasion for telling the story (a clear historical occasion)
- b. Look for the explanation of its meaning

Sometimes the explanation of a parable's meaning is given in the story: e.g. Matt. 24:44 "you be ready to" and Matt. 25:13 "be on the alert"

Prodigal son: (Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32) Jesus speaking to religious people who clearly objected to his ready acceptance of sinful people. v.2 "This man receives and eats with sinners."

Note the difference between the reason for teaching the parable and the teachings within the parable.

Lk. 15:11-32 trace conversation "so...or...and..."

This is a continuing conversation with the same audience.
Jesus is speaking to them in parables.

The point of the story is the contrast between the older brother and the loving, forgiving father as represented by Jesus Himself.

The point of the story is not the loving father receiving back his lost son. If it were, the story would have ended after the father received him back. But it has not yet reached its climax and the purpose for the story.

Clue: The older brother grumbled and complained. Who were the ones with Jesus who grumbled and complained?

See also “Good Samaritan” Lk. 10: 25-37 – context is the question posed to Jesus: “Who is my neighbor?” (v.29) This is the purpose of the story. Note Jesus’ final response to the inquirer: “Go and do likewise.”

Did Jesus answer his question? _____
What was the answer? _____

3. Look for the one basic point of comparison between the picture and the reality to which it corresponds.

The danger of a parable is to read too much into the specific details of the parable searching for hidden meanings.

e.g. “The Prodigal Son” – the Pharisees and Scribes **were complaining** because Jesus was eating with sinner. The older brother **was complaining** because his father celebrated over his younger brother’s return.

e.g. the treasure hidden in the field (Matt.13:44)

The point of comparison is the kingdom of God to the treasure in the field
: the great value of the kingdom of God.

4. Identify the relevant details

Those that are intended to teach some truth and therefore, may legitimately be interpreted and applied.

The Prodigal son:

That the father ran to meet the son is a relevant detail and has spiritual significance.

How do we know? It reinforces the key theme which is to reveal the heart of the father.

Not relevant - the fact that the father stayed home and did not go in search of the son

5. Identify irrelevant details

Parables contain details that are not intended to teach truth at all. They are usually inserted to make the story complete, realistic and true to life.

e.g. Lk. 11: 5-13 the persistent friend at midnight

- midnight, 3 loaves, for a friend on a journey

Lk. 17:7-9 “The servant plowing or keeping sheep”

Jesus constructed a story that was true to the life of their times. His point: We do not deserve credit for doing the right thing.

The other details of the parable are irrelevant and should be set aside. They could have been doing any number of things...digging a well, herding cattle, etc.

6. In a parable, we must limit ourselves to the information provided in the parable. Idle speculation is only idle speculation.

e.g. prodigal son- can't ask: “How did the older son respond to his father's appeal? Or...did he then join the celebration?”

or: “How was it that the father saw the son while he was at a distance?”

The father saw the son because Jesus wanted him to.

7. Don't try to ascribe hidden meanings to the various points of the parable. (allegorize)

Ex. story of the good Samaritan:

One interpretation from an early church father: Every detail was ascribed a literal meaning: Paul was the good Samaritan, the thieves were demons, the inn was the church, the 2 denarii represented the two sacraments, etc.

The context clearly calls for an understanding of human nature. (“Who is my neighbor?”)

8. Arriving at the main point:

This is based upon what is called “the rule of end stress.”

A good story teller starts slowly, builds up and draws peoples' attention to the conclusion of the story.

- A. Focus on the main characters.
- B. Identify what happens at the end of the story.

Matt. 20:1-16 "The workers in the vineyard"

Jesus ended the story with the grumbling of the first hour workers. (This would be representative of the Jews who were the first to be invited into God's kingdom. The Master of the house is God.)

The point of this parable: the unwillingness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law to accept God's gracious offer of salvation to those who came later, i.e. the Gentiles.

- C. What occurs in conversations.

Prodigal son: At the end, there is an extensive conversation between the father and the older son.

Note that even though the younger son had given his rehearsed speech, the text provides no response of the father to the son.

The focus of attention shifts quickly to the older son and provides the climax and reason for the story.

- D. Who gets the most space?

Once you have evaluated the story, ask the question:

What are the implications of the story that are most relevant to us? This should provide you with the application for the present-day reader.

e.g. The prodigal son: The emphasis (climax of the story) is not on the demonstration of God's love for the outcast but on the reaction of the older brother to such love.

The "Good Samaritan" story in Lk. 15:3 must be interpreted in the light of his audience who had said: "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

- 9. Identify the catalyst for the decisive action of the story.

e.g. Prodigal son – His father’s joyous celebration over the returning son was the catalyst for the older brother’s complaining.

This connects him with the Pharisees and Scribes who were grumbling and complaining.



IV. A Comparison of Parables and Allegories

Parable	Allegory
1. Has one central point	1. can have more than one central point
2. teaches one truth	2. can teach a number of truths
3. every relevant detail reinforces the central theme or point of emphasis	3. The details may be varied or many, relating to more than one theme.
4. can have irrelevant details; all features of the parable don't have to be identified	4. can have irrelevant details; all features of the parable don't have to be identified
5. usually the story is separate from its interpretation and application	5. intertwines the story and its meaning
6. interpretation usually follows the parable	6. interpretation is found within the allegory

MATTHEW 13 – The Parables of Jesus – Part I

Background:

In Chapter 12, we saw the 4th of Matthew's narrative passages. This chapter focused on conflicts Jesus encountered while ministering in public.

- the Sabbath controversy...Jesus' disciples were plucking and eating grain on the Sabbath.
- a demon possessed man is healed. The Pharisees take advantage of the opportunity to accuse him of being in league with Satan.
- Jesus wouldn't satisfy the Pharisees and Scribes' request for a sign even though He had just given them a sign of his power by healing the demon possessed man.
- his family came for him while he was in a house teaching. His response: "My family are those who do the will of my Father."

Chapter 13 begins: That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Great crowds came to him and he began to teach them, but with a wrinkle...he taught in parables. So we see continuous action from Ch-12 to 13.

Outline of Chapter 13:

This chapter consists of 2 set discourses, one to the crowds that had gathered about him by the sea. And, later, he leaves the crowds and went into a house where he spoke privately with his disciples. These teachings/parables are a continuous set of teachings given by Jesus, not a collection of isolated parables taught at different times. The combination of these 8 parables provides an important instruction from Jesus to his disciples. (see 13:51-52) As such, we will need, after reviewing each of the parables, to evaluate the overall meaning of the 8 parables in this chapter.

An outline of the chapter is as follows:

A. Teaching the crowds:

1-2 The setting

3-9 the parable of the sower

10-17 Jesus explains why he was speaking in parables.

18-23 The parable of the sower is explained.

24-33 3 parables - wheat and tares, the mustard seed, leaven

34-35 a summary teaching about Jesus speaking only in parables (fulfilling Ps. 78:2)

B. Teaching his disciples:

36-43 Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and tares

44-52 4 parables - the treasure hidden in the field, the pearl of great value
the net thrown into the sea, the master of the house

53-58 Jesus teaches in his home town – the people are astonished and then offended.

Note from the chapter that the first four parables were spoken to the crowds with no explanations. In these four parables, Jesus speaks to them regarding human, earthly things that related to the present age.

The final four parables were spoken to his disciples. He explained two of the parables to them, the parables of the sower and the wheat and tares. These explanations become key for us as we seek to understand the teachings of the parables. These four parables spoke of Divine, spiritual things and discuss the kingdom of God which the unregenerated crowds were not prepared to receive or understand. The disciples were prepared to receive the deeper teachings because they had received Jesus as king. Note from other passages that those who received him were given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.

Guidelines for Interpreting the Parables:

1. Simplicity of interpretation – The simplest interpretation is the most likely to be the true interpretation. Don't look for the hidden meanings. Don't assign meanings to details that are only provided to make the story more realistic. (Don't allegorize the parables.) Keep in mind the multitudes to whom they are addressed...mostly uneducated, common people.
2. Restrict the application of the verbal pictures Jesus provides to the limits that are clearly marked. They are pictures of one age and that age is not final.
3. Maintain a consistent use of the figurative terms that are utilized. This will be especially important to us because Jesus explains 2 of the parables and specifically tells us what some of the symbols mean:

The sower – the son of man

An enemy – the devil

Seed (parable of the sower) – the Word (see the parallel accounts in Mark 4:14 and Luke 8:11B)

Parable of the wheat and tares:

- Good seeds (wheat) - the sons of the kingdom
- The tares/weeds (darnel) – the sons of the evil one

The field – the world

Reapers or servants – angels at the end of the age

The harvest – the end of the age

Observation and Interpretation:

In this series of teachings, Jesus is giving his disciples some key instructions that will be helpful when they are carrying on His work after His ascension. He needed to know if they understood the things he had been doing and teaching. In vv. 51-52 he asks them: Do you understand the things that He has taught in this chapter.

vv.1-2 These verses set the context of his initial teachings...great crowds, by the sea, the crowds standing on the beach.

vv.3-9, 18-23 the sower – one of two parables that Jesus would explain (18-23)

3-9 focal points – the sower, the seed, the soil quality and the action following

The main focus of this parable is that Jesus spoke of the seed (the Word sown) and the effect of the soil on the seed. A main lesson of this parable has to do with the condition of the soil.

Now looking ahead to verses 18-23, explain the following (who or what are they)

1. a sower _____
2. the seed _____
3. the birds _____
4. the stony ground _____
5. the thorns _____
6. good ground _____

At this point, it is helpful to look at parallel accounts of this parable in Mark 4:14 and Luke 8:11B. In both of these accounts, the authors specifically tell us that the seed is the “word of God.”

What results from the seed being sown into the following conditions?

1. along the path _____
2. rocky ground _____
3. among thorns _____
4. good soil _____

So...we have the sower, the seed, the soil and the response of those who hear the Word of God. The focus of this parable is on the response of “those who hear the Word.”

Note also that, in Mk. 4:13, Jesus says that understanding other parables is dependent upon understanding this one.

What is the meaning of this parable? _____

Why did Jesus tell this parable? _____

vv. 10-17 In this segment, Jesus explains why he was teaching in parables.

Why did he? (see "A Brief Introduction to Parables" beginning on page 93 of this workbook.)

vv. 24-30, 36-43 The parable of the wheat and tares and it's explanation

What are the explanations for the symbols of 24-30 as provided in 36-43?

1. the sower _____
2. the field _____
3. the good seed _____
4. the tares (darnel) _____

(from theological dict. of the NT – darnel or false grain – tares, weeds)

Darnel (degenerate wheat, worthless to the one who sows it) is so much like wheat in the first stages of its growth that it is almost impossible, even for the local farmers, to distinguish it from wheat. The differences between the two will become clear as each grows towards maturity.

5. the enemy sowing the tares _____

Note the premeditated, destructive work of the enemy who creeps in by stealth at night. He is a trespasser having no rights or responsibilities for the field. It was his determination to do harm to the field.

6. the harvest _____
7. the reapers _____

Who is the owner of the field (symbolic)? _____

What is the picture presented here? _____

What instruction did the owner give to his servants regarding the darnel?

Why did he give this instruction? _____

What does this mean for the disciples? _____

for us _____

vv.31-32 Parable of the mustard seed

The mustard seed is a small seed that eventually grows to be larger than all other “plants” in the garden. The mustard seed is an herb and not a tree. It is not natural for it to grow so large that birds come and make their nests in its branches.

It is generally accepted that Jesus taught a “natural” growth of his kingdom by the Spirit. But, to date, we have yet to see the kingdom of God set up in its true perfection and zenith of its growth.

Growth of the church in this age is generally met with difficulty, opposition and a mixture. Separation of the foreign components is postponed until the end of the age.

If we maintain a consistency between the symbols utilized in previous parables, we would have to say that the birds represent those who do harm and not good.

This parable, therefore, presents a picture of unnatural growth.

Teachings of this parable:

1. In this age, there will be periods of unnatural growth and development of the kingdom. The most obvious example was the work of Constantine to forcefully make his subjects submit to the cross...he literally “Christianized” the nation. This was not a work of repentance and faith towards God but a political decree by a world ruler.

As a result of this action, we see the ecclesiastical order becoming ruled by unprincipled persons and not Spirit-led. Positions of importance in the church became “perks” in the natural political arena. This led to the period known as the “dark ages.”

The true, scriptural development of the church is by faith and repentance in lowliness and meekness of heart with all humility in the face of persecutions. Positions of authority in the church are positions of sober responsibility and are assigned by the Holy Spirit.

2. An alternate interpretation:

The kingdom of God begins small. It grows slowly, sometimes unnoticed. It continues its growth and becomes larger than all of the other kingdoms.

vv.33 Parable of the leaven

Most Scriptures regard the use of leaven to be a symbol of evil, something undesirable.

Paul used the figure of leaven in a negative sense: “Your glorying is not good. Don’t you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven...wherefore, let us keep the feast not with the old leaven neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I Cor. 5:8

In Mt. 16:6 Jesus, in speaking to his disciples, warned them to “beware the leaven of the Pharisees.”

In Lk. 12:1, Jesus tells his disciples to beware the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.

However, there are some occasions where leaven is used in a positive sense:

- Lev. 7:13 The peace offering employed leavened bread.
- Lev. 23:17 The offering of the first fruits of the grain harvest consisted of two loaves baked with leaven (This was an occasion for rejoicing in God’s provision.

So, what do we do?

Let’s consider the context of the previous verses:

- In the first parable, 3 out of 4 of the seeds sown were non-productive.
- In the second parable, we saw the deliberate sowing of darnel, an unproductive seed.
- The third parable of the mustard seed showed an unnatural growth.

These three parables teach that the present age is not characterized by perfect and complete victory but by a mixture of good and evil. The mixture of the principles of good and evil are seen in communities and administrations throughout the present age.

A. a positive symbol:

Using the 1st guideline of simplicity (presented earlier in this chapter), we consider the simple, natural view of the physical properties of leaven.

If leaven is a positive symbol, then we have the image of the kingdom message and its effects that will start out small and gradually, unnoticed, will grow and spread until it permeates and is found in the entire world.

B. a negative symbol: In many biblical cases, leaven is considered something undesirable.

If this is true, then we have a picture of the mixture and leaven is a symbol of that which the people of faith are to guard against. The things it stands for, hypocrisy, materialism and tolerating evil in the church, are the things which break up the church.

The church is weakened by hypocrisy which is profession without possession, rationalism which is the denial of the supernatural, materialism which adopts the world’s materialistic views.

What we have here is a picture of the present evil age and not the final picture of the “kingdom age” which Jesus brings at his second coming.

What then, is your interpretation of this parable?

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this section:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

MATTHEW Chapter 13: PARABLES of the KINGDOM

Parable	Location	Type (see below)	Context	Point of Comparison	The Main Point
1. Sower	13:3-23	True to life story	Jesus is teaching a great crowd		The condition of the soil of the heart determines the response of a person to the Word of the kingdom.
2. Wheat and weeds	13:24-30	True to life story	Jesus is teaching a great crowd	The seeds represent good and evil persons	In this present age, believers and non-believers will dwell together.
3. Mustard seed	13:31-32	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching a great crowd		
4. Leaven	13:33	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching a great crowd		
5. Treasure hidden in a field	13:44	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		
6. Merchant searching for fine pearls	13:45-46	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		
7. Net thrown into the sea	13:47-50	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		
8. scribe of the kingdom	13:51-52	A comparison (simile)	Jesus is teaching his disciples		

Parable types: 1. True-to-life story 2. A comparison between 2 things that are different 3. Fictional literary form
4. Other

MATTHEW 13 - The Parables of Jesus - Part 2

We now come to the second section of Jesus' parable teachings in Matthew 13, that which he gave to his disciples and not to the crowds. These teachings were for those who had received the king and their hearts were prepared to receive teachings about the kingdom of God. Those he had spoken to in the first 4 parables were likely interested or curious observers but not yet disciples.

vv. 34-35 A summary teaching as to why Jesus only spoke in parables at this time
According to these two verses, why did Jesus speak in parables?

vv. 44-46 the treasure hidden in the field and the merchant searching for fine pearls

These 2 parables are addressed together because of similarities in the parables.

One of the things to keep in mind as we continue this study is that Jesus often used the teaching technique of "repetition." And so it is also with these 2 parables...there is much in the way of repetition that Jesus wants us to learn.

In these 2 parables, the principle persons and the objects of value identified are different, but from that point on, there are several similarities in their responses:

1. They recognized the value of what they had found.
2. They determined to acquire the treasure apparently without concern over the cost.
3. They sold everything they possessed.
4. They purchased the object of great value. In one case, the field containing the object was purchased giving the new owner the rights to that which might be found in the field.

In the second case, the object of great value itself was purchased.

Referring back to the parable of the wheat and tares (weeds/darnel), we saw in Jesus' interpretation of this parable that the field was the world.

Then, using our basic guidelines of consistency in interpreting parables, in this parable, we know that the field is the world.

We need to be careful in assigning meanings to the treasure and the pearl and the implications that might be implied.

For example, if I say that the treasure found in the field is the gospel of salvation, does that mean then that the man finding it purchased his salvation? But we know that God's salvation is without price, it is the gift of God. We have nothing of our own with which to make so great a purchase.

What does “selling all that he had” mean to us? _____

One thing we can say is that each person was determined to have that which was of great value. The price is that we forsake all else and follow Jesus on His terms. We have no righteousness nor great wealth to offer God.

The rich young ruler of Mt. 19:16 who inquired about having eternal life was told by Jesus to sell all he had, give it to the poor and then come and follow him. This was the price he would need to pay. (not his riches, per se, but his undivided devotion to Jesus)

In the case of the two parables, the man and the merchant willingly sold all they had to secure the treasure and the pearl. They held nothing back.

Note in the first parable that the treasure was “in the field.” If the field is the world, then what was it that was “in the world” that was of such great value?

If we use the simplest of approaches to interpreting these parables, since the parables are comparing the kingdom of God to something, can we not say that the kingdom of God, like the pearl, like the treasure, is of great value, so great that it is worth all that we are or possess in order to obtain it.

Is there anything of greater value for us to secure in this world than the kingdom of God? _____

Remember Jesus’ words to his disciples regarding losing the hand that offends or the eye that causes transgression in order to obtain the kingdom of God. It is better that you enter life maimed than to miss the kingdom of God.

Note: Some believe that “the man” is Jesus and that he sold (gave up) all that he had in order to purchase the world. His life therefore, became the purchase price for the world and the treasure was the kingdom of God, the reign of God, that could be achieved in the hearts of his people in the present world.

How do you interpret this parable? What is its meaning?

vv. 47-50 the net thrown into the sea

Again, we see elements of repetition in conjunction with the parable this time of the wheat and tares...a period of time when both are dwelling together and a time to come when the good and the bad will be separated. Both parables talk about a burning, the tares “to be burned,” the bad fish to be thrown into the “fiery furnace.”

There are 3 important facts about the separation to come:

1. It is absolute. In the “day of judgment” there will no longer be a mixture of any kind. For the present, there is a mixture (the bad dwelling with the good), but, on the day of judgment, the separation will be total and complete.
2. The destiny of the good and bad at the day of judgment will have already been determined. When “that day” arrives, there will no longer be any opportunity for the lost to repent and be saved.
3. The separation, at this time, will be permanent. Recall the story of the rich man and Lazarus. (Lk. 16:19-31) There was an inseparable gulf between the two which could not be bridged. From this story, we get every indication that the rich man in his suffering was given no hope that his suffering could be averted or dismissed.

Question? How should knowing these things affect us? _____

vv.51-52 the parable of the scribe

When Jesus asked the disciples if they understood these things, their response was “Yes.”

Did they really understand the parables? _____

Did they fully understand what Jesus was teaching? _____

“Hardly anyone today would dare to say that he or she understands “all these things.” (from “The Parables of Jesus” by J.M. Boice)

What then were they saying? Were they saying that, at least, they believed what they did understand and were prepared to act upon it?

Who were the “scribes?” _____

What are the things “new and old” that the trained scribes were to bring out of their treasures? _____

In reviewing the parables we have just studied in Matthew 13, identify something that we have learned from each of the parables:

1. the sower _____
 2. the wheat and tares _____
 3. the mustard seed _____
 4. the leaven _____
 5. the treasure hidden in the field _____
 6. the merchant searching for fine pearls _____
-

7. the net thrown into the sea _____
8. the scribe of the kingdom _____

vv.53-58 Jesus' reception in his home town

What was the first reaction of the people in Jesus' home town to his teachings?

Why did they react this way? _____

What was their second reaction? _____

Why did they react this way? _____

If you returned to your home town and began "preaching in the houses of worship," what would the response be to you from your friends and relatives that knew you when you were growing up? _____

Be sure to finish filling in the blanks for the parable chart before you put this lesson aside.

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this section:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

MATTHEW 14

Background:

We have just completed Chapter 13, one of the longer chapters in the book of Matthew. This was the 3rd of the “discourse” passages recorded by Matthew.

This chapter consisted of 2 set discourses, one to the crowds that had gathered about him by the sea. And, later, he left the crowds and went into a house where he spoke privately with his disciples. These instructional parables are a continuous set of teachings given by Jesus providing important instructions to his disciples. (see 13:51-52)

This chapter can be rightly called the “kingdom of heaven” chapter in which Jesus gives 8 parables most of them beginning: “the kingdom of heaven is like...” These parables provide us a glimpse into the character and nature of the kingdom of God which Jesus preached.

He told the parables of the sower, the good seed and the tares/weeds, the mustard seed, leaven, the treasure hidden in the field, the merchant searching for fine pearls, the net thrown into the sea and finally, the scribes of the kingdom.

We are now moving to the 5th narrative section which could be entitled: “The Mission of the King.” In this section we have the account of Jesus’ last ministries in Galilee before he turns towards Jerusalem and his final days leading up to the cross.

This “Mission” section includes verses 13:53 to 17:27.

We discussed the section 13:53-58 during the last session on chapter 13.

This passage shows that Jesus has returned to his own country. As he taught in the synagogue the people were first amazed at his teaching and then offended with him.

If they knew him, why then, did they reject his message? _____

Outline of Chapter 14:

14:1-12	Herod kills John the Baptist
13-21	Jesus feeds 5000+
22-33	Jesus walks on the water
34-36	Jesus heals the multitudes

Observation and Interpretation:

14:1-12 Herod kills John the Baptist

Note: Matthew records this chapter after the long day (chapters 12, 13) when Jesus is rejected by the Jewish leaders, teaches the crowds and then teaches His disciples giving them the parables of the kingdom.

Both Mark and Luke record the death of John the Baptist after the sending out of the 12 (Mk. 6:7-12; Lk. 9:1-6)

Why might Matthew have placed the account of John's death at this place in his gospel?

Provide the transition of Jesus' public ministry to his private ministry and mark a turn in His path away from the crowds and towards His death on the cross.

In the parables we have:

- only 1/4 will hear
- wheat and tares
- mustard seed and yeast
- v. 13:57 His own people are offended and reject Him

Now the death of John is recorded.

Next, (Mt. 14:13) Jesus withdraws knowing that His death on the cross is near.

v.1 tetrarch – Rome had divided the area of Palestine into 4 regions. Tetrarch was the title given to the 4 rulers of these regions. Herod ruled over Galilee and Perea (an area east of the Jordan river.)

v.2 Why did Herod think that Jesus was John the Baptist? See Lk.9:7-9 _____

v.3-12

In this account:

Why did Herod have John beheaded? _____

What did Herodias have against John? _____

What can we learn from this account of "Herod's rash oath?"

Herod was reluctant to fulfill the request of Herodias' daughter.

What prompted him to go ahead with this brutal, murderous act?

What was Herod's character weakness? _____

How can we apply the lesson of this passage to our own lives?

What is the great irony of this passage?

Herod sought to "save face" by yielding to Salome's request.

But...he only buried his face deeper in the mud by executing a righteous man without a trial.

He knew it was wrong both by Roman and by Jewish law.

What should Herod have done in response to Salome' request?

1. appealed to the law which required a man to be convicted by the judicial system in order to take his life.

What law has he broken that merits the death penalty.

2.

14:13-21

Jesus feeds 5000+

How many people did Jesus feed in this narrative? _____

At times, Jesus performed miracles to show his deity. At other times, he used miracles to teach important truths.

In this narrative, why did Jesus heal (v.14) the people?

How many loaves and fish did the disciples have? _____

How many did Jesus have? _____

What does this tell us about what Jesus can do with the things that we have...our gifts, abilities, possessions? _____

Where is the best place to put our gifts, abilities and possessions?

It might, at this point, be useful to compare Herod's party with Jesus' party, the feeding of the 5000.

<u>Herod</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
Friends	crowds
In the palace	in the desert
Important people	masses
Orgy	pleasant country meal
Immoral	righteous teaching
Murder	nourishing

What lessons can we learn from the feeding of the 5000?

1. Jesus cares about people.
2. When we take our problems to Jesus, we are taking them not only to one who cares but also to one who understands us and is able to help us in our need.

Jesus was the only One who could respond to the need of the crowd = the sufficiency of Jesus

3. Apart from me, you can do nothing.
4. God works through His disciples.
5. He fulfilled the expectations of those who were looking forward to "a new Moses."

Deut. 18:15 “raise up a prophet like Moses” (Moses fed them in the wilderness.)

Note: This is the only “pre-crucifixion” miracle recorded by all four gospel writers.

14:22-33 Jesus walks on the water Also Mk. 6:45-52; Jn. 6:16-21

Note that neither of these parallel accounts record Peter walking on the water.

Why might Jesus have stayed behind when He sent His disciples away in a boat?

1. to be alone to pray
2. escape the crowds and get some rest
3. diffuse a movement to make Him king (Jn. 6:15)

v.23 Jesus made a place in his busy schedule to be alone with his Father. We know that spending time with God in prayer is vital to our spiritual life and equips us to meet the challenges of each day.

An interesting study: Record the times and occasions in the gospels that show Jesus taking time to be alone with God. Include what had just happened or what was about to happen in his life.

If Jesus needed to have times of quiet devotion, what does that say for us? _____

v.28 Why did Peter ask Jesus to command him to come on the water?

v.30 Note: Peter was not testing Jesus, he simply had faith.

Why did he begin to sink? _____

Why didn't the other disciples venture out as Peter did?

Note:

This passage is a good example of a biblical interpretation guideline called “the rule of end stress.” Matthew tells a short story and the climax, purpose and teaching of the story is found at the end of the narrative...the final words spoken by those in the boat: “Truly, you are the son of God.”

What, therefore, is the teaching of this narrative? _____

Note: This is the first time the disciples have called Him “the son of God “ and worshipped Him.

How does this apply to us? _____

14:34-36

Jesus heals the multitudes

As a summary of this short passage, I have provided a quotation from the NKJV Application Bible:

“The people recognized Jesus as a great healer, but how many understood who he truly was? They came to Jesus for physical healing, but did they come for spiritual healing? They came to prolong their lives on earth, but did they come to secure their eternal lives? People may seek Jesus to learn valuable lessons from his life or in hopes of finding relief from pain. But we miss Jesus’ whole message if we seek him only to heal our bodies but not our souls, if we look to him for help only in this life, rather than his eternal plan for us. Only when we understand the real Jesus Christ can we appreciate how he can change our lives.”

How can we apply the teaching of this passage to our lives?

For discussion: How would you respond if someone did come to you requesting spiritual healing?

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

MATTHEW 15

Background:

We discussed chapter 14 in our previous study and saw a remembrance of the death of John the Baptist, Jesus feeding the 5000+, Jesus walking on the water and Jesus healing the multitudes.

We see Jesus responding with compassion to the needs of the people, although, they were coming to him to fix their physical needs prolonging their natural life and not their spiritual needs leading to eternal life.

Recall also that, when Jesus is present, the kingdom of heaven is at hand and everything he does demonstrates the superiority of his kingdom of God over the present evil age.

Outline of Chapter 15:

- 15:1-20 Jesus teaches about inner purity
- :21-28 Jesus delivers a young girl from demon possession
- :29-31 Again...Jesus heals the multitudes
- :32-39 Jesus feeds 4000+

Observation and Interpretation:

- 15:1-20 Jesus teaches about inner purity
- v.1 Where did the Pharisees come from? _____
What is the distance they traveled? _____?
Do you think such a trip was warranted in the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees? _____
If yes, why? _____
What did they accomplish? _____
 - v.2 What was their complaint about Jesus? _____
 - v.3-9 How did Jesus respond to their complaint? _____
What were they guilty of doing? _____
Note Jesus' comment about the passage in Isaiah: "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you..."
In essence, what is he saying? _____
 - v.10-11 How did Jesus explain this controversy to the multitudes?

 - What does this say about all of the "traditions of the Pharisees?"

 - What is Jesus really interested in? _____
 - v.13 What was Jesus' response when he was told that he had offended the Pharisees? _____

v.14 What figure of speech did Jesus use regarding the Pharisees?

What did he mean by calling them blind guides? _____

v.16-20 What is the bottom line on the issue of inner purity? _____

What is it that defiles a person? _____

If a person has a “defiled” heart, what can they do? _____

How does this instruct us regarding our attitudes and responses towards those in the world who do not “take a liking to” Christians? _____

Is a godly response easy to have? _____

If not, why not? _____

15 :21-28 Jesus delivers a young girl from demon possession

I think this is one of the great “little conversations” recorded in Scripture that sets peoples’ minds to spinning. What questions does it raise?

Let’s see if we can answer some of our concerns about Jesus’ responses to a desperate woman:

v.22 Who came to plead for the daughter? _____

Was she a Jew or Gentile? _____ (see Mk. 7:26)

v.23 What was Jesus’ 1st response to her? _____

v.24 What was his 2nd response to her? _____

v.25 What character qualities did she exhibit when she was ignored a 2nd time? _____

v.26 What was Jesus’ 3rd response to her? _____

How did he refer to her? _____

v.27 What was her response to this reply? _____

v.28 What was her reward for her humility and perseverance? _____

Why did Jesus “treat her” this way? _____

What are the lessons for us in this “short story?” _____

Although she is not identified as a “child of the kingdom,” she certainly exhibited the character quality of “poor in spirit.” see Mt. 5:3 The “poor in spirit” are those who recognize their need. In Mt. 5:3, the poor in spirit is a

“ptochos,” a beggar in the street who has no possessions and is entirely dependent upon the mercy and generosity of passers-by.

Question? Can a person be saved if they are not a “ptochos?”

Jesus’ days of ministry were certainly not boring nor monotonous.

First we have the verbal sparring with the Pharisees.

Next came the Gentile woman with a demonized daughter.

Now, he tries to go up on the mountain for some quiet time alone with God.

(v.29)

But someone “let the cat out of the bag” and shortly he was besieged with no small crowd of people with almost every kind of illness.

15:29-31 Again...Jesus heals the multitudes

The scriptural summary of this event is terse but effective...he healed them.

This time the people glorified God for the great things that were being done...not the response of unbelief he encountered in his home town. (Mt. 13:54-58)

However, again we see people coming to Jesus to receive healing for their physical needs which would prolong their natural lives. None are recorded, in this case, who came to him seeking spiritual healing which would lead to eternal life. (But we did see one recently, vv.21-28)

As Jesus ministered to the crowds, we once again see the power of the kingdom of heaven (of God) overcoming the diseases and sicknesses caused by the advent of sin in the world. No sickness nor demon could resist the power of the kingdom of God which had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

15:32-39 Jesus feeds 4000+

The crowds of verses 29-31 were not to be denied. They “hung out” with Jesus for three days hoping to receive the things they had come for, even to the point of not eating. The way the text is written leads me to believe that he turned no one away.

Question: How long are you willing to wait before God to receive the things you are hoping and asking for?

After 3 days, what became the problem of the crowds? _____

What did Jesus just do in Matt. 14:13-21 _____

Did the disciples now know what to do? (v.33) _____

Why or why not? _____

Did Jesus reprove them for not learning the lesson of the “5000?” _____

What did he do? _____

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

Supplementary Information:

I. Mt. 15: 1-20: “They don’t wash their hands.”

Jesus has been trying to get some rest and quiet time alone with His Father but the crowds still pursue Him and are able to find Him. They are seeking Him because of their needs for physical healing and not because of spiritual needs.

Jesus first talks with the scribes and Pharisees. Then, due to the importance of His observations about the scribes and Pharisees, He talks with the crowds and then his disciples.

The scribes and Pharisees had traveled approximately 150 miles. This indicates that they must have felt their concerns were well-founded and worthwhile to make a trip of this magnitude.

Their concern: “His disciples did not wash their hands before they ate.” People have serious physical and spiritual problems and they’re concerned about washing hands. Actually, the physical washing of hands was not the concern. The real issue, according to their traditions, was that this made the person unclean and, as a result, were “non-religious.”

From other passages we also know that the scribes and Pharisees were looking for something with which they could accuse Him and, thereby, discredit His ministry.

It is important to note that this “washing of hands before they eat” was not a requirement of God’s Law. It was one of the hundreds of teachings added by the religious leaders but had no foundation in God’s Law.

Discuss “leaven of the Pharisees.” See Mt. 16:6, 11-12

Explain addition of rules since the captivity.

See also Ps 24:4 – They should have understood about having a pure heart.

Jesus’ response to them repudiated their entire religious system. Their hearts were far from God and their worship was in vain. (vv. 8-9)

How would this make them feel or respond? _____

Note that in verse 13 He says, in effect, that God has not planted them. In referring back to chapter 13, the parable of the wheat and tares, they are, therefore, tares and not wheat. They have the appearance of a true planting but are only blind guides.

This is of major significance since the scribes and Pharisees were the religious leaders and well-thought-of. Being teachers, they were responsible for the spiritual well-being of the common, untrained people. Even Jesus said that “our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.” (see Mt. 5:20)
Question: How could their righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees?

Jesus’ response to these “blind guides” is two-fold:

1. They break God’s law by holding to their traditions.
Explain “Corban.”
2. From verse 8: “They honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me.”

This clearly shows that an outward adherence to religious duties has absolutely no effect on the inner purity of a man. This is false piety, hypocritical and false worship.

Jesus seized this opportunity to now speak to the crowds about true religion.

True religion is concerned with having a pure heart.

The kicker is that the scribes and Pharisees should have known this.

See Psalms 24:4

Clean hands in Ps. 24:4 refers not to outwardly clean hands (as was the concern of the Pharisees) but a blameless life flowing from a purified/holy heart.

This is the kind of person who pleases His Father.

Here we have the main teaching of this narrative, the nature of true religion.

Summary:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this passage?

2. What applications does this passage have for us? _____

II. Mt. 15: 21-28: “The Gentile dog”

Jesus leaves this area and travels to Tyre and Sidon, Gentile regions.

Note that “Gentile” magi had come to worship the king and the great commission to “all the world” are indicators that the gospel is not just for the Jews, but to all nations.

Notes:

From v.23: He did not answer her.

Why...Jesus was always responsive to those in need and certainly He must have discerned something about her.

One possible answer is that, in this very non-typical” response of Jesus, He was preparing to answer the prayer of a Gentile and wanted to draw attention to what He was about to do.

Any other suggestions?

His 2nd response: “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

3rd response (after she worshiped Him): “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” (kunarria – house pets, not wild dogs of the street)

What might have been His tone and facial expression when giving this response?

Why would he refer to “dogs?” *The Jews considered these heathen people to be no more likely to obtain God’s blessings than a dog. Jesus was not degrading her but simply reflecting the Jews attitude towards her so as to contrast it with his attitude.*

I suspect that a smile may have crossed His lips as He saw her unwavering faith and commitment to her task of getting deliverance for daughter. She was not to be denied.

Summary:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this story? _____

2. Applications for us:

A. Faith may be found in some very unlikely places.

Recall the woman with the issue of blood that pressed through the crowd with the hope of touching the hem of His garment.

We would have expected to find “faith” in Israel, among God’s people, but not in a Gentile “dog.”

B. In your time of need, go to Jesus. See Jn. 6:37 and Mt. 11:28

C. Persevere in your pursuit of God’s gifts.

D. _____

III. Mt. 15:29-31: Jesus heals the multitudes

Summary:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this narrative? _____

2. Applications for ourselves? _____

IV. Mt. 15: 32-39: Feeding 4000+

Mark 7:31 indicates that Jesus came through the region of the Decapolis (Greek for 10 cities) indicating that He was in a Gentile region.

Note also in 15:31 that the people “praised the God of Israel.” (not something the Jews would have said.) – a further indication that He was with Gentiles

This narrative follows the account of the “Gentile dog” making this a sequel to the story of the Canaanite woman. (Note that Canaanites were dwelling in the land when Israel came out of Egypt.)

Note parallels in the feeding of the 4000 and the 5000:

1. People were healed just as the Jews had been;
2. They were fed with loaves and fish just as the Jews had been;
3. The disciples were used to serve the people just as had been done for the 5000.

This leads me to conclude: Gentiles are important to God as are the Jews and Christianity is a world-wide faith, not limited to the Jews.

Summary:

1. What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? _____

2. Applications for ourselves? _____

MATTHEW 16

Background:

We are still moving within the 5th narrative section which could be entitled: “The Mission of the King.” In this section we have the account of Jesus’ last ministries in Galilee before he turns towards Jerusalem and his final days leading up to the cross. This “Mission” section includes verses 13:53 to 17:27.

We discussed chapter 15 in our previous study and saw a variety of ministry narratives...Jesus’ teaching on inner purity (a confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees), a deliverance from demonic bondage for a Gentile woman’s daughter, Jesus healing the multitudes that were brought to him and finally, another feeding of the multitudes...this time Jesus feeding the 4000+.

We see Jesus laying aside his own personal needs for personal fellowship with his Father to respond to the needs of the people.

Recall also that, when Jesus is present, the kingdom of heaven is at hand and everything he does demonstrates the superiority of his kingdom of God over the present evil age...his wisdom, his power and his compassion.

Keep in mind as we study chapter 16, that Jesus is nearing the end of his public ministry. Since chapter 13, after His rejection in chapter 12, Jesus has redirected His ministry and is now teaching his disciples privately. They progress albeit sometimes slowly, not grasping what He is telling or showing them.

In chapter 16, Peter makes the most important declaration of faith to this point: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus will shortly begin to tell the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed and then be raised on the 3rd day.

Some commentators mark verse 16:21 as the beginning of Jesus’ passion.

Outline of Chapter 16:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 16: 1-12 | Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a sign |
| 13-20 | Peter’s declaration that “Jesus is the Messiah” |
| 21-23 | Jesus predicts his death and resurrection |
| 24-28 | Jesus exhorts the disciples to “take up their cross and follow him.” |

Observation and Interpretation:

Pharisees:

- “separated” – separated themselves by strict observance of the law. People regarded them as the “most spiritual” of the people of their day.
- They were zealous for the Law and believed many of the right things: e.g. resurrection of the dead, miracles, the coming of the Messiah, a final judgment at the end of time.

Sadducees:

- did not believe in life after death nor miracles.
- They were, in general, politicians who tried to work with the foreign rulers who governed them in order to achieve benefits for the Jews.

In many cases, you could identify their beliefs by stating the opposite of what the Pharisees believed.

But now they had “joined forces” in an attempt to discredit Jesus..

Note that Matthew has recorded many “signs” in the previous chapters which would have been reported to the religious leaders. It must have taken great unbelief and enmity towards Jesus to ask for another sign.

And all of this from those who should have been leading the people to receive Jesus as the Messiah.

16:1-12 Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a sign

Note that, in this segment, Pharisees and Sadducees, who were constantly “at each other’s throat” regarding matters of doctrine, had joined forces to challenge this “uneducated newcomer.”

vv.1-4 Why were the Pharisees and Sadducees “testing him” by asking for a sign from heaven? _____

In today’s idioms, we would say: “Red skies at night, sailor’s delight; red skies at morning, sailors take warning.”

What is Jesus saying by quoting this adage that they all knew? _____

What were the “signs of the times” that they should have discerned? _____

What was “wrong” with seeking a sign? _____

What would the “sign of the prophet Jonah” be? _____

Note: In other passages, the religious leaders tried to discredit Jesus’ miracles by ascribing them to “his league with the devil.”

They could discredit some miracles as a magic trick or coincidence, but they believed that only God could perform a “sign in the sky.”

vv.5-12 In v.5, the disciples are concerned because they forgot to bring bread.

In v.6, Jesus tells them to beware the “leaven of the Pharisees.”

But they are still concerned for having forgotten “bread.”

One explanation for this strange conversation and response is that the disciples were concerned about earthly matters while Jesus was concerned for spiritual matters.

However... had they already forgotten about the 5000 and the 4000? Certainly Jesus could provide "bread" for such a small group as this.

What was "the leaven of the Pharisees?" see v.12 _____

See also Lk. 12:56 _____

What had they (the Pharisees) done? Added human legalisms to God's revelation

What would the "leaven of the Pharisees" do to the disciples? Make them into hypocrites like the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What had it already done to the Pharisees and Sadducees?

They had become a "brood of vipers." (children of the devil)

See Mt. 3:7 (John) and Mt. 12:34, 23:33 (Jesus)

At this point, it is useful to summarize Jesus' life on earth.

Jesus' words and works (Who he is and what he does)	The question regarding his identity:	Jesus' death and resurrection
Providing the revelation that he is the Messiah	"Who am I?"	Providing the final confirmation that he is the Messiah
Mt. 1:1 - 16:12	Matt. 16:12-20	Matt. 16: 21 - 28:20

13-20 Peter's declaration that "Jesus is the Messiah"

v.13 What is Jesus asking the disciples in this verse?

What was their answer? _____

Note that none of the answers stated that Jesus was the Messiah.

v.15 What was the question asked in this verse? _____

v.16 What was Peter's answer? _____

v.17 Where did he get his answer? _____

What two things did Peter's confession do?

1. Identified Jesus as the Messiah
2. Identified Jesus as God (son of God)

In essence, Peter was confessing that Jesus was no mere man but God Himself who had come to save mankind from their sins.

What is the importance of Jesus being God with respect to His dying for the sins of the world? He had to be God and therefore infinite in order to take all of the sins of the world for all time on Himself.

Note: This demonstrates His qualifications to be the Messiah and also shows why no other person, e.g. Buddha, Gandhi, Mohammed, etc. were qualified to be the Savior of the world.

vv.18-19 What is the rock on which Christ will build his church?

Note: Some say the rock is:

1. Peter - note that the text says nothing about Peter's successors, infallibility or exclusive authority.
2. Peter's confession of faith
3. Christ
4. _____

What do you say? Christ...see Peter's answer in I Peter 2:4-8

I Pet. 2:4-8 _____

Note Peter's 3 OT quotes:

- Isa. 28:16
- Ps. 118:22
- Isa. 8:14

What are the "gates of Hades (hell)?" _____

Gates: gates were the place where the ruling council of elders sat and ruled and administered a city.

Some answers:

1. attacks on the church by demonic forces
2. Hell here refers to death. This was a common way of the Jews in referring to death.
3. Since "gates" suggest a defensive position – Hades will not be able to stand against the church when the church is assaulting it.
This implies that the church has an active offensive role in pulling down strongholds. See II Cor. 4:4

What do "keys" do?" _____

What are the "keys of the kingdom of heaven?"

Some say:

1. the authority to carry out church discipline, legislation and administration.

2. the opportunity to bring people into the kingdom through the ministry of evangelism
3. Ministers have the authority to announce forgiveness of sins to those who repent; and therefore can receive or exclude individuals from salvation
4. Peter used the keys of the kingdom in announcing the gospel first to the Jews at Pentecost and secondly, to the Gentiles when he was preaching in Cornelius' home.
5. _____

v.20 Why did Jesus command the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah? The people still had false ideas about what the Messiah would be like and what he would do. Therefore, He didn't want to be force-fitted into their expectations.

21-23 Jesus predicts his death and resurrection

v.21 In v. 4:17, the phrase "from that time" indicated that Jesus had now begun his public ministry of preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Now, it means that his work is taking a new direction. The direction it is taking is towards the cross where he will die for the sins of the world.

Did the disciples understand what He was telling them? Why or why not? _____

Most likely not because they still hadn't grasped the idea of suffering. Their expectation of the Messiah was still that of a warrior king.

v.22 What entirely inappropriate (outrageous) thing did Peter do in v. 22? He rebuked God.

He had just confessed Jesus to be the Messiah and God.

v.23 What was Jesus' response to Peter's words? _____

What does "Get behind me, Satan" indicate?

Does this mean that Peter needed deliverance? Likely not, but he did need to be delivered from a world mindset.

Note that in one moment Peter is a mouthpiece for God; and in the next moment, a mouthpiece for the devil.

I'm sure that Peter didn't grasp the implications of his rebuke. He didn't want Jesus to go to the cross which was the very thing needed and which the devil was trying to prevent. For there would be no salvation without the cross.

Another lesson from this short episode is that we all have the potential to be incredibly right at one moment and then incredibly wrong in the next moment.

24-28 Jesus exhorts the disciples to "take up their cross and follow him."

vv.24-25 What is the price of "following Jesus?" _____

What does "taking up our cross" mean to us? _____

Note: When Jesus used the picture of his followers carrying a cross, they knew what he meant. Crucifixion was now a common method of executing criminals. He was telling them that following him was a commitment that would include the risk of death.

v.27 What does this verse say that Jesus will do for his disciples? _____

Note that this verse of promise comes immediately after the "hard word" of the cross.

v.28 This "guarantee" was an amazing thing for Jesus to say.

Who are the "some" standing there? _____

So this means that "some" of his _____ will shortly see Jesus coming in his kingdom.

When will this happen? _____

In the next chapter, we will see who the "some" are.

We will also get a glimpse into the power and glory of the "kingdom of God"

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter, one from each section:

1. Beware of human legalisms. (adding to God's Word)
2. Believe and acknowledge that Jesus is God.
3. Be aware of our human weaknesses.
4. Be conscious of what our personal "cross" is.

MATTHEW 17

Background:

We are still moving within the 5th narrative section which could be entitled: “The Mission of the King.” In this section we have the account of Jesus’ last ministries in Galilee before he turns towards Jerusalem and his final days leading up to the cross. This “Mission” section includes verses 13:53 to 17:27.

We discussed chapter 16 in our previous study and a number of “red-letter” narratives in which Jesus responded to inquiries and provided answers to his disciples:

- Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a sign,
- Peter’s declaration that “Jesus is the Messiah,”
- Jesus predicts his death and resurrection, and
- Jesus exhorts the disciples to “take up their cross and follow him.”

(“Red-letter” narratives are narratives in the gospels where Jesus is speaking and the translator of the text highlighted his speech in red for our easy identification.)

Recall that, when Jesus is present, the kingdom of heaven is at hand and everything he does...his wisdom, his power and his compassion...demonstrate the superiority of the kingdom of God over the present evil age.

Keep in mind as we study chapter 17, that Jesus is nearing the end of his public ministry. He will shortly begin to tell the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed and then be raised on the 3rd day.

In verse 16:28, Jesus tells the disciples that some of them standing there will not die until they see Jesus coming in his kingdom. I believe the fulfillment of this prophetic word occurs at the beginning of chapter 17.

Outline of Chapter 17:

- : 1-13 Jesus and the 3 disciples on the mountain of transfiguration
- : 14-21 Jesus cures a demon-possessed boy.
- : 22-23 Jesus predicts his death and resurrection a second time.
- : 24-27 Peter and the “temple tax fish”

Observation and Interpretation:

Introduction:

- : parallel accounts in the gospels – In this chapter, we will again see the importance of observing the other gospel accounts of this event.
- : transfigured: 3339 *metamorphoo* a change of condition from earthly to supernatural which is denoted by the radiance of the garments,

also the countenance, suggesting what the bodies of the righteous may be in the age to come.

Note especially...the change in condition.

See also II Cor. 3:18 (changed) and Rom. 12:2 (transformed) – Paul using the same Grk. Word, *metamorphoo*.

II Cor. 3:18 “*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*”

What does this verse indicate about Jesus’ experience for us? _____

Mountains - We sometimes hear the phrase “mountain-top experience. From the Scriptures we see that some major events have occurred on mountains:

- Mt. Sinai – the “burning bush” – Ex. 3: 1-4:17
- Mt Carmel – Elijah and the prophets of Baal
- “a very high mountain” – Mt. 4 Jesus’ temptations

So, it is not, therefore, incorrect when we refer to mountain-top experiences, as long as we also recall that we must come down from the mountain and return to the tasks God has given us on the “plain.”

Recall - It is now 6 days later from Jesus’ declaration in Mt. 16:28.

What did Jesus tell the disciples in this verse? _____

What would this have meant to them? _____

17:1-13 Jesus and the 3 disciples on the mountain of transfiguration

v.1 Jesus took his closest associates with Him up the mountain. Lk. 9:28 tells us that their purpose was to pray.

v.2 What happened to Jesus on the mountain?

What two things happened to him in this event?

1. _____

2. _____

What do these 2 things show us about Jesus in this brief experience? _____

What were the disciples seeing? _____

v.3. What two Old Testament characters appeared to them?

_____ and _____.

How did they know who they were? _____

What did they discuss? (see Lk. 9:31) _____

Why these two? The presence of Moses, the Lawgiver and Elijah, the prophet, suggests that Jesus was now going to fulfill/complete the ministries they had had.

See Lk. 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached and everyone is forcing their way into it.

Jesus is the fulfillment of all of the OT revelation including the things to come.

v.4 What was Peter's response? _____

Why did he want to do this? _____

Was this a good suggestion? _____

Why or why not? _____

Jesus was God's one and only Son and the king of glory.

Peter's suggestion placed Moses and Elijah on the same level as Christ.

v.5 What happened next? _____

See Lk 9:34 "...as they entered into the cloud"

"The cloud" – It would be obvious to the Jews of the OT that the cloud indicated that God was present and ready to speak as He did on Mt. Sinai.

Note that the "cloud" is mentioned almost 60 times in at least 10 of the OT books.

What is new here (with reference to what God spoke at Jesus' baptism?)

How do we "listen to Jesus" today? _____

God's audible voice in the gospels:

The gospels record that, in the earthly life of Jesus, God spoke audibly three times in such a manner that a man could hear.

- The first at his baptism: "This is my son in whom I am well pleased." (Mt. 3:17) Here He had agreed to be numbered with the transgressors in baptism, a symbol of his baptism of death at his passion;
- The second was here on the mount of transfiguration, again "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Here he talked with Moses and Elijah regarding his coming accomplishments in Jerusalem;

- And thirdly, in John 12:20-28, we have his discussion with the Greeks and his proclamation that now, in the light of the events which would shortly take place, the son of man would be glorified.”

These occasions of God’s speaking came at times when Jesus was approaching the cross with the redemption of mankind at stake:

Each of these passages shows us that the way of the cross was always in his mind. His path across the hills, valleys and plains of Judea was always leading to Jerusalem and the cross. As he ministered to the people and taught the disciples, the way of the cross was always before him.”

v.6 What was the response of the disciples? _____

v.7 How did Jesus respond to their reaction? _____

v.9 Why did Jesus caution the disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen? _____

v.10 Why would the disciples then ask Jesus about the coming of Elijah?

(See Mal.4:5-6) Based upon this passage, the teachers of the OT believed that Elijah must come before the appearance of the Messiah. Since they now knew that Jesus was the Messiah...and they thought that Elijah had not preceded him...hence, the question.

v.11-13 What was Jesus’ answer to their question? _____

Note the author’s note indicating that they now understood He was talking about John the Baptist. v.13

Jesus has just come down from a “mountaintop” experience. Now he encounters his disciples and their inability to cast out a demon, even though He had recently given them authority to do so. See Mt. 10: 1, 8 and also Mk.6:13 where they had actually done so.

17: 14-21 Jesus cures a demon - possessed boy

“lunatic” – 4583 *seleniazomai* - crazy, to be lunatic

“sore” **2560** *kakos* badly , literally “to have it badly”

“vexed” **3958** *pascho* the opposite of free action, to experience something evil

Note the significant, additional information provided by Mark in 9:14-29.

- deaf, dumb spirit
- how long he has been afflicted
- when the spirit saw Jesus he manifested v. 20

- he was as one dead

v.15 the Greek word for epileptic translates literally: "moonstruck."
What does this mean? _____

v.17 What appears to be Jesus' attitude in this verse?

Note in Mt. 10:1, he had given them power over unclean spirits.

Why then couldn't the disciples cast it out? _____

Who were the faithless and perverse generation?

v.18 What does Jesus' response to the boy's "illness" tell you about the source of the problem?

v.20 What did Jesus say was the reason they couldn't cast it out?

570 *apistia* uncertainty, unbelief, the lack of acknowledgement of Christ, want of confidence in Christ's power

A suggested answer:

Faith consists of 3 elements:

1. knowledge of what is to be believed,
2. assent to what is to be believed;
3. trust in Jesus as the author and power behind the teaching.

In this particular case, the disciples knew what to believe (#1) and believed it to the point of trying to do the exorcism (#2).

But since Jesus identified their problem as unbelief, it suggests that their faith was deficient. They may have tried to "do" the exorcism with a formula instead of faith. After all, they had seen Him do this on numerous occasions.

Praying "in the Name of Jesus" is not a magical incantation or formula for success. Any prayers in His name must be substantiated with heart faith. You can't receive "right results" without faith simply because you've followed a prescriptive process.

Jesus' comment in v.21 also suggests that they had not prayed in preparation for this deliverance.

What figure of speech did Jesus use to illustrate the problem? _____

How much faith was needed to "remove this mountain?"

v.21 What caveat did Jesus interject that might have eased the disciples' minds a little? _____

: 22-23 Jesus predicts his death and resurrection a second time

In these two verses, Jesus affirms what he has told them previously in Mt. 16:21. How long had it been since the first time he told them of his impending death?

v.23 What was the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' announcement?

Did they not hear the part about his being raised up?

Explain your answer:

Notes: This is the first time that He mentions His betrayal.

Matthew alone includes the sorrow of the disciples over this announcement.

Only Mark and Luke mention that the disciples didn't understand His saying and that they were afraid to ask Him about it.

: 24-27 Peter and the "temple tax fish"

v.24 Who approached the disciples in this verse? _____

v.25-26 What was Peter's response to their inquiry?

What does this mean? _____

How did Jesus instruct Peter in this matter? _____

What does Jesus' response imply? _____

v.27 So...how did Jesus ultimately deal with this issue?

What was his reason for doing so? _____

What kind of fish was Peter looking for that would have the coin in its mouth?

Likely a "Tilapia" or "chromis simonis"

Notes: Jewish teachers had several stories describing how God had rewarded faithful Jews who bought fish and found jewels in them.

This story is unique to Matthew. This is understandable since Matthew had been a tax collector and this story would have been of particular interest to him.

Application:

What can we learn and apply from the following?

1. the transfiguration? _____

2. the demon-possessed boy _____

3. Jesus' 2nd prediction of his death? _____

4. the temple-tax fish? _____

MATTHEW 18

Background:

During the last session on Matthew 17, we completed the 5th narrative section entitled: “The Mission of the King.” In this section we **saw** the account of Jesus’ last ministries in Galilee before he turns towards Jerusalem and his final days leading up to the cross. This “Mission” section includes verses 13:53 to 17:27.

In chapter 17, we saw:

- Jesus and the 3 disciples on the mountain of transfiguration
- Jesus cures a demon-possessed boy.
- Jesus predicts his death and resurrection a second time.
- Peter and the “temple tax fish”

Our next chapter of study is the next to the last of Jesus’ discourses to the disciples in Matthew, a teaching on relationships. His disciples still have much to learn before He departs. And sometimes they ask the wrong questions.

Outline of Chapter 18:

- 1-7 Who is the greatest in the kingdom?
- 8-9 Jesus warns against temptation.
- 10-14 Jesus warns against looking down on others.
- 15-22 Jesus teaches how to treat a sinning brother.
- 18-22 Church discipline and restoration
- 23-35 Parable of the unforgiving servant

Biblical Interpretation:

1. The Golden Rule: Look for the plain sense of the text.
“When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and fundamental truths, clearly indicate otherwise.”
2. Context – especially the verses and paragraphs before and after the main text. (First/primary/immediate context)
3. For the gospels, review the other gospel accounts which record the same narrative which you are studying. In chapter 18, notice particularly the additional information provided in Mk. 9:33-37 and Lk. 9: 46-48 regarding the Matthew 18:1-5 narrative.
4. Identify any figures of speech or symbols in the passage and provide a literal translation. Determine why the author is using this particular figure of speech or symbol. (e.g. 10,000 talents, v.24)

5. At times, you will find an interpretation of an instruction included in the text itself. (e.g. In v. 4, Jesus provides the interpretation of what He has just said in v.3)

Observation and Interpretation:

A quote from I. L. Jensen "Matthew, A Self-Study Guide"

"Not long after Jesus called the disciples to Himself, they began to be proud of their calling. And, since pride begets jealousy and disunity, their effectiveness in teamwork was in jeopardy. This is why Jesus spent long hours with His close disciples counseling them about their personal spiritual problems, to make them vessels fit for His use. All Christians can profit much from the counsel of Jesus recorded in this chapter of Matthew."

1-7 Who is the greatest in the kingdom?

Read Mark 9:33, 34

What do we learn from Mark's account regarding the reason for the disciples raising this question? _____

Jesus has just previously revealed to them that He was to be betrayed and killed. Mt. 17:22-23

Note also that He has previously taught them the qualities of kingdom dwellers, i.e. poor in spirit, mourn, meek.

So, why were the disciples asking this question?

1. _____
2. _____

What does Jesus' response to them indicate that the important question to be asking is? _____

v.3 What does it mean to "be converted and become as little children?"

What is the relationship between "being converted" and "humbling yourself?" _____

Who were the "childish" ones in this narrative? _____

In vv. 3-4 notice that Jesus says that we must be like little children in their humility in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Jesus is providing the interpretation of His previous comment about becoming like little children.)

Can you explain this "requirement to enter the kingdom of heaven?"

Notice that the disciples had become so focused on seeking positions of advantage that they had lost sight of the true kingdom perspective of seeking positions of service.

Notice also Jesus' very strong words against those who are a stumbling block to children, to offenses.

What other qualities about children are desirable in adults? _____

Since Jesus is instructing the disciples on "entering the kingdom," what is the significance of the word "converted?" _____

The disciples betrayed their "lack of conversion" by the question they were asking. If they had been converted, what question/s might they have been asking? _____

When would the disciples eventually "be converted?" _____

James and John:

How does Jesus refer to these brothers in Mk. 3:17:

"sons of _____"

What does this reveal about them? _____

We know, at this point in their training, that they did not understand Jesus' present, earthly ministry. They were still thinking in terms of the OT "warrior-king" concept.

Did they ever "get it?" _____

See Acts 12:1-2 and the book of I John for insights. _____

Note: In v.6, Jesus uses the word "woe." This was the word used to express great sorrow over the end of the wicked, i.e. eternal judgment and the fire of hell.

Note the strong warning regarding the treatment of children.

8-9 Jesus warns against temptation

Discuss vv. 18:8-9 cutting off a hand or foot and plucking out an eye.

Is Jesus using hyperbole (figure of speech which uses exaggeration for effect) here? _____

What are two terms Jesus uses to describe the end of those who have missed the kingdom of God? _____ fire and _____ fire.

What is he describing? _____

These statements alone should give us a strong sense of urgency to make sure of our salvation.

10-14 Jesus warns against looking down on others

This section is a parable, a true to life story that makes a single point (with a few exceptions; e.g. prodigal son parable)..

What does Jesus mean when he says “despise one of these little ones?” _____

Who are the little ones? _____

What else do we learn from v.10 about children? _____

Who are assigned to them? _____

In vv. 12-14, what is Jesus saying about the father’s concern for the lost? _____

What lessons can we learn from this passage?

1. God cares for us _____.
2. The Shepherd knows His sheep and His sheep know His voice.

What can we say about the following?

Jesus _____ John 17:12

Peter _____ Mt. 4:18-20

Matthew _____ Mt. 9:9

Zacchaeus _____ Lk. 19:5-6

3. Jesus understands our weaknesses. (We stray.)

We are intellectually challenged sheep,

Note how often the Scriptures refer to us as sheep.

Can you think of some other “sheep” passages?

See John 10:1-16; Ps 23, Ps. 100:3b, Heb. 13:20; I Pet. 2:25

4. God seeks us when we go _____. (v.12)
5. God rejoices when His lost sheep are found. (v.13)

15-22 Church discipline and restoration

Recall from the first page of this chapter that Jesus’ teaching in this chapter is to His disciples on matters of relationships. So, when you see the words “you” and “your,” remember that He is speaking to His disciples.

Verse 15 begins with “moreover.”

This indicates that this discussion (context) is a continuation of the teaching of vv. 10-14 regarding “restoration.”

And verse 21 begins with “then” also showing a continuation of the theme of “restoration.”

What are the 4 steps Jesus gives for dealing with a brother who sins against you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Note from IVP New Testament Commentary:

“Tax gatherers were seen as agents of a pagan government and were excluded from the religious life of the Jewish community.”

Who are these guidelines for? _____

18-19 What topic does the “binding and loosing” address?
(see vv. 15-17 context) _____ discipline

Note that in v.19, two are praying for the restoration of the sinning brother.

v.20 What are the unspoken requirements identified in v.19?

- A. _____
- B. _____

v.20 Who are the two or three gathered together “in my Name?”

Note the primary teaching of this passage:

“The purpose of church discipline is to restore the sinning one to fellowship with the body of Christ.”

It is not for the justification of the offended party.

Rule of Context:

Note especially the context of vv. 18-20. The two or three who are gathered together are providing testimony (witnesses) on a matter of church discipline. (v.16)

The results expected by the two or three (and therefore God’s answer to their agreement) is connected to the church discipline being addressed. There is no warrant in this passage for extending the request beyond the bounds of this context.

How many times have you heard someone come into a prayer meeting not at all connected to church discipline and announce

that, since 2 or 3 are gathered together, God will do whatever is asked by those praying.

This is to lift a passage out of its context and, in this particular case, God is not obligated to fulfill whatever requests are made under this pretext since the God-given context is violated.

There are a number of other passages that discuss/address the issue of praying together in unity such that it is not necessary to take this passage out of context to establish the principle of praying together and answered prayer.

“Only the Word rightly divided can have the blessings of God’s response.”

23-35 Parable of the unforgiving servant

The rabbis of Jesus’ time taught that people should forgive those who offend them, but not more than three times.

Peter may have been thinking he was being generous when he suggested seven times (the perfect number).

What was Jesus answer? _____

What does this mean? _____

Why wouldn’t the unforgiving servant who had been shown so much mercy, forgive the person who owed him “a little?”

In this story, the 10,000 talents is not a precise number but is given (a symbol) to represent a huge amount. A talent was about 75 pounds, a denarii represented a day’s wage. (75 # X 10,000 talents X 16 oz./# X \$ 400/oz of gold ~ \$5B)

What can we conclude from this brief mathematical excursion? _____

If a person is thrown into prison until he has paid the last penny, how then, can he earn the money to pay off his debt since it can be assumed that he cannot work while in prison?

What is the primary focus in this teaching? _____
from the _____. (see v.35)

Some key points can be made from this narrative:

1. Since this is a kingdom parable, we can liken the king to Jesus who will require an accounting of each of His servants.
2. He will deal justly with all persons.

3. God's attitude towards us will take into account our attitude of forgiveness towards those who offend us.
4. Christians should be unlimited in forgiving others their offenses since God has already been infinitely forgiving towards our sins.
5. Having a forgiving heart is part of what it means to be a Christian.
6. _____

Application:

Identify personal life applications from this chapter:

1. Humility is a requirement for entering the kingdom of God.
2. We should be infinitely forgiving towards others because God has already been infinitely forgiving towards us.
3. God is not obligated to respond to our interpretation of His Word when we have not rightly divided the Word. (made wrong conclusions about what a passage teaches.)
4. The purpose of church discipline is restoration. This assumes that the leadership of a local church will embrace the responsibility of discipline when it is needed.
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

MATTHEW 19

Background:

In chapter 18, we studied Jesus' discourse on relationships.

In this discussion with the disciples, he talked about:

- who is the greatest in the kingdom.
- He warned against temptation and looking down on others.
- He taught how to treat a sinning brother.
- He talked about binding and loosing, and
- gave us the parable of the unforgiving servant.

We now turn our attention to the narrative of his final public ministries. These last busy days were devoted to preaching, teaching and healing as the multitudes flocked to him. During this time also, the religious leaders tried to trap him in his words and, having been unsuccessful, began to plot to kill him.

Outline of Chapter 19:

- 1-2 Jesus heals the multitudes in Judea.
- 3-12 Jesus teaches on marriage and divorce.
- 13-15 Jesus ministers to little children.
- 16-26 The rich young ruler comes to Jesus seeking eternal life.
- 27-30 Jesus speaks with the disciples regarding rewards for those who have followed him.

Observation and Interpretation:

1-2 Jesus heals the multitudes

This short segment simply states that when Jesus had completed his ministry in the region of Galilee, he proceeded southward to the coastlands of Judea.

Multitudes followed him and he ministered healing to them.

It is important to note that Jesus has already told the disciples on more than one occasion that he must go to Jerusalem to be killed and raised.

He has met with Moses and Elijah on the mountain and revealed his glory to the disciples.

The way of the cross is now, more than ever before, near to him. What does he now do? _____

What can we say about our king, knowing that the suffering of death on the cross is near, he continues to minister to the multitudes that come to him? _____

3-12 Jesus teaches on marriage and divorce

Background: John the Baptist had lost his life because of his public statements about marriage. The Pharisees also hoped to use Jesus' marriage position statements against him.

At this time, there were 2 principle schools of thought regarding divorce.

A person's position on this issue was based upon their interpretation of Deut. 24:1-4.

1. It was ok for almost any reason.
2. Divorce was only allowed because of marital unfaithfulness.

v.3 Why did the Pharisees come to Jesus? _____

What was their question? _____

Why did they ask him this question? _____

v.4-6 In responding to their inquiry, to what did Jesus resort? _____

Note that, instead of talking about divorce, he talked about marriage.

What reasons did Jesus give in support of marriage?

What can we say is God's true intention in marriage? _____

v.7 Why did they reference Moses when responding to Jesus' answer?

v.8-9 What was Jesus' response? _____

Did the Pharisees have an answer for Jesus' response? _____

v.10 How did the disciples respond to his teaching? _____

vv.11-12 *eunoch* Strong's # 2135 a castrated person; by extension an impotent or unmarried man

In v.11, Jesus says that "all cannot accept this statement,..."

What does he mean by this? _____

For what reasons might a person not seek marriage?

13-15 Jesus ministers to little children

Rebuke Strong's # **2008** *epitimaō* from epi – upon and *timao* to evaluate

to evaluate, to rebuke, but not so as to bring the offender to conviction

to reprimand sharply, reprove (M-W dictionary)

reprove – to express disapproval (M-W dictionary)

v.13 Why did the disciples rebuke them? _____

v.14 What does Jesus mean by: "...for of such is the kingdom of heaven." _____

What attitudes do "little children" have that qualify them for the kingdom of heaven? _____

The attitude of the children, simple trusting faith, must have been a welcome change to Jesus from the response of the religious leaders who allowed their pride, education and sophistication to close the door of the kingdom to themselves and others.

16-26 The rich young ruler comes to Jesus seeking eternal life

See also Mk. 10:17-31; Lk. 18:18-30 for parallel gospel accounts of this story.

What words can we use to describe the inquirer?

v.22 _____ Mk. _____ Lk. _____

v.16 What was the man seeking? _____

What is this? _____

What other words refer to the thing the man was seeking:

v.17 _____

v.21 _____

v.23 _____ of _____

v.24 _____ of _____

v.25 _____

What can we conclude from the fact that these words are used interchangeably? _____

v.20 What astounding thing did the man say to Jesus when Jesus had told him to keep 6 commandments? _____

From Jesus' response, do you think what the man was saying was true? _____

What 3 thing did Jesus then tell the man to now do?

1. _____

- 2. _____
- 3. _____

What was the man's difficulty? _____

Did he enter the kingdom of heaven? _____

v.25 Why were the disciples astonished at Jesus' instructions to the man? _____

v.26 How can we summarize Jesus' response to the disciples? _____

Can we not say that, when any of us are saved, it is a miracle of God? _____

What information does this passage give us relative to the ministry of evangelism? _____

27-30 Jesus speaks with the disciples regarding rewards for those who have followed him.

After Jesus conversation with the rich ruler, the disciples are somewhat "taken aback" by the nature of his response.

I suspect that more than just Peter may have had questions about their reward for following Jesus. But Peter, of all the disciples, often seemed to have a readiness to speak what was on his mind.

v.28 What is "the regeneration?" _____

When will the regeneration occur? _____

Who will then sit on the 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel? _____

Who is the 12th apostle? _____

v.29 What will our reward be if we have left houses or brothers or sisters...? _____

v.30 What does Jesus mean by his comment: "Many who are first will be last, and the last first?" _____

What does this say about our society? _____

Identify one application lesson from each of our segments in this chapter.

1-2 Jesus heals the multitudes in Judea _____

3-12 Jesus teaches on marriage and divorce _____

13-15 Jesus ministers to little children _____

16-26 The rich young ruler comes to Jesus seeking eternal life

27-30 Jesus speaks with the disciples regarding rewards for those who have followed him.

MATTHEW 20

Background:

In chapter 19, we turned our attention to the narrative of Jesus' final public ministries. This narrative includes chapters 19 – 23.

Following this segment, we will study his great Olivet discourse (chs. 24 and 25) in which he teaches on the end times.

These last busy days were devoted to preaching, teaching and healing as the multitudes flocked to him. During this time also, the religious leaders tried to trap him in his words and, having been unsuccessful, began to plot to kill him.

In chapter 19, we saw:

- Jesus healing the multitudes in Judea.
- Jesus teaching on marriage and divorce.
- Jesus ministering to little children.
- the rich young ruler who came to Jesus seeking eternal life. And finally,
- we saw Jesus speaking with the disciples regarding rewards for those who have followed him.

Outline of Chapter 20:

- 1-16 The parable of the workers in the vineyard
- 17-19 Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time.
- 20-28 Jesus teaches on serving others.
- 29-34 Jesus heals 2 blind men.

Observation and Interpretation:

1-16 the parable of the workers in the vineyard

Note: this parable is told only in the book of Matthew.

v.1 Jesus begins this parable with the familiar: "The kingdom of heaven is like..." This is a familiar pattern with Jesus when he is showing us something about the character or function of the kingdom of God. (See Matthew, chapter 13.)

As we shall shortly see, this parable is about grace and sovereignty. God, as the sovereign ruler of the universe, has the absolute liberty to do as He pleases.

To assist us in our interpretation, we can say that God is the landowner and the hired laborers represent those who come into the kingdom of God. The hour that a laborer is hired represents a certain time in their life...either early in life or late. The vineyard is the world.

vv.2-7 Describe the action of this segment. _____

Up until this point, no one has any complaint about the hiring process or the wage (reward) that is offered to each group of hired employees. The “rub” will now come as the landowner pays the wages for those who have worked for him, starting with the ones that came last and worked the least number of hours.

vv.8-12 What happens in this segment? _____

What is the complaint of those who began to work early during the day? _____

vv.13-16 How does the landowner respond to this complaint? _____

Is the landowner (God) just to do this? _____
Why or why not? _____

What lessons do we learn from this parable?

1. About God? _____
2. About those who have served God for most of their lives? _____

3. About those who come to Christ late in their lives? _____

We need to be careful to guard against being jealous of what God has given to others. And, we also need to cultivate a grateful heart towards God for what He has done for each one of us. The reality is: None of us deserve to be saved. None of us deserve the gifts or abilities that He gives us. All of us are saved by God’s grace and mercy.

In fact, it is an even greater grace to us if God saves us into his kingdom early in our lives. Think of the years of fruitful service we can have for our king that we would have missed if we didn’t enter the kingdom until the later years in our lives. (and the additional rewards we will receive)

17-19 Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time

This third prediction of Jesus’ death and resurrection is told in all 3 of the synoptic gospels.

Note that Jesus takes the 12 disciples aside to speak with them.

What does he now tell them? _____

Do they yet understand that he will be killed and then raised from the dead? _____

Skim through the next segment, vv. 20-28.

What is the topic here? _____

Does it seem a little strange that after telling the disciples a third time about his death and being raised, that they are now discussing positions of importance in the kingdom?

What do you make of this? _____

20-28 Jesus teaches on serving others

This teaching is provided only in Matthew and Mark.

vv.20-21 What does the mother of James and John request of Jesus?

v.22 What was Jesus' response? _____

v.22b Do you think that James and John understood what Jesus was saying? _____

What was the "cup of suffering and baptism" that Jesus was speaking about? _____

Does this foretell the manner of their deaths? _____

Jesus has just taught on rewards (Mt. 19:28-30) and eternal life (Mt. 20:1-16). Did James and John really grasp these teachings? _____

v.23 What 2 things did Jesus now tell them?

1. _____

2. _____

In the 2nd item, Jesus was again demonstrating that he was under the father's authority. He is the one who makes these decisions. (see previous parable about the landowner.)

vv.24-28 What was the reaction of the 10 disciples to the request for James and John? _____

How did Jesus respond to their reaction? _____

Note again, how diametrically opposed are the values of the kingdom of God as compared with the values of this present evil age.

He who would be first, should be the servant of all.

v.28 What word did Jesus use to describe his death on the cross?

What does this mean? _____

29-34 Jesus heals 2 blind men

Note: This narrative is provided in all 3 of the synoptic gospels.

Jesus has just been talking about being a servant of all. This will include putting the interests of others above our own interests.

Keep in mind also, that Jesus is going up to Jerusalem (20:17) where the cross and an agonizing death await him. There must have been many things on his mind. But, he is not too busy to stop and serve the 2 blind men sitting by the road.

vv. 30 What did the blind men cry out? _____
What does the phrase "son of David" tell you? _____

Were they going to be denied? _____

What was the reward for their perseverance? _____

This is another amazing gospel story. The men who could not see, "clearly saw" that Jesus was the Messiah. That's why they wouldn't give up on their quest for sight. They knew he could answer their request. See Isa. 42:7

And the eyes of the religious leaders that could physically see the miracles had no spiritual light. They were the blind guides refusing to open their eyes to the truth.

Application:

What application lessons can we identify from each of these narratives?

1-16 The parable of the workers in the vineyard

17-19 Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time.

20-28 Jesus teaches on serving others. _____

29-34 Jesus heals 2 blind men. _____

MATTHEW 21

Background:

In chapter 20, we continued our study of the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries. This narrative includes chapters 19 – 23.

Following this segment, we will study his great Olivet discourse (chs. 24 and 25) in which he teaches on the end times.

These last busy days were devoted to preaching, teaching and healing as the multitudes flocked to him.

Chapter 20 included: the parable of the workers in the vineyard.
Jesus foretelling his death and resurrection a third time.
Jesus teaches on serving others.
Jesus healing 2 blind men.

As we review these narrative accounts of Jesus' ministry, it is important to keep in mind that the things the disciples learned in these teachings are also the things that we should learn and apply to our lives.

Outline of Chapter 21:

1-11	Jesus' triumphal entry
12-17	Jesus drives the moneychangers out of the temple again.
18-22	A short teaching on faith and prayer
23-27	Religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority.
28-32	The parable of the two sons
33-46	The parable of the wicked vinedressers

Observation & Interpretation:

- 1-11 Jesus' triumphal entry
- 1-3 Jesus gave his disciples instructions regarding a donkey. The instructions about the donkey illustrated the spiritual gift of a word of knowledge.
- 4-5 Why was Jesus going to enter Jerusalem sitting on a donkey? _____
- What does this passage from Zech. 9:9 tell us about Jesus?
1. _____
2. _____

- 6 What happened when the disciples did as Jesus had instructed them? See Lk. 11:32-34

- 7-11 Note that, during this time, when great kings and rulers entered a city, they were transported on a donkey that had not been ridden.
When Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, it demonstrated from Scripture that he was the Messiah.
What character quality did riding on a donkey demonstrate?

What does the word “hosanna” mean? Strong’s # 5614

What were the people asking Jesus to do? _____

What does the reference to “the son of David” tell us about the crowd? (see also Mt. 20:30) _____
Who did the crowds think Jesus was? _____
- 12-17 Jesus drives the moneychangers out of the temple again
- 12-13 This is the second time that Jesus has taken this action. See John 2:13-17 for the first time. When was this?

What did Jesus accuse the money changers of being?

We have at least two kinds of merchants in this segment, those who exchanged foreign currency for the special coinage used in the temple and those who bought and sold sacrificial animals.
Since the temple coins were the only currency the merchants would accept, the exchangers could charge unreasonable rates knowing and taking advantage of those who had come long distances to worship but did not know the normal exchange rates.
Those who sold animals for sacrifice would also charge unreasonable prices knowing that travelers who had come to worship were at their mercy to obtain sacrificial animals.
To what did Jesus appeal as justification for his actions?

14-17 As he healed the blind and the lame in the temple, what was the response of the chief priests and scribes? _____

How did Jesus respond to their veiled accusation?

Why were these men “indignant?” indignation – anger roused by something unjust, unworthy or mean (M-W dictionary)

Note: Zodhiates “The Complete Word Study New Testament” translates this word as “sore displeased.” Strong’s # 23

Note the difference in response of the children and the chief priests and scribes. What was the difference? _____

How could this be? _____

18-22 A short teaching on faith and prayer - a fig tree cursed

18-20 The explanation of this short narrative can be discovered by reviewing the context ...the previous passage and realizing that Jesus’ action was not a vindictive, angry act but an “acted-out” parable.

Who had Jesus just confronted in the previous narrative?

Can we not say that the chief priests and scribes “looked good” on the outside but inwardly were lacking in character not producing fruit unto righteousness.

So, the fig tree, while looking good and holding the promise of fruit on the outside, did not produce fruit. Jesus was demonstrating the anger of the Father over those who looked good on the outside but inwardly were full of dead men’s bones and bearing no fruit.

21-22 Moving mountains

We need to keep in mind that believing prayer is not a “blank check” to get what we want. Our requests still need to be encouched within the will of God and for his glory.

Have you moved any mountains lately? _____

23-27 Religious leaders challenge Jesus’ authority

In our world, just as then, people want to know: “Who authorized you to do that?” They would look for letters of

recommendation, appointments from superiors, rank or company position and connections in worldly high places.

However, Jesus' authority came from who He was and what he had heard from the Father.

What were the two answers the chief priests and elders were hoping to hear and how would these men then "catch him" in his words?

1. from God _____
2. acting on his own
In this answer, the crowds would then believe that the Pharisees had greater authority.

Instead of giving them the answers they wanted, how did Jesus answer them? _____

What did this reveal about these men? _____

28-32

The parable of the two sons

Notice in v. 28...who is Jesus speaking to? _____

So, this parable is spoken directly to the chief priests and elders.

Who did the son that didn't obey represent? _____

Why? Because they said they wanted God's will but refused to obey him.

In this parable, "work" correlates with "believing."
For even after the chief priests and elders saw tax collectors and harlots believing. They did not relent and also believe.

33-46

The parable of the wicked vinedressers

In this parable, the landowner is God, the vineyard is Israel and the vinedressers are the Jewish leaders.

Why did the vinedressers not receive the servants of the landowner? _____

Who was the landowner's son? _____

What did the vinedressers do to him? _____

Is there any faulty logic in the actions of the vinedressers?
Explain your answer. _____

What did Jesus reveal about the vinedressers? _____

- v.42 Who is the stone that the vinedressers rejected? _____
- v.43 When Jesus said: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you..." who was he talking about? _____
- v.44 What did Jesus mean when he said: "on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." _____
Who is he talking about? _____
- v.45 Note that the Chief priests and Pharisees knew that Jesus was speaking this parable about them. (They were the vinedressers.)

Application:

Identify one personal application that can be drawn from each of the segments of this chapter:

- 1-16 Jesus' triumphal entry _____
- 12-17 Jesus drives the moneychangers out of the temple again.

- 18-22 A short teaching on faith and prayer _____

- 23-27 Religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority _____

- 28-32 The parable of the two sons _____

- 33-46 The parable of the wicked vinedressers _____

MATTHEW 22

Background:

In chapter 21, we continued our study of the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries. This narrative section includes chapters 19 – 23. (See outline chart of Matthew in the Introduction of this study guide) Following this segment, we will study Jesus' great Olivet discourse (chs. 24 and 25) in which he teaches on the end times.

These last days of Jesus' time on the earth were devoted to preaching, teaching and healing as the multitudes continued to flock to him, especially for healings. Others, e.g. religious leaders, came to him also but with evil intent.

Chapter 21 summary (for review):

In this chapter we saw:

Jesus' triumphal entry and then Jesus driving the moneychangers out of the temple again.

Jesus gave a short teaching on faith and prayer (the fig tree that withered.)

Jesus encountered religious leaders who challenged his authority, and
2 parables: The parable of the two sons, and
The parable of the wicked vinedressers

As a point of timing, one author's "Life of Jesus" chart shows that, after his triumphal entry, there are 2 months until his ascension.

As we review these narrative accounts of Jesus' ministry, it is important to keep in mind that the things the disciples learned in these teachings are also the things that we should learn and apply to our lives.

Outline of Chapter 22:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-14 | The parable of the wedding feast |
| 15-40 | The religious leaders question Jesus:
15-22 Pharisees – "Paying taxes"
23-33 Sadducees – "the resurrection"
34-40 Pharisees – "The greatest commandment" |
| 41-46 | Jesus questions the Pharisees |

Observation & Interpretation:

1-14 The parable of the wedding feast

There are 2 stages to this parable:

1. inviting the guests
2. the man in the wedding hall who was improperly attired.

v.1 Who is Jesus addressing in the telling of this parable?

v.2-9, “The Kingdom of heaven is like...” Jesus uses a simile to illustrate something about the kingdom of heaven. What is the point of comparison? _____

If we draw parallels to the people in the story, who are represented by:

1. a certain king _____
2. his son _____
3. those who are invited _____
4. those in the highways, as many as you find _____

v.3 What was the excuse of the first group of invitees for not attending? _____

The invitation again went out to the first group of invitees. What was their response at this time?

v.5 1. _____

v.6 2. _____

What did the king do at this _____

v.10 Note that there were 2 qualities ascribed to the guests that came...good and bad. What does this represent?

v.11 The king discovered a man in the banquet hall that didn't have on a wedding garment.

Why would he not have or be wearing a wedding garment?

Culture note: It was customary in this culture for the wedding guests to be given a wedding garment to wear by the host. So this

man could not excuse himself by saying that “he had nothing to wear.”

It would be a gross social blunder and an insult for the guest not to wear the garment offered. In fact, the host would be insulted and he could only presume that the guest was impudent and disrespectful and thought perhaps that he could get by without the appropriate attire.

In our case, we have been given the wedding garment of righteousness by our great king. This is our “wedding garment” for dining in the kingdom of God.

What can we say about the first invitees who refused to come?

What is the principle lesson of this parable? _____

15-40 The religious leaders question Jesus:

We now come to a segment in which the religious leaders, i.e. Pharisees, Herodians and Sadducees, come to question Jesus. They have not come seeking truth or with honorable motives. Their goal is to try and trap Jesus in his words so they can accuse him to Caesar and get rid of him. They wanted to establish a charge against him that would stand up in a Roman court of law.

15-22 Pharisees – “Paying taxes”

What is the logic of the Pharisees in asking Jesus this question?

1. If Jesus agreed that it was right to pay taxes to Caesar?

2. If Jesus said they should not pay the taxes? _____

(This is why the Pharisees joined forces with the Herodians in this ploy.)

What was Jesus’ answer to their question? _____

Jesus’ response acknowledged our dual citizenship. Our citizenship in a country or nation requires that we pay taxes for the benefits we receive. Sometimes we have no choice about how “our tax monies” will be spent.

We are also citizens of the kingdom of heaven. This citizenship requires our commitment and obedience.

What was the response of the Pharisees to Jesus' answer?

Culture Note: The Jews were required to pay taxes to support the government of Rome. They despised and hated this tax because their monies went into Caesar's treasury where some of it would go to building heathen temples and also be given in support of the decadent Roman aristocracy.

Does this have any application for us today? If yes, how?

23-33 Sadducees – “the resurrection”

This could also be called “the question of the 7 brothers who died.”

v.28 Why would the Sadducees ask Jesus this question since they didn't believe in a resurrection? _____

What was Jesus' response? _____

What were their errors? They didn't know the _____ and the _____ of God.

Jesus again used the Scriptures to answer them. How did he demonstrate from Scripture a true view of the resurrection?

Notice that Jesus' answer came from the Pentateuch (1st 5 books of the Bible.) These were the only Scriptures that the Sadducees accepted.

Jesus' use of the present tense in his response pointed to the resurrection and the life people would have in the kingdom of heaven. (e.g. Abraham is not dead.)

34-40 Pharisees – “The greatest commandment”

One of the interests of the Pharisees was cataloging the Scriptures as to which were more important and those of lesser importance.

What was the essence of Jesus' response? All of the law can be summarized in ___ commandments. What are they?

Notice that the focus of these two laws is what we can and should do, not what we shouldn't do, something that was of great interest to the Pharisees.

41-46 Jesus questions the Pharisees

Here Jesus quotes from Ps. 110:1 to show that the Messiah would be greater than David.

Note that the Pharisees knew that the Messiah would be a “son of David” but they didn’t know that he would also be God Himself.

A key to the phrase “The Lord said to my Lord” is found in the Hebrew text. The first Lord is Yahweh, the second Lord is Adonai. Remember that David is speaking. He is indicated in the text by the word “my” which shows his relationship with the Messiah, his Lord or Adonai.

Application:

Write out one application for our lives (in this 21st century) for each of the segments listed below:

- 1-14 The parable of the wedding feast _____

- 15-40 The religious leaders question Jesus: _____

- 15-22 Pharisees – “Paying taxes” _____

- 23-33 Sadducees – “the resurrection” _____

- 34-40 Pharisees – “The greatest commandment” _____

- 41-46 Jesus questions the Pharisees _____

A help to application:

As we review these narrative accounts of Jesus’ ministry, it is important to keep in mind that the things the disciples learned in these teachings are also the things that we should learn and apply to our lives.

MATTHEW 23

Background:

In chapter 22, we continued our study of the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries. This narrative section includes chapters 19 – 23. (See outline chart of Matthew) After our study of chapter 23, we will study Jesus' great Olivet discourse (chs. 24 and 25) in which he teaches on the end times.

In chapter 22, Jesus:

- taught the parable of the wedding feast,
- was confronted by religious leaders on 3 occasions in which they tried to catch him in his words, and finally,
- we heard Jesus ask the Pharisees a question for which they had no answer.

As we review these narrative accounts of Jesus' ministry, it is important to keep in mind that the things the disciples learned in these teachings are also the things that we should learn and apply to our lives.

We come now to one of the most stunning of Jesus' rebukes of the religious leaders.

In this chapter, Jesus pronounces 8 woes against the religious leaders.

Outline of Chapter 23:

1-12	Jesus warns the multitudes and his disciples about the religious leaders
13-33	Jesus pronounces 8 woes against the religious leaders
34-36	Jesus promises to send prophets, wise men and scribes
37-39	Jesus sorrows over Jerusalem

Observation & Interpretation:

1-12	<u>Jesus warns the multitudes and his disciples about the religious leaders</u>
v.1	Jesus is now speaking to his disciples and the multitudes
v.2	What does it mean "to sit in Moses' seat?"

In Scripture, the image of a "seat" focuses on a special role or authority deserving of reverence and respect. In the case of Moses' seat, this statement about the Scribes and Pharisees confirms their position and authority as interpreters of the Law.

v.3 What did Jesus tell the disciples and multitude to do with regard the “those who sat on Moses’ seat?” _____ what they tell you to do, but do not follow their _____.

What specific complaints did Jesus have about these religious leaders?

- v.4 _____
- v.5 _____
- v.6 _____
- v.7 _____

v.5 What are “phylacteries?” _____ See Deut. 6:8; Ex. 13:9, 16

Jesus usually didn’t condemn them for what they _____ but for what they _____.

They knew the Scriptures but did not live according to what they taught.

They were more interested in the praise of men than of God. They were, according to the Scriptures, hypocrites, the ancient word for actors on a stage.

Unfortunately, in our society, even in church, some people desire positions to receive the praise of men. God is not against positions in the church, He created them. What He is against is those who aspire to positions and utilize the position to serve themselves rather than Him and others.

vv.8-10 Why does Jesus give the people the following prohibitions:

1. Don’t be called teacher/rabbi _____
2. Don’t call anyone father _____

vv.11-12 Note the opposites in these verses:
greatest – servant exalts – humbled humbles – exalted

This is another powerful example that demonstrates that the kingdom of God is diametrically opposed to the kingdom of this present evil age.

13-33 Jesus pronounces 8 woes against the religious leaders

It is important to note that, in the culture of this day, the religious leaders were powerful men. Since the life of Israel centered upon its relationship with God, these men who were closest to the temple, taught the law, offered up the sacrifices, etc. and were the best known and most respected of all the leaders.

Jesus gives these strong rebukes because their lust for power, status and money had caused them to lose sight of their calling to be holy unto God. Their blindness to their own inner depravity was spreading to the whole nation.

Definition: "woe" - an exclamation of deep sorrow or grief; e.g. "Woe is me."

Deep suffering from misfortune, affliction of grief (M-W dict.)

What, then, is Jesus doing when He pronounces "woes" on the religious leaders? What is he saying? _____

Study this section and then explain the 8 woes identified below:

1. v.13 – they shut the door to the kingdom _____

- v.14 – exploit widows _____
- v.15 – entrapped converts _____
- vv.16-22 binding oaths _____

- vv.23-24 neglecting the weightier matters of the law _____

- vv.25-26 hypocrites _____
- vv.27-28 white-washed tombs _____
- vv.29-33 those who would justify themselves _____

34-36 Jesus promises to send prophets, wise men and scribes

Who are the prophets, wise men and scribes that Jesus will send to the religious leaders? _____

What will the religious leaders do to them? _____

The religious leaders had declared that they would not act as their fathers had acted in killing the prophets that God had sent to them.

What effect would the prophets, wise men and scribes that Jesus will send have on the religious leaders? _____

Note that Abel was the first martyr and Zechariah the last of the martyrs mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (see II Chron.) Zechariah was killed by those who claimed to be God's people.

37-39 Jesus sorrows over Jerusalem

v.38 What is Jesus saying by the figure of speech of the hen protecting her chicks? _____

Why wouldn't they let Him? _____

In this short paragraph we see a glimpse of the feelings of Jesus for God's people and the city He loved, the city that would soon be destroyed.

v.39 Note that this is a quote from Ps. 118:26.
See also Mt. 21:9, Jesus' triumphal entry.
Jesus promises to come once again to his people but only after a time of great judgment when they are finally ready to receive him.

This short paragraph immediately precedes Jesus' great Olivet discourse (chs. 24-25) on the end times. So this paragraph becomes a lead-in to his "end times" teachings.

Application:

Identify 4 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

MATTHEW 24

Background:

In chapter 23, we completed our study of the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries, chapters 19-23.

In this chapter, Jesus:

- warned the multitudes and his disciples about the religious leaders,
- pronounced numerous woes against the religious leaders,
- promised to send prophets, wise men and scribes, and
- sorrowed over Jerusalem.

We come now to Jesus' Olivet discourse, called as such because it was given on the Mount of Olives. This discourse on the end times and Jesus' coming includes chapters 24 and 25. This is the 5th and final discourse of Jesus recorded in the book of Matthew.

This discourse by Jesus is "mini" instruction on End Times events.

One of its goals is to teach the disciples about the future, both near and far.

Note that Mark 13:1-36 and Luke 21:5-36 have also recorded the words of Jesus' discourse in chapter 24:1-42. Matthew alone has 24:45-51. Mark and Luke do not include chapter 25.

The book of John does not include any of the Olivet discourse.

Context:

Preceding the Olivet Discourse: In Mt. 23:1-39 we have:

1. Jesus denunciation of the Jewish leadership, especially their guilt for leading Israel to reject Jesus' claims to be the Messiah.
2. Jesus announcement of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. (24:2)

Note that the temple construction (funded by Herod) began in 20 B.C. and would not be completed until 64 A.D., some 34 years later.

Following the Olivet Discourse: the Passover and Jesus' upper room discourse.

His ministry now transitions from prophet to priest when He will offer Himself for the sins of the world.

Purpose of the Olivet Discourse: The primary purpose of the Olivet Discourse is to answer the questions as to when and how the Messianic kingdom would be established.

Since Israel has rejected the king, it would be impossible to set up the Messianic kingdom at this time.

Note also the criteria for His return in Mt. 23:39: “You will not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (In other words, the Jews must ask Him to return.)

Date of the Discourse: 30 A.D.

Outline of the Discourse:

1. Historical Setting (Mt. 23:37-39; 24:1-2, Mk. 13:1-2, Lk. 21:5-6)
2. The 2 Questions* (Mt. 24:3-35)
3. The Rapture (Mt. 24:36-44)
4. Four “Watch” parables Mt. 24:45-25:46

* There has been some debate as to whether there are 2 or 3 questions being sked by the disciples.

A review of the Greek text shows that Jesus’ coming (*parousias*) and end (*sunteleias*) of the age are joined by one article and the conjunction and (*kai.*) According to Greek grammar, this indicates that they are two parts of one question. This shows that the disciples understood the correlation between His coming and the end of the age.

Outline of Chapter 24:

	1-2	The destruction of the temple foretold	
	3	The disciples’ two questions	
↑	4-14	Signs of the close of the age	
	4-8	“the beginning of sorrows” (see v.8)	
	9-14	more signs...then the end will come (v.9 = beginning of the first half of the tribulation)	
	15-22	The “abomination of desolation”	} 2 nd half of the tribulation
	23-28	“Look! Here is the Christ!”	
	29-31	The coming of the “son of man”	
↓	32-35	The parable of the fig tree	Satan’s final attempt to destroy the Jews
	36-51	No one knows that day or hour (the rapture)	

Flow of Jesus’ Responses:

- v.3 The disciples ask Jesus 2 questions (v. 3):
1. When will “these things” be (referring to the destruction of the temple)?
 2. What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?

Note that only Luke(21:20-24) records Jesus’ response to the first question regarding the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew and Mark only record the answer to the second question.

vv.4-13 In response to the disciples request for signs, he gives them many calamitous, earth-shaking events that might be interpreted as signs, but are not.

These are general characteristics of the church age; e.g. false Messiahs, local wars, famines, pestilence, etc.

v.14 After the gospel is preached to all nations, then the end will come.

vv. 15-22

In these verses, Jesus tells them of one particular, dreadful event, called “the abomination of desolation” coupled with a great tribulation. The disciples are to flee the city. But even this event will not be a sign of his return.

} 2nd half
of the
tribulation

vv.23-28

Jesus returns to his discussion of false messiahs. (v.5)

vv.29-35

This segment addresses Jesus’ 2nd coming. However, he does not give them signs but events that will coincide with his return.

vv.36-51*

Here Jesus tells of the suddenness of his return (rapture – for the church) and uses the historical example of Noah and the images of people working together.

His coming will be like:

- Noah’s flood
- a thief coming in the night
- a master who suddenly returns from a trip without notice.

*Note particularly the Greek contrastive construction “peri de” (beginning of verse 36) which indicates that Jesus is changing the subject. He will now discuss the rapture which occurs before the tribulation. So, He does not maintain a strict chronological sequence in this passage.

Observation and Interpretation:

1-2 The destruction of the temple foretold

These verses coupled with the Mt. 23:37-39 provide the historical setting for the Olivet discourse.

Jesus has just denounced (pronounced woes upon) the Pharisees. As they leave the temple area, the disciples come up to him to show him the buildings of the temple.

Historical note: Herod, in an effort to gain the support of the Jews, had financed the rebuilding/remodeling of the temple. The rebuilding project was not yet complete and would take another 34 years until it was finished. (64 A.D.)

What was Jesus' startling statement to the disciples about the "stones of the temple?"

The temple was destroyed and the stones overturned by the Roman army in 70 A.D., approximately 40 years from the time of Jesus prophecy.

This statement, coupled with Jesus' statement in 23:39 ("...you shall see me no more until...") must have stirred the interest of the disciples in signs related to events in the near and distant future.

3 The disciples' questions

Jesus was sitting on the Mt. of Olives, the place that the prophet Zechariah had foretold (Zech. 14:4) that the Messiah would stand when he came to establish his kingdom.

The disciples took the opportunity of privacy with Jesus to ask the questions that were on their minds.

What were their questions?

1st Question: _____

Note that "These things" refers to the destruction of the temple which He had just foretold in the previous verses.

So, incorporating the statements of Mark and Luke, the first question is: "When will the temple be destroyed and what sign will indicate that this is about to take place?"

Also note that Mark and Luke only request info regarding "these things" as follows:

- A. When will it occur?
- B. What will be the sign that it is about to occur?

Note also that only Luke records an answer to the first question. (See Lk. 21:20-24)

2nd Question (2 parts)

Part A. The sign:

The sign of His coming does not refer to the rapture since it is imminent and has no signs preceding it.

"His coming" is a reference to His 2nd coming which will be preceded by a sign.

Part B.

This part refers to the sign which would indicate the end of the “**world**” was at hand.

This word in the Greek is *aion* (SN 165) which refers to an “age” in contrast with *kosmos* “world.”

Note that rabbinic teachings addressed two ages, the current age in which they were then living and the age to come which was a reference to the Messianic kingdom.

As we proceed, note that Jesus answered the two questions but not in the order they were asked.

Matthew and Mark answer the second question.

But only Luke provides an answer for the sign of the destruction of the temple.

4-14 Signs of the close of the age

4-8 “the beginning of sorrows”

The disciples had asked Jesus for signs. But his first response was: “Don’t be deceived.” (Watch out for the deception.)

Why would he give them this as a first instruction? _____

Note that Jesus gives his disciples “signs” that will occur but these are not actually signs of the end times...but they are events which will occur. (see end of v.6) e.g. “You will see ... but the end is not yet.”

So, instead of immediately answering their questions, He provides some general characteristics of the church age, none of these however, indicating that the end of the current age had begun.

List the various signs that Jesus identified:

v.5 _____

Note that many false messiahs have come but none of these are an indicator that the end has begun.

v.6 _____

So, false Messiahs and wars and rumors of war will continue and can be expected, but these are not signs that the end of the current age has begun.

Note: The present, continual wars and fightings in Israel are not indicators that the close of the age has begun.

Jesus is giving examples of things that we will always have.

Does this sound like the kind of “age” in which we would want to live? ____

Jesus now answers the second part of the 2nd question regarding the sign that the end of the existing age has begun. What is that sign?

v.7 _____

The sign of the beginning of the end of the age is identified by all 3 gospel writers to be when nation rises against nation.

What occurs simultaneously with the wars between nations?

v.8 And...these are only the “beginning of sorrows (travail).”

What does he mean by this statement? _____

Sorrows: *odin* (SN 5604) grief, sorrow, usually in the plural and meaning pains of labor, distress, woes compared to the pain a woman experiences in childbirth

Note that “nation against nation” is a Hebrew idiom for a world war. (see Jewish writings of this period)

From Jewish sources we know that the rabbis clearly taught that a world-wide conflict would be the sign of the coming of the Messiah. Jesus actually corrected this teaching by indicating it would be the sign that the end of the age has begun. (not the coming of the Messiah)

So, has this sign occurred? If yes, when? _____

See Luke 21:12-19 (But before these things...)

Having provided an answer to the 2nd part of the second question, Jesus now returns to His own time and describes the personal experiences that His disciples will encounter. (9 items)

Identify 5 things the apostles will suffer. _____

Note that Jesus clearly identifies that these things (from Luke 21) will occur before the end of the age has begun. See Lk. 21:12

The experiences of the “these things” of the apostles as forecasted by Jesus are well-recorded in the book of Acts and other historical records.

Next, Jesus returns to answer the 1st question regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. This is recorded in Lk. 21:20-24.

What is the sign that the destruction of Jerusalem is imminent?

Now, to answer the first part of the 2nd question, the sign of His coming, Jesus addresses the tribulation. Mt. 24:9-14 concerns the first half of the tribulation.

Note the word “then,” which shows that He is now dealing with events after “nation rises up against nation.”

9-14 more signs...then the end will come (the beginning of the tribulation)

List the various signs that Jesus identified in this segment:

v.9-10 _____

v.11 _____

v.12 _____

v.13 _____

v.14 _____

Jesus has provided some of the events that will occur during the first half of the tribulation. He now turns to the 2nd half of the tribulation.

Mark’s account is found in Mk. 13:14-23 and is very similar to Matthew’s.

15-28 Events of the 2nd half of the tribulation

15-22 1st: The “abomination of desolation”

v.15 Note that this verse marks the beginning of the 2nd half of the tribulation.

Matthew’s account says several things about the 2nd half of the tribulation.

First: the abomination (See chart of mid-tribulation events)

There are two stages to the “abomination:”

1. The antichrist takes over the temple and declares himself to be God. II Thess. 2:3-10
2. An image of the antichrist is erected in the Holy of Holies Rev. 13:11-15; Dan. 12:11

Abomination:

Definitions from the Application Bible and a dictionary

- Rather than one specific object, event or person, it could be seen as any deliberate attempt to mock and deny the reality of God’s presence (Application Bible note, p. 1731)

- something that elicits great dislike or abhorrence.
(Miriam-Webster dictionary)

Following are some differing views about what the abomination is:

Some think that Daniel's prediction (Dan. 9:27) came true in 168 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the sacred temple altar.

However, Dan. 9:26 indicates that the Messiah must first be cut off.

And, Jesus was not referring to a past event when he spoke of the abomination that causes desolation. It was still something to come.

Some have seen the destruction of Jerusalem as it was surrounded by the Roman armies as "an abomination that causes desolation." Titus, in 70 A.D. placed an idol on the site of the burned temple after destroying Jerusalem.

This would certainly mesh with the description of people fleeing quickly given in vv.16-20.

And, the "abomination" could also be something yet to come.

Now, continuing with the events of the 2nd half of the tribulation:

2nd: The Signal for the Jews to flee Mt. 24:16-20

See also Rev. 12:13-17

Problems on the Jews flight out of the land:

- pregnancy/ new births
- rainy season – Oct. - Apr, heavy, flooding, washing out of highways
- the Sabbath (businesses closed, no public transportation, 2/3 of Israeli's without cars)

3rd: Great tribulation v.21

Satan will pull out all of the stops in trying to annihilate the Jews. (He is kicked out of heaven for good at the mid-tribulation point and descends to the earth in great wrath.)

4th: Population greatly reduced v.22 (estimates of the fatalities due to the 21 judgments (seal, trumpet, bowl) are 2/3 of the population of the earth.

23-28 "Look! Here is the Christ!"

Additional signs given by Jesus are people declaring that Christ has come. But these will not be the true fulfillment of his coming.

Note: False Christs, false prophets, great signs and wonders – All are designed to deceive the elect.

How does v. 27 answer this question of the false Christs? _____

In the previous verses up to v.28, Jesus has warned the disciples of difficult and disruptive events in the world and he has foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.

v.28 “Wherever the carcass is...”
Petra/Bozrah Isa. 34:1-8 “He has given them over to slaughter...”
63:1-6 “...the day of vengeance...”

29-31 The coming of the “son of man”

The answer to the first part of the 2nd question for the disciples is provided in this next segment.

v.29 What occurs in v.29 _____

These are common Old Testament imagery for any cataclysmic event. (Isa. 13:9-10; Ezk. 32:7-8; Joel 2:30-31)

However, this imagery also occurs in New Testament passages that are associated with Christ’s coming at the end of the age. (II Thess. 1:7; 2:1-8; II Pet. 3:10-12)

This also occurs in the parallel passage in Lk. 21:23-25. Here, Jerusalem is trampled upon by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled. It is only after this that Jesus says he will appear the 2nd time.

This will be characterized as a total blackout of the earth.

Note that, from verse 29, we know that this “darkening of the earth” will occur *immediately* after the great tribulation.

v.30 Then the sign of the son of man will appear in heaven...with power and great glory.

What is the sign? _____

Why will there be mourning? _____

Note the use of words immediately and then. This indicates that these signs coincide with Christ’s coming.

So...now Jesus has answered the 2 questions. See if you can provide the answers below:

1. What will be the sign of the destruction of the temple?

2. What will be the sign of your coming? _____
What will be the sign that the end of the age has begun?

However, He still has some more information regarding the last days that He would like to give them.

- v.31 What happens in this verse? _____
 Who does it include? _____
- 32-35 The parable of the fig tree
 What is the teaching of this parable? _____

- When the fig tree begins to blossom, it is a sign that summer is about to begin.
- In a similar way, when you see the things spoken by Jesus, know that His coming is near.
- Who is “this generation?” _____
- Note that “generation can be used in a number of ways...20, 40, 70 100 (see Gen. 15:13-16)
- In this passage, it likely refers to the generation seeing “these things” occur.
- So, what is it that signals the Lord’s soon return?
- The event of which he was talking was the abomination of desolation. (not the restoration of Israel as a nation) 24:15
- Therefore, His return will be exactly 1260 days from the event known as the “abomination of desolation.” See Dan. 9:27 (Daniel’s 70 weeks)
- 36-42 No one knows that day or hour (The rapture) see also Lk. 21:34-36
- Some believe that, since, by virtue of context Jesus has been speaking about the 2nd coming and this passage follows that discussion, then logically and chronologically, He would be speaking about the same thing.
- The “taking away “ of 40-41 is then interpreted to be the same as in v. 39 which is a taking away to the judgment of the “sheep and goats.”
- However, v.36 begins with the Greek περι δε (peri de) which is a Greek contrasting construction which introduces a new subject.
- Note also that the taking away in v. 39
αιρο airo to lift up (in the judgment of the flood)
 is different than the taking away in vv. 40-41
παραλαμβανω paralambano to receive,
to take unto, with (receive at the rapture – reward)
- What are the points that Matthew and Luke make regarding the rapture?

1. v.36 _____
2. vv.37-39 _____

3. vv.40-42 _____
4. Lk. 21:34-36 _____

Note that to watch means to be ready.

But readiness in this case (for the rapture) is to be saved.

Therefore, only those who receive/accept Christ the Messiah before the rapture can be ready.

How does Jesus characterize “that day and hour?” clue – Noah

vv. 40-41 Why does Jesus use the illustration of two people working together? _____

This tells me that, at this time, the choices we have made regarding Christ will have been made and there will be no opportunity to repent thereby escaping the time of tribulation.

Note that Christ’s coming will be swift and sudden.

43-44 Parable of the master of the house and the thief

What 2 words describe the lesson of this segment? be _____ and _____.(v.43, 44)

45-51 The faithful and wise servant

What 2 servants are identified in this paragraph? _____ and _____

Note that there are two slaves (*doulos*) in this paragraph. (Each are preceded by the article “ho” which provides “the” before each servant.)

v.45 Who then is a faithful and wise slave...”...”

v. 48 could be translated: “But if the wicked slave says in his heart...”

Literally the arrangement of the Greek words in v. 48 provides the following:

“If but says the wicked slave

What rewards/punishments do they receive for their service?

What is the teaching of this parable? _____

Difficulties:

v.29 “sun being darkened, moon failing to give its light” – see discussion under v.29 earlier in this chapter.

vv.33-34 “When you see all these things” and “this generation shall not pass away...” –

There are several interpretations of “this generation”:

1. Generation refers to those alive at the time that Christ is speaking.
2. a prediction with multiple fulfillments so that Jesus’ disciples will be those who saw the destruction of the temple but also those at the end of the age who see the events of the “abomination of desolation.”
3. Since generation can refer to a quality of people, some take it to mean all believers throughout the present evil age.
4. Some think that generation refers to race and therefore, in this case, to the Jews.
5. the generation that sees all these things, i.e. the generation that is alive at the beginning of the great tribulation - contemporaries

The fig tree has just put out its leaves indicating the beginning of summer. So also, “this generation” is the generation that sees “all these things” which are described in vv. 4-25.

vv.36-42 the coming of the son of man (rapture)

Note *περι δε* peri de - see discussion under this section

Applications:

Some important lessons for us from this chapter:

1. We need to be watchful that no one deceives us. v.4, 26
2. Don’t be troubled by the events occurring around you. v.6
3. We need to endure to the end. v.13
4. The last sign that precedes the end of the age is that the gospel will be preached to every nation v. 14 (see Rev. 14:6-7)

Our assignment is this very task.

5. We (all persons on the earth) need to be ready which means to be saved in order to qualify to be raptured and not be on the earth during the horrific, cataclysmic events of the great tribulation.

6. The sign of the coming of “the son of man” is the abomination of desolation. (24:15)

7. _____

8. _____

Matthew 25

Background:

In chapter 23, we completed our study of the narrative section of Jesus' final public ministries, chapters 19-23.

In this chapter, Jesus:

- warned the multitudes and his disciples about the religious leaders,
- pronounced 8 woes against the religious leaders,
- promised to send prophets, wise men and scribes, and
- sorrowed over Jerusalem.

In chapter 24, we came to Jesus' Olivet discourse, so-called because it was given on the Mount of Olives. This discourse on the end times and Jesus' second coming includes chapters 24 and 25. This is the 5th and final discourse of Jesus that is recorded in the book of Matthew.

Chapter 24:

In v.3, the disciples ask Jesus 2 questions:

1. When will these things be (referring to the destruction of the temple)?
2. What will be the sign of your coming, and
What will be the sign of the end of the age?

In Jesus' response to the disciples, he answers the 2nd part of the second question first.

vv.4-13 In response to the disciples request for signs, he gives them many calamitous, earth-shaking events that might be interpreted as signs, but are not.

v.14 After the gospel is preached to all nations, then the end will come.

vv. 15-22 In these verses, Jesus tells them of one particular, dreadful event, called "the abomination of desolation" coupled with a great tribulation. The disciples are to flee the city. But even this event will not be a sign of his return.

vv.23-28 Jesus returns to his discussion of false messiahs. (v.5)

vv.29-35 This segment addresses Jesus' 2nd coming. However, he does not give them signs but events that will coincide with his return.

vv.36-51 Here Jesus tells of the suddenness of his return (rapture) and uses the historical example of Noah and the images of people working together.

His coming will be like:

- the time of Noah's flood
- a thief coming in the night
- a master who suddenly returns from a trip without notice.

No one knows the day or hour of his coming.
Therefore, be watchful and prepared, be ready.

In chapter 25, Jesus continues his teaching on the Mount of Olives and gives the disciples two more parables and a discussion of the final judgment. He repeats the message to be watchful and ready.

Outline of Chapter 25:

- 1-13 Parable of the 10 virgins – Everyone is responsible for their own spiritual condition.
- 14-30 Parable of the talents – We are responsible to use our gifts and abilities well in serving our king.
- 31-46 The final judgment (Great White Throne, also “sheep and goats” and “judgment of the nations”)
This discourse stresses the importance of serving those in need.

It is useful at this point to note that these three discourses are parallel accounts that have some commonality.

1. In each case, the key authority figure (the bridegroom, the lord of the servants and the son of man) returns suddenly and unexpectedly.
2. In each discourse, the return of the key authority results in unchangeable divisions between two groups of people - the wise and foolish virgins, the three servants (2 profitable, the other judged) and the sheep and the goats.
3. In each case, those who are lost or judged are completely surprised at their rejection (why won't the bridegroom let us into the banquet, the lazy servant who buried the talent expects to be praised and the goats don't grasp why the Lord's disapproval has been pronounced against them.)

This particular feature of these teachings represents people who are participants in the visible church. (Note that all 10 of the virgins had been invited to the feast and, in varying degrees of preparation,

were waiting for the bridegroom's coming. Each of the 10 anticipated their participation in the great banquet to be given.)

The people of these parables (the lost and judged) think they are prepared (in our culture, saved) ready for the coming one (on their way to heaven).

But they are not. Their actual destiny is separation (the 5 virgins), weeping and gnashing of teeth (wicked and lazy servant) and everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, everlasting punishment (goats).

This powerfully demonstrates the appropriateness of Jesus' strong and repeated exhortations to be watchful and ready.

Observation and Interpretation:

1-13 Parable of the 10 virgins

Background Information:

The background for this parable is the Jewish wedding system.

On the evening of the marriage, the bridegroom would go to the home of his bride to bring her to his home.

As he returned to his home, amidst a procession of rejoicing, he would be met by virgins who would escort him and his bride to the marriage ceremony. Their responsibility was to light the lamps for the marriage ceremony.

The prophetic sequence of events is that the rapture will have already occurred approximately 8 years earlier prior to Jesus' 2nd coming.

Jesus will bring His bride (in fine linen – Rev. 19:7-8) with Him at His second coming which will be followed by the marriage ceremony and the marriage feast. (The marriage feast is a common symbol of the Messianic kingdom, also referred to as the Millennium.)

Note that the virgins, those who have oil, are neither the bride (church) nor Israel.

Since oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the virgins are therefore, those who have been saved during the time of the tribulation on the earth.

Note also that the virgins have two vessels:

1. a pail (a cylindrical vessel with handles), and
2. a lamp

Observations:

What is the main focus of this parable? The _____ between the wise and foolish virgins.

It is also of interest to note the ways in which the 10 virgins are alike.

1. All had been invited to the _____.
2. All had accepted the invitation to the banquet.
3. All were together waiting for the _____.
In our case...who is this? _____
4. All must have had some affection for the bridegroom as they had prepared and were anticipating joining in the celebration.
5. All referred to the bridegroom as their Lord.
6. All of them fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom.

This parable is about being _____.

Note that the difference between the 10 virgins was not revealed until the bridegroom came. Up until that point, each of them would have been perceived alike (although the difference was already present).

What opportunity did the 5 foolish virgins have to get oil after the bridegroom came? _____

How can we know that we are prepared for the coming of our Lord?

1. By their _____ you shall know them. Mt. 7:16
2. If we keep his _____, we show that we love Him and God, and Jesus will make Himself known to us. Jn. 14:21
3. By this we know that we know him _____
_____. I Jn. 2:3
4. By this we know that we are in him...we _____ just as he
5. The witness of the _____ with our spirit. Rom 8:16;
Gal. 4:6-7

Some important lessons from this parable:

1. Jesus' coming with respect to our expectations may be delayed. But it may also be sooner than we think.
2. The Lord will come without warning.
3. Preparations are not transferable. You can't get by on someone else's faith.
4. Some opportunities that we have, once lost, cannot be regained.

When Jesus comes for his bride, those who are ready will be taken to be with him. Those who are not ready at his 2nd coming will be shut out of the kingdom with no further opportunity to repent.

5. This parable reinforces Jesus' previous teachings on being ready and watchful.

14-30 Parable of the talents

Cultural note:

In this society, a talent was a measure of weight. It could be in gold, silver or copper. Jesus doesn't specify the particular kind of coin in this story. We do know, however, that it was a large sum of money. By weight, a talent was 75 pounds.

One commentator says that a talent of silver was worth \$1200. And a denarius, a day's wage was valued at \$.20. Therefore, a silver talent would be the equivalent of 6000 days' wages.

Others believe that the value would have been in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

What we do know is that a talent was a large sum of money, much more than a servant could make in a few years of faithful service.

That having been said, we acknowledge that the amount is not important except to say that it was of extremely high value.

Money is only one of many things that God entrusts to us. J. Ryle says that anything that we have by which we may glorify God is a talent. This would include our knowledge, our health, our gifts and abilities, our time, our intellectual abilities.

Can you think of some other things that, with the above definition, we could use to glorify God? _____

v.14 "The kingdom of heaven is like..." – this is a formula for a simile that Jesus often uses when explaining some aspect of the kingdom of God. (See Mt. chapter 13.)

v.15 What was the criteria that the man used in deciding who should get how much? _____

vv.16-18 What did each of the servants do with the money given them?

1st servant _____

2nd servant _____

3rd servant _____

v.19 How long was the lord of the servants gone? _____

Read vv. 20-23 How do you perceive the character of the lord as he talks with the first 2 servants? _____

Would you say that they were eager to see their lord and show him what they had accomplished? _____

vv. 24-25 How does the 3rd servant characterize his lord?

Is his “accusation” justified? _____

Note the generosity of the lord in giving to each servant large sums of money but also in keeping with their abilities. He knew his servants and did not put on them more than they could handle...indicates he was a wise and fair man.

My personal opinion is that the 3rd servant did not know or did not like his lord. He perceived him as a hard man, one to be feared. I don't think the first 2 servants saw their lord with the same eyes.

What does the lord do with the money originally given to the 3rd servant? v.28 _____

Does this give an indication of the generosity of the lord? _____

Some lessons from this parable:

1. There will be a day in the future when all people will be judged and give a “reckoning” for their life on earth. In the case of each servant, they were required to give a reckoning for their service during their lord's absence.
2. In the first parable, the readiness of the 5 virgins corresponds with their new birth. In this parable, the servants will be rewarded according to their works. (This is not initial salvation which is always by grace through faith.) This is about faithful service in the kingdom.
3. All excuses for unfaithful service will fail before the Lord.
4. All servants “owe it to their Lord” to improve upon what He has given them.

Note the punishment given to the wicked and lazy, unprofitable servant - cast into outer darkness where he will experience wailing and gnashing of teeth.

31-46 the final judgment

Note that this is the last recorded teaching of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew. It is not a parable as are the first two segments. It is a description of the final judgment that we discussed briefly in the previous parable.

Note also the progression of judgments in these three segments:
- the 5 foolish virgins – shut out

- the wicked, lazy servant – cast into outer darkness with the wailing and gnashing of teeth
- everlasting punishment

v.31 What does this verse describe? _____

Where will Jesus be? _____

(see Joel 3:1-3

v.32 Who will be brought before him? _____

v.33 Who are the sheep and the goats? _____

What will be the basis of Jesus' judgment? _____

v.34-36 What will he say to the sheep? _____

vv.37-40 What will Jesus and the sheep say to each other? _____

Note how the sheep helped Jesus:

- stranger
- naked
- hungry
- thirsty
- sick
- in prison

v.40 Who are "my brethren?" _____

vv.41-45 What will Jesus and the goats say to one another? _____

v.46 What will be their punishment for the things they did not do?

This last "test" for knowing Christ is the assessment of how we loved and cared for God's people.

This shows us that the evidences of our new birth are not the great things we would consider such as giving millions to the cause of Christ or saving the multitudes such as have been seen in the ministry of Billy Graham.

The true test of our conversion is seen in the little things....many of which the righteous don't even remember doing, things like giving someone a cup of water or a coat to wear or visiting the sick in a hospital.

The reality of hell:

We have seen the progression of judgments in these three segments:

- the 5 foolish virgins – shut out
- the wicked, lazy servant – cast into outer darkness with the wailing and gnashing of teeth
- everlasting punishment for the goats

We may not like what we see here but the reality is that these words were spoken by Jesus and we know that he can only speak that which is true.

The description:

1. Hell is separation from God
Jesus says this when he tells the cursed goats to depart from him.
There will be no goats in the kingdom of God.
2. Hell is bad company.
In v.41, Jesus tells us that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. These angels are the wicked angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and are now known as demons. One day they will be in hell. Here Jesus pictures a place where fallen angels and those who have denied Jesus are dwelling together, i.e. keeping company with demons.
3. Hell is suffering.
The imagery of these passages...everlasting fire, weeping and gnashing of teeth, convey a horror beyond what literal language can convey. Demons are spirits and therefore, not subject to fire in the literal sense. But, the reality of the suffering in hell will be immeasurably worse than we can imagine.
4. Hell is darkness. v.30
Without light, those in hell will not be able to see.
John Ryle, in his "Expository Notes on the Gospels" wrote about hell:

"Who shall describe the misery of eternal punishment? It is something utterly indescribable and inconceivable. The eternal pain of body; the eternal sting of an accusing conscience; the eternal society of none but remembrance of opportunities neglected and Christ despised; the eternal prospect of a weary, hopeless future- all this misery indeed: it is enough to make our ears tingle and our blood run cold."

Why does Jesus, in one of his final parting teachings tell us these things?
_____ see II Pet. 1:10

Why is this instruction necessary? _____

Application:

From each of the three segments we have just studied, identify 2 applications for our own personal lives.

1. Parable of the 10 virgins
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

2. Parable of the 3 servants
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

3. The Final Judgment
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

We are:

1. to be prepared and ready
2. to be watchful
3. to labor and serve

Matthew 26

Background:

In chapters 24 and 25, we examined Jesus' Olivet discourse, identified as such because it was given on the Mount of Olives. This discourse, given in response to inquiries by the disciples, addressed the destruction of Jerusalem, the signs of Jesus' coming and the end of the age. This is the 5th and final discourse of Jesus that is recorded in the book of Matthew.

Flow of chapters 24-25:

Chapter 24:

In v.3, the disciples ask Jesus 2 questions:

1. When will these things be (referring to the destruction of the temple)?
2. Two parts to this question:
 - A. What will be the sign of your coming?
 - B. What will be the sign of the end of the age?

Note that the disciples make the connection between Jesus' 2nd coming and the end of the age. The Jews thought in terms of two ages...the present age which will end at Messiah's coming and the Millennial age in which He would set up and rule over His earthly kingdom.

In Jesus' response to the disciples, he answers the 2nd question first.

vv.4-13 Jesus describes many calamitous, earth-shaking events that might be interpreted as signs, but are not.

v.14 After the gospel is preached to all nations, then the end will come.

vv. 15-22 Jesus tells them of one particular, dreadful event, called "the abomination of desolation" coupled with a great tribulation. But even this event will not be a sign of his return.

vv.23-28 Jesus returns to his discussion of false messiahs. (v.5)

vv.29-35 Regarding his coming, Jesus does not give them signs but events that will coincide with his return.

vv.36-51 The suddenness of his return:

- as in the time of Noah's flood
- a thief coming in the night
- a master who suddenly returns from a trip without notice.

Based upon a comparison of the descriptions of His 2nd coming, this event is determined to be the rapture in which Jesus comes for His bride and returns to heaven.

The rapture will occur shortly before the beginning of the tribulation while His 2nd coming signals the end of the 7 years of tribulation.

No one knows the day or hour of his coming.

Therefore, be watchful and prepared, be ready.

Chapter 25: Jesus continues his teaching on the Mount of Olives and gives the disciples two more parables and a discussion of the final judgment. He repeats the message to be watchful and ready.

The final narrative in the gospel of Matthew:

“The Death and Resurrection of the King” (Chapters 26-28)

Since the beginning of the gospel of Matthew, the story of Christ’s life has been moving towards his death, resurrection and the completion of his ministry on earth. Matthew takes us through the 3+ years of Jesus public ministry with an alternating series of narratives (6) and discourses (5).

The first narrative started out slowly with the birth and infancy narratives presenting the king. Matthew diligently records a number of OT prophecies that are fulfilled in Jesus’ birth.

The first year of public ministry saw Jesus rising from obscurity and growing in popularity. He came preaching the gospel of the kingdom and commanding the people to repent and believe.

What’s not to like? Here was an amazing man who walked the talk, had compassion on the downcast, gave wonderful, wise public teachings, healed people of their diseases, cast demons out of those who were in bondage and, on occasions, miraculously fed large crowds of people.

Entering his second year, his popularity peaked and then began to decline largely due to the growing opposition of the religious leaders. Still, people from everywhere were flocking to see Jesus. Unfortunately, most were seeking him because of what he could do for them and not because they were particularly interested in him or in being his disciple.

During his third year, his popularity was decreasing largely due to the opposition of the religious leaders and some difficult sayings of his, e.g. to be first, you must be last, to live you must die, take up your cross (this brought up the image of crucifixion) and follow me, eat my flesh, drink my blood.

Now, Jesus has completed his public ministry of teaching and healing. He must go to the cross and obtain the salvation of all who will believe. He will be the sin-bearer, the sacrificial lamb that takes away the sins of the world.

Prior to his deliberate moving towards Jerusalem, he began to tell his disciples that he must die and be resurrected. He told them this on four occasions which would grow increasing in details:

1. Mt. 16:21 his death and resurrection
2. Mt. 17:22 his betrayal
3. Mt. 20:18-19 He will be handed over to the Gentiles who will mock him, flog him and then crucify him.
4. Mt. 26:2 crucifixion

Outline of Chapter 26:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-5 | The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus. |
| 6-13 | Jesus is anointed for his burial. |
| 14-16 | Judas contracts with the chief priests to betray Jesus. |
| 17-19 | Preparation for the Last Supper |
| 20-30 | The Last Supper |
| 31-35 | Jesus foretells the disciples' stumbling. |
| 36-46 | Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane. |
| 47-56 | Jesus is betrayed and arrested. |
| 57-68 | Caiaphas questions Jesus. |
| 69-75 | Peter denies Jesus. |

Observation and Interpretation

1-5 The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus.

At this time, the Roman government had taken over the process of assigning religious and political leaders. Many of them didn't last very long. But Caiaphas was in office for 18 years. This indicates that he must have been somewhat astute at cooperating with the Romans.

The chief priests and scribes were concerned that, due to his popularity with the people and the many miraculous signs which he performed, the people would believe in him. Then the Romans would come and take away their nation. It was Caiaphas who suggested that one person (Jesus) should die to save the nation. (Jn. 11:49-50)

Other reasons they wanted to be "rid" of Jesus:

1. He was not the Messianic person they had expected.
2. He didn't uphold the traditions of the Pharisees or Sadducees.

The hatred that the religious leaders had towards Jesus gave rise to a conspiracy which was led by Caiaphas, the high priest. The plan of the conspirators was to arrest Jesus in a private place away from the crowds and kill Him before the people knew what was happening.

All that was needed at this point was an opportunity to carry out their plan. Judas provided this opportunity. (see Mt. 26:14-16)

The amount to be paid was 30 pieces of silver, the legal price of a dead slave. Little did they know that they were fulfilling the OT prophecy recorded in Zech. 11:12.

This is the first violation of Sanhedrin law (see table below - There can be no arrest by ecclesiastical authorities due to a bribe.)

Note that Jesus said that the Passover was in two days and that he would be delivered up to be crucified. The council wanted to wait until after the Passover which would have been nine days, delaying for 7 days of feasting.

What does this say about the plans of man and the timing of God?

6-13 Jesus is anointed for his burial

Jn. 12:1-3 identifies the woman as Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. (This is not Mary Magdala of whom seven demons had been cast out.)

John's account of this narrative also indicates that Judas thought the fragrant oil could have been sold for 300 denarii, about a year's wage for a servant.

What was the purpose identified by Jesus for this anointing?

Did Mary understand what she was doing? _____

Read Lk. 10:38-39; Jn. 11:32

Where is Mary in these passages? _____

These passages, indicating a humble and devoted love for Jesus, would suggest to me that Mary, because of her selfless, loving acts towards Jesus, may well have understood what the disciples had not yet grasped - that Jesus must be crucified. Jesus said that she did it to prepare him for his burial.

Note also that in providing a memorial for Jesus, Mary provided a memorial for herself. "What she has done will also be told as a memorial to her." Mt. 26:13

So, Matthew has just given us narrative regarding someone who will always be remembered in a good way.

He now contrasts Mary's selfless act with that of Judas, who betrayed Jesus to satisfy his greedy desire for money. He too, would be remembered, but only in hushed tones of incredulity that acknowledged the enormity of his betrayal and the finality and horror of his eternal destiny. He now shares in the place that was prepared for the devil and his angels.

14-16 Judas contracts with the chief priests to betray Jesus

Why did Judas agree to betray Jesus?

Recall that Judas had been with Jesus for 3 years. He had seen the miracles, heard the teachings, witnessed the greatest, most wise and perfect life ever to be lived on the earth.

And yet, he could still betray this man.
Why would he do this? _____

One suggested answer is that Judas, like the other disciples, still expected Jesus to fulfill the Jewish Messiah expectations of driving out the hated Romans and setting up his own kingdom. As one of Jesus' close associates, he may have expected an important position in the new kingdom with the lucrative gains it could provide.

When he saw the anointing of oil for burial, he may have realized that Jesus was not going to set up an earthly kingdom as he had expected. He then chose an alternate plan that would at least provide a temporary reward and perhaps gain favor with the Jewish leaders.

17-19 Preparation for the Last Supper

v.18 Matthew refers to "a certain man." Mark 14:13 and Luke 22:10 tell us that the man would be carrying a pitcher of water.

Cultural note: In the Jewish culture, it was the responsibility of the woman to carry water. If a man was seen carrying a pitcher of water, it was likely that he worked in a business (inn) which catered to travelers. Since most of the travelers were men, a woman could not take water into an inn or room which was predominantly male. A man had to do it. The man with the pitcher of water would have been heading back to the inn which also would have large rooms to accommodate visiting travelers.

v.19 The disciples followed Jesus' instructions and the room was prepared.

A storm was brewing and Jesus needed a quiet place to have one last meal with his disciples.

This short segment indicates that Jesus is still in control. He had already made arrangements for the meal.

20-30 The Last Supper

Note that:

- John is the only one of the gospel writers to include Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet at this meal. Jn. 13:1-20
- Luke is the only one to include the account of the strife among the disciples over who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Lk. 22:24-30

What would Luke's account be telling us about the disciples?

The fact that they are arguing over who would get the greater positions in the kingdom after Jesus has told them that he will die indicates that they still didn't grasp the reality of his imminent death.

Two things occur in Matthew's account of the last meal together:

1. v.20-25 Jesus announces a betrayer.

Note that "each one" of them asked if he was to be the betrayer (including Judas).

Why would Judas ask this question? _____

v.24 Jesus pronounces a woe on the betrayer.

Where is the betrayer today? _____

2. vv. 26-29 Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper.

We use several names for this event:

"The Lord's supper" – commemorating the final Passover meal that Jesus ate with his disciples.

"The Eucharist" (thanksgiving) – in which we give thanks to God for the sacrifice and victory of Jesus.

"Communion" – It is a fellowship among the believers.

"This is my body; this is my blood."

There are four main interpretations of these words:

1. Figurative: The words are designed to stir up a remembrance of Christ. The sacrament is a memorial. ("Do this in remembrance of me.")
2. Spiritual: A spiritual presence – Jesus is truly present in the communion service, but it is a spiritual presence.
3. Literal: Transubstantiation – the substance of the bread and wine are literally changed into the substance of Jesus' body and blood.
4. Consubstantiation – the unchanged substance of the bread and wine are united with Christ' body.

Clues to resolving the question of interpretation:

1. the response of the disciples – The Jews were taught that it was sinful to eat flesh with the blood in it. If they had taken Jesus' words literally, they would have been surprised and shocked by his words. This

would indicate that the disciples interpreted his words as figurative.

2. Our own senses, when taking communion, indicate that the wafer remains the wafer and the wine or grape juice remains the wine or grape juice.
3. Jesus had a human nature. And it is the nature of our human bodies to be in one place and form at a time. (Our natural bodies cannot take two forms simultaneously.)
4. Jesus often used figures of speech. He was the true vine, beware the leaven of the Pharisees, “and on this rock will I build my church,” the churches of Revelation are lamp stands, etc.

Therefore, it should not surprise us that Jesus would use a figure of speech for this important memorial.

What are some of the important teachings we can identify from the Lord’s Supper?

1. The meaning of the Passover was that the blood was given for salvation. For us, we see his death on the cross for us.
2. In v.28, he uses the word “covenant.” This most likely is a reference to Moses in Ex. 24:8 where he says; “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.
3. The “remission” or forgiveness of sins
4. The promise of a future with Christ in God’s kingdom.
5. _____

31-35 Jesus foretells the disciples’ stumbling

This short narrative is included in all four of the gospels.

Note:

1. Jesus says that all of the disciples will fall away, not just Peter. Peter gets the more attention because he is more vocal and vehement in his protestations. But note Mt. 26:35 and Mk. 14:31...all of the disciples said the same thing that Peter had said.
2. Only Mark 14:30 says the cock will crow twice.
3. All 4 gospel writers say Peter will deny Jesus 3 times.
4. This event was prophesied in Zech. 13:7 and Jesus was careful to show that this event was a fulfillment of Scripture.

There is some indication in the text that Peter thought he was better or more devoted to Jesus than the others: “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.”

The powerful lessons of this brief segment are:

1. We, as weak and mortal men, do not know our own hearts.
2. We need to be careful not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.
3. We need to guard against disputing with Jesus when he says something. He is the truth, perfect in wisdom and he has never been deceived about anything. When we read and understand his words, we can hang our hats on the truthfulness of his understanding and teaching.

36-46 Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane

C.H. Spurgeon wrote that in this passage, we come to the Holy of Holies. No man can rightly expound such a passage as this; it is a subject for prayerful, heart-broken meditation, more than for human language.

Another has said that we must approach a passage like this on our knees.

The magnitude of what Jesus is about to suffer should move us to a place of awe and wonder at the gracious mercy of God to require His son to endure what shortly lies ahead.

What can we learn from this passage?

1. In these 11 verses, we see the clearest portrait of Jesus' humanity.

We have seen him as a baby nursed by his mother and as a young boy at the temple delighting in God's Word and house. In his traveling ministries, we saw him hungry, thirsty, tired, weeping and interrupted by crowds as he attempted to have a time of communion with his Father.

But here we see him most vulnerable.

There has been no greater sorrowing than we see here in the garden. Jesus knew full well the path he was on and here, he travels the path alone as his close associates fall asleep in the waiting.

Three times he goes to them. His comment: "Could you not wait with me one hour" seems to indicate that he had been in prayer for at least an hour each time. So this was not a "once and done prayer."

Note that "cup" is a biblical image for wrath.

2. In this narrative, we see the importance of deep, prolonged prayer, especially in times of great trial or sorrow.
3. We see here Jesus' persistence in prayer.

We can see a progression in Jesus' prayers:

First, he asks God if the cup (of wrath) can be avoided.

Second, he recognizes that the cup cannot be avoided, so He prays for God's will to be done.

Thirdly, from Lk. 22:43-44, he prayed more earnestly with sweat falling as great drops of blood. (Note that Luke only records two of Jesus' times of prayer in the garden.)

4. Jesus prayed with the expectation that the Father would answer him, and He did. So also, ought we.

5. In times of deep sorrow, persevering prayer receives its answer and supply.

47-56 Jesus is betrayed and arrested

Some issues arrest our attention in this section:

1. Why was Judas needed to identify Jesus in the garden?
Jesus was not in hiding. He taught openly in the temple area and most people would have known who he was by sight.

The leaders faced several problems in trying to arrest (and kill) Jesus:

- A. The timing to do it before the Passover began was short.
They knew that the crowds considered Jesus a prophet and might riot if Jesus were seized.
- B. They also knew of the miracles he had performed, that they were supernatural. What if Jesus should use his supernatural powers to resist arrest?

One author suggests that Judas gave the leaders information that led them to think, that, in spite of the difficulties, this was the opportune time to seize him. They must move quickly. A delay at this point will result in a significant delay (~ 1 week) due to the Jewish Passover celebration.

- C. Another question regarding Judas that often perplexes the reader: Why did the Jews need Judas?

There are several answers:

- (1) The Jews were attempting to try, convict and kill Jesus apart from the knowledge of the crowd. They needed someone who could tell them Jesus' daily habits so they could identify an optimum time and place to seize him without the crowds knowing what they were doing.

Judas knew exactly the place...for often he had been with Jesus when He took His disciples to the garden for some rest and quiet, a place apart from the crowds.

(2) According to Roman law, no one could be brought to trial without an initial formal indictment. Judas would be their man to make the initial accusation.

(3) Once they went to trial, they would need him to act as the prosecuting witness.

However, before the trial could begin, Judas had departed.

2. Peter's attack on Malchus in which he cut off his ear.

It would seem obvious that Peter wasn't trying to cut off his ear. He was trying to cut off his head. Likely Malchus ducked or Peter, who wasn't a skilled swordsman, just plain missed.

But, something else may have been going on here. After Jesus' statements at the last supper that all would flee, it is likely that Peter was trying to demonstrate that he was "with Jesus all the way." There was certainly no military advantage in what Peter did.

Note: A second violation of Sanhedrin law occurred at the arrest: "Judges and Sanhedrin members are not to participate in the arrest."

There was also a third violation of Sanhedrin law in that the law specified that: There are to be no criminal proceedings after sunset. Mishna, Sanhedrin IV, 1 (must be tried by day, but suspended at night)

The trials of Jesus are evaluated by piecing together the information provided by each of the gospel writers.

In summary, there were four main events:

1. the arrest
2. the Jewish trial – religious (3 parts)
3. the Roman trial – civil (3 parts)
4. the execution

A question: Why did the Jews go through the legal process in an attempt to eliminate Jesus?

An answer: They did not have authority from the Roman government to execute a person accused of a capital offense. Therefore, they had to show sufficient cause within the judicial system such that the Romans who had that authority, would execute the accused.

Additionally, it would be an advantage to their relationship with the people if they did not “muddy their hands” in the death of Jesus. (Get someone else to do the dirty work.)

There were 6 illegal trials of Jesus.

First trial before Annas:

Note: Annas was still the high priest to the Jews even though the Romans had deposed him. (The Jews believed that an appointment to the high priesthood was for life.)

The first trial before Annas occurred at night (Jewish). Jn. 18:12, 19 This was a preliminary hearing in which the high priest asked Jesus questions about his disciples and his doctrine.

The purpose of this trial: to question Jesus to determine if there were legal grounds for a formal charge against him.

Jesus frustrated the high priest by not answering his questions.

This 1st trial ended with Annas sending Jesus to Caiaphas.

The fourth and fifth violations of Sanhedrin law occurred here:

#4: No trials may be conducted before the morning sacrifice.

#5 Secret trials are forbidden. All trials must be public.

57-68 Caiaphas questions Jesus before the Sanhedrin

The 2nd trial:

Matthew and Mark record most of the details of the 2nd trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (informal Jewish)

This was the significant trial in that Jesus was accused of blasphemy and the attendees determined that he should be put to death.

The 3rd trial:

The 3rd phase of the Jewish trial (recorded in Mt. 27:1) was a formal hearing before the Sanhedrin at sunrise. (This was an attempt to make the trial process appear to be legal since they had just spent the night “trying” Jesus in Caiaphas’ home.)

There were many illegal actions taken against Jesus. The following chart shows the 22 violations of Sanhedrin law that occurred during this illegal process of 3 religious and three civil trials.

As can be seen from the scripture references in this table, the majority of the violations occurred in the 2nd illegal religious trial in the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. (see Mt. 26:57-68)

**The Illegalities of the 6 Trials of Jesus
(According to Sanhedrin Law)**

#	Illegality	Scripture
1	There can be no arrest by ecclesiastical authorities due to a bribe.	Judas Mt. 26:14-16
2	Judges and Sanhedrin members are not to participate in the arrest.	Chief priests, scribes and elders present; Mt. 26:3-5
3	There are to be no criminal proceedings after sunset. Mishna, Sanhedrin IV, 1 (must be tried by day, but suspended at night)	Jn. 18:3 lanterns and torches
4	No trials may be conducted before the morning sacrifice.	Jn. 18:12-14, 19-23
5	Secret trials are forbidden. All trials must be public.	Jn. 18:12-14, 19-23
6	Sanhedrin trials are to be conducted in the Hall of Judgment.	Lk. 22:54 (home of the high priest)
7	The appropriate procedure for the trial is: The defense must go first, and then the accusation.	Mk. 14:55-56 (defense first)
8	All judges can argue in favor of acquittal but all judges cannot argue for guilt.	Mk. 14:55-56
9	There must be 2 -3 witnesses and their testimonies must be in agreement. Deut. 19:15	Mk. 14:59
10	The accused cannot testify against himself.	Mt. 26:62
11	The high priest is forbidden to tear his garments. Lev. 21:10	Mt. 26:65-68
12	Judges cannot originate charges against a defendant.	Mt. 26:65-68
13	If charged with blasphemy, the guilt of the defendant can only be established if he pronounced the actual name of God.	Mt. 26:65-68
14	A person cannot be condemned on the basis of his own words.	Mt. 26:65-68
15	No verdict is to be pronounced at night.	Mt. 26:65-68
16	In death cases, the trial and the verdict must be separated by at least 24 hours. Mishna Sanhedrin IV,1	Mt. 26:65-68
17	Voting for the death penalty was to be done by individual count beginning with the youngest.	Mt. 26:65-68
18	A unanimous judgment for guilt shows innocence. (It is impossible for 23 or 71 to agree without collusion.)	Mt. 26:65-68
19	A sentence can only be pronounced 3 days after a verdict of guilty has been rendered.	Mt. 26:65-68
20	A person cannot be scourged or beaten prior to being condemned to death.	Mt. 26:65-68
21	Judges are to be kind and humane.	Mt. 26:65-68
22	Trials are forbidden on the eve of the Sabbath or on a feast day. Mishna, Sanhedrin IV.1	Jn. 18: 28-32

Note that Matthew records (vv. 59-60) that the religious leaders were looking for false testimony against Jesus so they could put him to death. These “mock” trials were not pursuing justice but were pursuing the religious leaders wicked plans to dispose of Jesus.

The Jewish Mishnah (Jewish Verbal Traditional Teachings) identifies 3 kinds of testimonies:

1. a vain testimony
2. a standing testimony – had relevance and was permitted to stand until it was either confirmed or disapproved.
3. adequate testimony

Most of the testimony collected during this late hour was “vain” testimony. (v.60 “many false witnesses came forth”)

The last two false witnesses referred back to Jesus’ comment (Jn. 2:19) that he will destroy the temple made with hands and rebuild it in 3 days.

Even this testimony was overthrown because the testimonies did not agree.

At this point, v.62ff, the high priest intervened in the trial charging Jesus to say whether or not he was the Christ, the son of God. (This was illegal since the high priest was forbidden to intervene in a capital trial and could only cast his vote after the other court members had cast theirs.)

Jesus’ answer that, yes, he was the Messiah, was all the high priest needed to declare that Jesus had blasphemed and was worthy of death.

At this point, if the legal system had proceeded according to the due process of law, the Sanhedrin should have begun to diligently inquire as to whether or not the claim was true or false. This didn’t happen.

It’s important to note that, although the religious leaders are proceeding as in a panic to quickly remove Jesus, everything is going according to God’s plan, including the exact timing of Jesus’ crucifixion and death. Man’s plans and purposes can never thwart the plans and purposes of God.

69-75 Peter denies Jesus

Peter’s thrice denial is a well-known narrative of the gospel accounts. All four of the gospel writers provide significant details of this event with some variations in the data recorded.

There is no question that Peter’s denial of his Lord was a great sin and a terrible failure on his part. And no one had to tell him of the magnitude of what he had done.

The text speaks for him:

Mark: “And when he thought thereon, he wept.”

Matthew: “And he went out and wept bitterly.”

Luke: “And Peter went out and wept bitterly.”

In defense of Peter, he had tried to defend Jesus in the garden. And he had followed Jesus (albeit, at a distance) and he clearly loved Jesus.

What went wrong?

1. The primary source of Peter's failure was the fact that he did not believe Jesus' words that he, Peter, was going to fall away like all of the other disciples. He thought himself to "know better" than the Lord. Peter thought more highly of himself than he ought to have thought. This is confirmed by his comment to the effect that...even if all the others fail, I won't.
2. I don't think Peter had a realistic assessment of the depravity of the human heart. Sometimes, it takes a difficult circumstance to reveal what really lies just beneath the surface. The winds of difficulty test the mettle of the human spirit.
3. There is no evidence that Peter prayed.

When Jesus was in the garden, the text says that, after one of his times of prayer, an angel came and strengthened him.

Peter did not receive the strength through prayer for his impending trial that Jesus received for his.

Can you think of another reason or cause for Peter's failure?

Application:

Identify 5 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Matthew 27

The final narrative (continued): “The Death and Resurrection of the King”
Chapters 26-28

Background:

Since the beginning of the gospel of Matthew, the story of Christ's life has been moving towards his death, resurrection and the completion of his ministry on earth. Matthew takes us through the 3 years of Jesus public ministry with an alternating series of narratives (6) and discourses (5).

The first narrative started out quietly, slowly, with the obscure birth and infancy narratives presenting the king. The first year of Jesus' public ministry saw Jesus rising from obscurity and growing in popularity. He came preaching the gospel of the kingdom and commanding the people to repent and believe.

What's not to like? Here was a man who walked the talk, had compassion on the downcast, gave wonderful public teachings that were filled with irrefutable wisdom, healed people of their diseases, cast demons out of those who were in bondage and, on occasion, miraculously fed large crowds of people.

Entering his second year, his popularity peaked and began to decline largely due to the growing opposition of the jealous religious leaders. Still, people from everywhere were flocking to see Jesus. Sadly, most were seeking him because of what he could do for them and not because they were particularly interested in knowing him or in becoming his disciple.

During his third year, his popularity was decreasing largely due to the opposition of the religious leaders and some difficult sayings of his, e.g. to be first, you must be last, to live you must die, take up your cross and follow me, eat my flesh, drink my blood.

In chapters 24 and 25, Jesus responded to questions from his disciples regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs of his coming and the end times.

Now, Jesus had completed his public ministry of teaching and healing. He must go to the cross and obtain the salvation of all who will believe. He will be the sin-bearer, the sacrificial lamb that takes away the sins of the world.

He always knew that his steps were leading to the cross.

In chapter 26, the longest chapter in Matthew (75 verses),

- The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus.
- He was anointed for his burial by Mary.
- Judas contracted with the chief priests to betray Jesus

- Jesus had his last supper with his disciples.
At this meal, Jesus foretold the disciples' stumbling and also that there was a betrayer in their midst.
- He prayed the most agonizing prayer in scripture in the Garden of Gethsemane while his disciples slept.
- Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested.
- The illegal trials (6) begin.
- Peter denies Jesus three times.

Outline of Chapter 27:

1-2	The council of religious leaders deliver him to the Roman governor.
3-10	Judas' remorse and death
11-14	Jesus stands trial before the governor.
15-26	Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified.
27-31	The Roman soldiers mock and abuse Jesus.
32-34	Simon carries Jesus' cross to Golgotha.
35-44	Jesus is crucified.
45-56	Jesus' death on the cross
57-61	Jesus' dead body is placed in a tomb.
62-66	Guards are posted at the tomb.

Observation and Interpretation:

- 1-2 The council of religious leaders deliver him to the Roman governor.

This action by the religious leaders is a double fulfillment, first, of the OT (see Ps. 2:2) and secondly, of Jesus' own prediction in Mt. 20:17-19.

In his parallel account (Lk. 22:66-68), Luke alone records the council's question of Jesus: "Are you the Christ?" Jesus' response: "If I tell you, you will not believe."

What does he mean by this response? _____

Keep in mind that the Jewish religious leaders did not have authority from Rome to execute a criminal convicted of a capital crime. In addition, it would look better if someone else did "their dirty work" for them.

- 3-10 Judas' remorse and death

In this short section, Matthew pauses in the narrative of the trials of Jesus to provide a final summary of Judas' fate. His

is the only gospel writer recording this finality to Judas' life. (see Acts 1:18-19)

Note that the book of Acts was also written by Luke.

v.3 What word is used to describe Judas' emotional response when he saw that Jesus had been condemned?

Matthew uses a word here that represents a strong self-loathing but it is not a word that describes true biblical repentance which would lead to faith and salvation.

Note that Peter's response was different than Judas'. Peter wept and shed bitter tears. Judas did not weep.

Judas knew what he had done was reprehensible but, it did not lead him to repentance.

What two things did Judas confession include?

1. _____

Note that Pilate confessed Jesus' innocence three times during the trials. But this did not save him either.

What would Judas have had to do to reverse the path he was on? _____

v.4 In this verse, Judas confessed his sin to the chief priests. What were the priests supposed to do?

What does their response "What is that to us? You see to it." Tell us about the priests? _____
What, in essence, were they saying? _____

Because the priests failed to help Judas find forgiveness, they were forsaking their role and responsibility as priests.

What lessons can we learn from this narrative about Judas?

1. Judas had a bad ending but it did not come about all at once. Record what you find out about Judas in the following passages:

- A. Jn. 12:6 _____
- B. Mt. 26:49 _____
- C. Mt. 26:14-15 _____

2. The path of sin is always a downhill course. (see Rom. 1: 18-32.

3. _____

v.9 Note that Matthew is diligent to record the fulfillment of the OT Scripture.

Why is he doing this? _____

11-14

Jesus stands trial before the governor.

Pilate was the governor before whom Jesus stood.

Historical records indicate that Pilate was not a righteous man. In fact, his marriage and family relationships were notorious for their immoral behavior.

He was the sixth Roman administrator of the region of Judea. Previous governors had shown some sensitivity to Jewish customs. Pilate did not.

But, as the trial opened, he appeared to give attention to the due process of the Roman judicial system. He began by asking that the charges against Jesus be identified. (Jn. 18:29)

But the Jews could only say: "If he were not a criminal we would not have brought him to you." Jn. 18:30 (They took Jesus to trial without a legitimate charge to bring against him.)

Jn. 18:34b-37 gives the fullest account of Jesus' response. Note that the 3 synoptic gospel writers only record: "Thou sayest it."

Mark records that the chief priests accused Jesus of many things. (Mk. 15:3)

Note that the initial accusation by the Jewish leaders was blasphemy. But this was a religious charge that would mean nothing to the Romans. So the Jews now had to come up with a charge related to the Roman government, e.g. treason against Rome.

Pilate, in Lk. 23:4 pronounces: "I find no fault in this man."
Lk. 23:5 says that the religious leaders, at this point, became even more fierce in their accusations against Jesus.

15-26

Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified.

The scene now shifts to the feast being held. Pilate has found no fault in Jesus and is still trying to release him.

His wife adds to the weight of his convictions:

Read v.19 and record what his wife told him. _____

Pilate had followed the Roman trial procedure: He asked for the charges, the evidence, the defense and the verdict ("I find no fault in him."). He knew that the religious leaders had brought Jesus to court because of their jealousy of him.

Still, he was trying to release him. What did he do next?

v. 21 _____

What was the response of the multitudes? _____

v.23 What evil had Pilate found in Jesus? _____

v.24 What was Pilate's response? _____

Did washing his hands take away his responsibility for what was about to happen to Jesus? _____

v.26 What did Pilate have done to Jesus? _____

What purpose would this serve? _____

Pilate tried in several different ways to avoid pronouncing sentence on Jesus: What were they?

1. sent him to Herod Lk. 23:6-12
2. punishment without execution Lk. 23:16, Jn. 19:1-5
3. _____ Mt. 27:21

v.24 Note that Pilate's response to the people was similar to the response of the chief priests to Judas' remorse: "You see to it." (27:4)

Why did Pilate give in to the crowd's request even though he knew that Jesus was innocent? v. 24 _____

Another thought: The Jewish leaders had intimated to Pilate in previous conversations that they might bring a bad report of him to Caesar. And Pilate certainly wanted to avoid anything that might discredit his relationship with Caesar. (see Jn. 19:12)

v.26 Who then took Jesus away to be crucified? _____

The Jewish chief priests and elders must have thought that they were now victorious having, through a torturous path, moved the Roman government to agree to sentence and perform the execution of Jesus. After all, their hands were clean. Or were they? _____

What was really happening? _____

What would the chief priests and elders receive for their efforts?

27-31 The Roman soldiers mock and abuse Jesus.

v.27 A garrison consisted of approximately 200 soldiers.

Why was this size of military force necessary? _____

Who takes Jesus away to be crucified? _____

After the scourgings, mockings, etc. that Jesus received, how would you describe him physically? _____

Should we be surprised that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords was treated in this manner? (see Isa. 53:1-12)

32-34 Simon carries Jesus' cross to Golgotha.

Condemned prisoners were required to carry their own crosses to the place of execution. In Jesus' case, why did the Roman soldiers require Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for him?

Cyrene is a town in North Africa.
Why might Simon be in Jerusalem at this time? _____

What effect would wine mixed with gall have on Jesus?

Gall Strong's 5521 "chole" an anodyne – something that
relieves pain
poppy – yields opium

Why then did he refuse it? _____

35-44

Jesus is crucified.

Elements of the cross:

1. wine mixed with gall - a pain killer v.34
2. casting lots for his clothing – v.35 Ps. 22:18
3. the written charge against Jesus – v.37
4. thieves on both side v. 38,44 Isa. 53:12 – numbered with the transgressors

Matthew calls them thieves – Strong's # 3027B *lestes*
Luke calls them malefactors – Strong's # 2557B *kakourgos*
an evil doer

v.44 What does Matthew say about the two thieves?
They _____ reviled Jesus.

What does Luke 23:39-43 say about the two criminals?

What does this indicate must have happened while they
were hanging on their crosses? _____

5. Those passing by blasphemed him.

Blaspheme Strong's # 987B *blasphemeo* to revile
"to hurt the reputation of"

v.39 Note that those reviling Jesus said "If you're the son
of God..." the same words used by Satan in two of his
temptations of Jesus when he was tempting him after his
baptism.

What does this indicate? _____

6. Mocking by the chief priests, scribes and elders v.41-43

Note that the chief priests et al did not address Jesus directly
but spoke with one another.

We have now technically analyzed the events of the cross. But no amount
of words will ever adequately describe the horror of the cross.

Here we have the unbridled wickedness of humanity at its worst and the unflinching, long-suffering, covenant love of the Creator at its zenith.

We need to say it: “Jesus endured the injustices of the cross for us so that we could be declared “justified.” It was for our sin he died so that we could be restored to and know his heavenly father.”

We would do well to meditate on these passages and allow the Spirit of Holiness to bring them “home” to our comprehension

Never in our wildest imagination would we ever have thought up such a “good news” as this. But this is true Christianity. Jesus died for us because, without his death and resurrection, we could never be saved from the hell, darkness and suffering that is prepared for the devil and his rebellious angels.

45-56 Jesus’ death on the cross

1. The seven last sayings of Christ

When a person is dying, relatives and close friends stay close to the one about to depart to the next life. In addition to wanting to be close to their loved one in his/her last days, they also want to hear his/her last words and to benefit from the experiences and wisdom this loved one has gained over the years.

Jacob is a good example from the Old Testament. In Genesis chapter 49:1-27, the sons of Jacob gathered together around him to listen as he tells them “what would befall them in the last days.”

Similarly, Christians over the centuries have treasured the “last words of Christ,” the statements that he made while on the cross.

Matthew, for his own Spirit-led purposes, only recorded one of these sayings. The “7 Sayings” from the four gospels are reproduced here for your benefit and edification.

Lk. 23:34 “*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*” – As he is breathing his last breaths, he speaks the word of forgiveness towards those who had done him great harm.

Lk. 23:43 “*Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.*” The thief who had initially railed on him along with the other (Mt. 27:44), now converted, receives mercy from Jesus and hence, the kingdom (Paradise) of

God. What an amazing miracle! We can truly say, “He made it into heaven by the “skin of his teeth.”

John 19:26, 27 Speaking to his mother Mary and John, “*Woman, behold your son.*” Then he said to the disciple, “*Behold your mother.*” – In his last breaths, Jesus makes earthly provision for his mother.

Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34 “*My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?*” In the deepest darkness he has ever known, separation from his father, Jesus cries out from the depths of his soul.

John 19:28 “*I thirst.*” This saying demonstrates the humanity of the king, the God who had become man.

John 19:30 “*It is finished.*” Jesus has endured. He has paid the price. Mankind has been ransomed from the ruler of this evil age. Salvation has been won for all those who believe in him.

Luke 23:46 “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*” His final breath, his final act. Even though he has been separated from the father, he still demonstrates his absolute trust in the plan and purposes of the father.

2. The doctrines of Christianity

We come now to the heart of the doctrines of Christianity. As Paul stated in I Cor. 15...Jesus died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the 3rd day and was seen by many persons.

It is important that sufficient evidence be provided to substantiate each of these crucial elements of the gospel.

This first segment establishes the first element – his death.

Just as Jesus’ birth was attended by various miracles, so also was his death. However, we don’t give much press to the “death miracles” because they were followed by the most important miracle, his resurrection from the dead.

In brief, the death miracles are:

1. the darkening of the sky between noon (6th hour) and 3 pm,
2. the tearing of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom,
3. the tomb-opening earthquake,
4. the resurrection to life of many holy people, and

5. the declaration of the centurion who said: “Truly, this was the Son of God.”

Now, let's look briefly at each of these events:

1. the darkening of the sky between noon (6th hour) and 3 pm,
This was not an eclipse which usually lasts only a few minutes.

And, the fact that the Passover occurred at the time of the full moon...an eclipse cannot take place during a full moon.

This was a unique divine intervention in the laws of nature which continued for three hours.

These were three silent hours as the absence of narrative indicates.

During this time, the Son of God took upon himself the sins of the world. This was indeed the darkest of hours. The Son had never been separated from the Father. But, in this circumstance, with all of the evil of the world upon him, the father turned away. (“my God...why have you forsaken me.”)

2. the tearing of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom,

This miracle occurred at the time of Jesus' death. The tearing from the top to the bottom indicates that this was something that God did.

And what it meant was that the way into the Holy of Holies was now opened to man.

All of the Old Testament sacrifices were now fulfilled.

This tearing of the veil was at 3:00 in the afternoon, the time that the priests would have been in the temple performing their duties.

And they would have seen it and known that the time of Moses was finished, a new era was ushered in.

This may well explain the verse in Acts 6:7 that says that a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith.

We see three specific teachings here:

- A. The OT sacrificial system was now ended.
- B. Jesus' offering was the “once-for-all” offering so that there was no need for additional sacrifices.

C. By Jesus sacrificial death, every born-again believer now has the possibility of approaching God directly and not through a “mediator-priest.”

3. the tomb-opening earthquake

Earthquakes in general, are unpredictable. But this earthquake occurred at the precise moment of Jesus’ death, signifying that its source was other than a natural phenomena.

Matthew doesn’t have an explanation for the earthquake but it likely corresponds with the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai where it is recorded that the earth shook. In this instance, even Moses recorded that he “shook with fear.”

The earthquake did serve as an introduction to the resurrection and appearance of many Old Testament saints.

4. the resurrection to life of many holy people

The Scriptures do not give us an explanation for this miracle. We don’t know who the saints were. We don’t know how long they remained alive or if they eventually died or were transported to heaven.

What we do know is that this was a historical event, otherwise Matthew would not have recorded it.

We could suppose that this was a kind of “first-fruits” of those who should rise from the dead. By raising some from the dead at this time, God may have been showing the people that: “This is the reward and destiny of those who believe on my son.”

5. the declaration of the centurion who said: “Truly, this was the Son of God.”

The centurion was the commander of those who had been given the task of “seeing to” Jesus’ crucifixion. He would have been standing near the cross, overseeing the proceedings and became a witness of these events.

As a Roman citizen, he was likely a pagan. But, when he saw the miracles that occurred upon Jesus’ death, his heart was stirred and he voiced his emphatic confidence: “Surely this was the Son of God.”

Certainly, this was not a full confession as we would look for today.

But it closely parallels Paul’s writing in Rom. 10:9-10 where he maintains that if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, we will be saved.

In a similar way, the repentant thief on the cross is only recorded as saying “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He didn’t have all of the “right words” but he did declare Jesus innocent and Jesus, himself, gave him the guarantee that he would be with him in paradise “today.” The trauma of the cross had brought him to repentance and faith.

God is looking for the heart response of penitent sinners to the King of Kings.

57-61

Jesus’ dead body is placed in a tomb.

This is the second of the core doctrines as listed by Paul in I Cor. 15: “He was buried.”

This is of significant importance because it proves that Jesus was really dead. A key issue related to Jesus’ death is that it was necessary for him to die for the sins of the world. If his death were somehow a fraud, then the sins of the world would not have been taken away.

Can you think of other reasons regarding the importance of Jesus’ death? _____

Think for a moment. In what ways could we confirm and prove that someone is actually dead?

So, from the Scriptures, we have the following “death evidences:”

- A. the centurion that certifies Jesus death,
- B. Joseph of Arimathea who is given the body by the Roman soldiers,
- C. Joseph wraps the body in burial linens,
- D. lays it in a tomb, and
- E. then seals the tomb with a large stone.

62-66

F. Guards are posted at the tomb.

Then on the next day, the chief priests got together with Pilate and asked for guards to be placed at the tomb so Jesus’ disciples couldn’t come and steal the body away, claiming that he was resurrected. They were the ones who were standing around the cross murmuring to each other and the scribes and elders about Jesus saving himself. (vv. 41-43) Surely, they were not deceived about Jesus actually being dead. They had worked so hard to secure the death sentence for Jesus that they stood around the

cross to make certain that he did actually die. (Obviously, there would have been no need for guards if there was no dead body.)

This indicates that the Roman authorities (non-believers) believed the chief priests when they asked for a guard.

Given the 6 evidences submitted above, do you think this is sufficient to prove that Jesus did, in fact, die? _____

Were there any additional proofs of Jesus' death? _____

Application:

From the outline produced below, record one "application lesson" for each of the segments of this chapter:

1-2 The council of religious leaders deliver him to the Roman governor.

3-10 Judas' remorse and death _____

11-14 Jesus stands trial before the governor. _____

15-26 Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified. _____

27-31 The Roman soldiers mock and abuse Jesus. _____

32-34 Simon carries Jesus' cross to Golgotha. _____

35-44 Jesus is crucified. _____

45-56 Jesus' death on the cross _____

57-61 Jesus' dead body is placed in a tomb. _____

62-66 Guards are posted at the tomb. _____

Matthew 28

Background:

Chapter 27 was huge! Not just because it had 66 verses, but because it was the record of the illegal trials (6) Jesus endured, the brutal beatings and treatment he was subjected to, and then, the ultimate in human suffering, his death by crucifixion, the most horrible of deaths a person could die.

In this chapter, we briefly reviewed the illegalities of the 6 trials (3 Jewish, 3 Roman), and saw through the morass of jealousy in the Jewish religious leaders who trying to dispose of Jesus in any way that they could. (They were desperate to be rid of him.)

We witnessed a Roman ruler trying to set Jesus free, but ultimately caving in to the “mob pressure” and turning Jesus over for crucifixion.

We also saw the end demise of the infamous traitor, Judas, as he went back to the priests to return the “betrayal” money and confess his sin. The religious leaders, of course, were not interested in him or in helping him deal with his guilt, and left him to his own devices.

We reviewed the 7 last sayings of Jesus from the cross and also looked at the evidences provided to confirm that, yes, Jesus had in fact, died. Additionally, we reviewed the 6 “crucifixion miracles.”

In chapter 28, we now come to the 3rd and 4th major doctrines of the Christian faith as recorded by Paul in I Cor. 15: “He arose on the 3rd day” and he appeared/was seen by many persons, sometimes an individual, sometimes a small group and also a large group of 500 men (I Cor. 15:6)

Outline of Chapter 28:

- 1-10 Jesus rises from the dead.
- 11-15 Religious leaders bribe the guards.
- 16-20 Jesus gives the “great commission.”

Exposition and Interpretation:

1-10 Jesus rises from the dead

Each of the gospel writers tells the story of the resurrection in their own unique ways. Only Matthew records the earthquake and the rolling away of the stone by an angel. (28:2)

It is interesting to note that the last persons to be with Jesus at the crucifixion were also the first persons to be at the tomb.

What happened to the guards when the angel appeared? _____
_____ v.4

The two Marys also saw the angel. What was their response?

Why didn't they respond as the guards had? _____

The angel gives the 2 Marys four instructions. What were they?

1. "Don't be afraid."

Why was this instruction necessary? _____

2. "He is not here. He has arisen as he said."

Jesus is not to be looked for in the tomb.

3. "Come and see"

The women could search the tomb for themselves.

Additionally, what else might they see? _____

(See John 20:6-8)

4. "Go and tell."

They were the first ones given the opportunity of telling about the "good news" of the risen Christ.

Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead so important?

1. This is the key to the Christian faith. Paul later writes: "For if Christ has not been risen from the dead, then our faith is in vain." I Cor. 15:12-14

2. Jesus had foretold his resurrection and now, it had occurred just as he had said. We now know that he is able and will accomplish all that he has promised. His power and authority know no limits, not even death.

3. Rising from the dead gives us indisputable evidence that he is Lord over death, our final enemy. (Rev. 21:4, 8)

4. Since Christ has risen from the dead (the first fruits of them that should rise from the dead I Cor. 15:20-23), we have confidence that we too will not be held captive by death.

5. The Spirit that brought Jesus back from the dead now dwells in us and He will also give life to our mortal bodies.

Rom. 8:11

Can you think of some other reasons why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important? _____

From the scriptures below, identify our Lord's appearances after his resurrection:

1. Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:11-17 _____
2. Mt. 28:9 _____
3. Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:15-32 _____
4. Mk. 16:14a _____
5. Jn. 20:26 _____
6. Jn. 21:1-5 _____
7. Acts 9:3-6 _____
8. I Cor. 15:5a _____
9. I Cor. 15:6 _____
10. I Cor. 15:7 _____

Approximately, how many people saw Jesus after he was resurrected from the dead? _____ (See I Cor. 15:6)

Is this a sufficient number of witnesses to confirm the fact that Jesus did arise from the dead? _____

11-15 Religious leaders bribe the guards

Jesus' resurrection has begun to cause a stirring within the city. First we have the 2 Marys that have seen Jesus and they are now hurrying to tell the other disciples.

At the same time, those who were guards at the tomb are returning to the chief priests to report what has happened.

What can they tell the chief priests? _____

What did they tell the chief priests? _____

What did the chief priests tell the guards to do? _____

What assurances did the chief priests have that the guards would not broadcast the actual events that had occurred? _____

v.15 In verse 15, Matthew says that the story told by the guards is common conversation among the Jews "until this day."

What does he mean by "until this day?" _____

16-20 Jesus gives the "great commission."

In 28:7, the angel tells the women that Jesus is going ahead of them into Galilee. Now the eleven disciples have come to a mountain in Galilee where they will meet with Jesus

Amazingly, after all of the appearances of Jesus, some still doubt. 28:17b)

v.18-19 What authority had Jesus been given? _____

Does this include all nations? _____

What is the implicit teaching of this verse for all missionaries no matter where they are sent? _____

Does it include spiritual authorities such as principalities and powers? _____

Is there any nation or authority that is not included in this commission? _____

Does Jesus' authority and the ensuing commission apply to us today? Explain your answer. _____

v.19 Note that Jesus says they are to baptize in the name...

What does this singular form tell you about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit (named after his pronouncement)?

Can you name some other places in the Scriptures where the unity of the Godhead is indicated?

1. _____

2. _____

Note that verses 18-20 provide the fundamental basis for all Christian missionary activity.

What are the 3 elements of the "great commission?"

1. _____

What is another way of saying "make disciples?" _____

2. _____

Does "baptizing" make a person a "born-again" Christian? _____

3. _____

Put this command "Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" into your own words. _____

Important to note: In the "Great commission," Jesus gives all three instructions to all Christians.

Who did Jesus put into the church to help the church fulfill this commission? Eph. 4:11-12 _____

The following summarizes some of the key teachings that must be delivered to the church and to all nations:

1. the sovereignty of God
2. the authority of Scripture
3. the depravity and desperation of man

4. the saving work of Christ – “the gospel of the kingdom of God”
5. the Deity of Christ
6. salvation by grace through faith
7. the work planned by God for each believer from the beginning of time.
8. the security of the believer (Jn.10:28; Rom. 8:39)
9. the coming of Christ
10. It is appointed once to a man to die. Heb. 9:27
11. the resurrection of the dead
12. eternal judgment and the end of this present evil age
13. the bride of Christ
14. the internal workings of the Holy Spirit

Application:

Identify 5 personal life applications from this chapter:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois; my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local "Special Touch" ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women's Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around

50-95, they called themselves the “Sonshiners”) and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.

We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.



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