

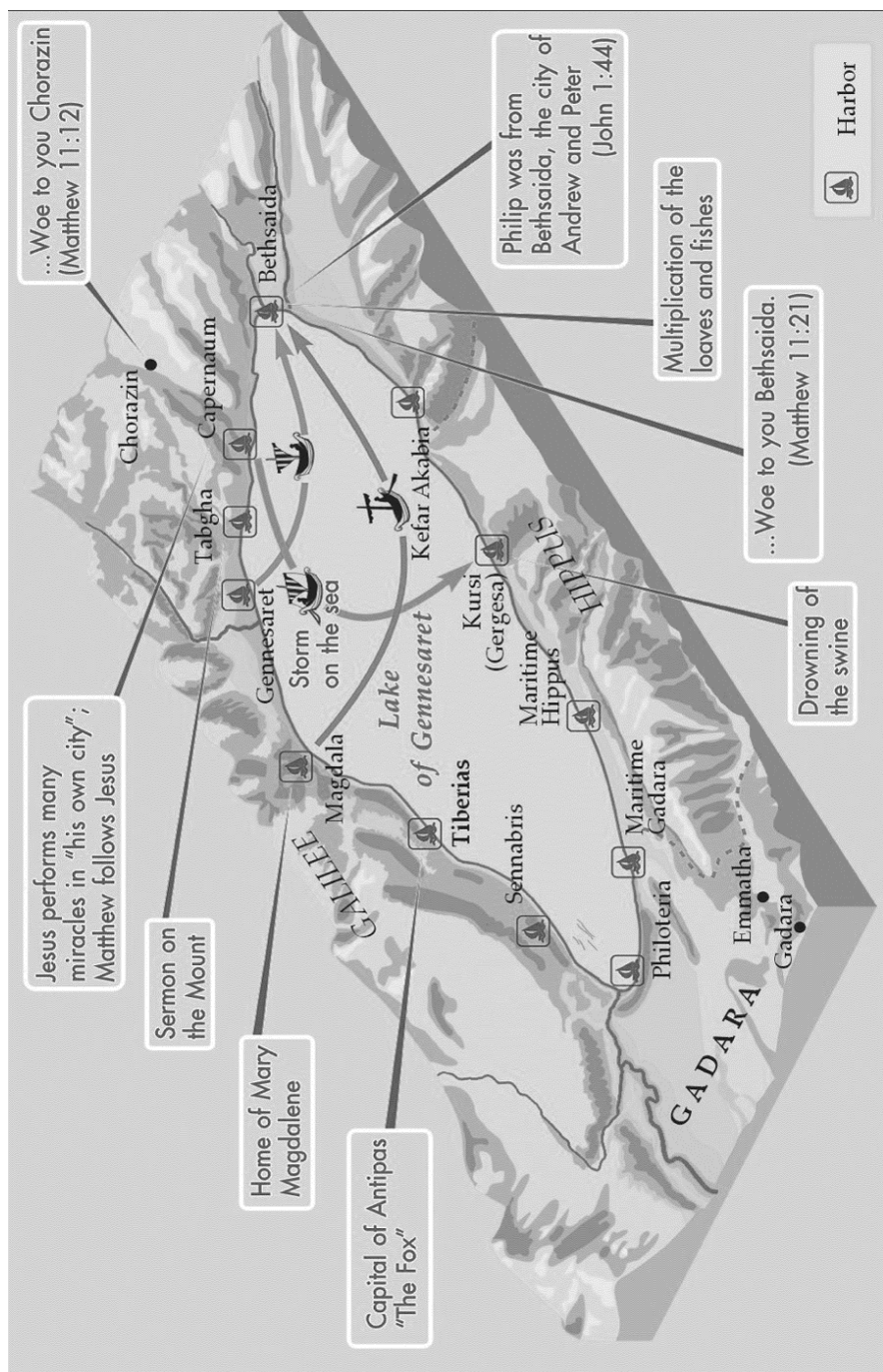
# AT HAND

— Matthew 1:1—7:29 —

## THE PROMISED KING AND PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM

Book One in a Sermon Series  
through the Gospel of Matthew  
at





## **INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

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*Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

Matthew 13:52

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**WHO WROTE THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW?** This Gospel was written by Matthew, the apostle, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Matthew was once employed as a tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government, and as a result he was certainly disliked by his Jewish countrymen. This training, however, would have made him an efficient record-keeper, and he would have been skilled in tracing genealogies. Jesus called Matthew to follow Him and chose him as one of the twelve apostles, and he is called both Matthew and Levi.

**WHAT IS THE THEME OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW?** Matthew is written to Jews and shows how Jesus is the Messiah that was promised in the Old Testament prophecies. Matthew refers to two-thirds of the Old Testament books and includes forty quotes and over 100 other connections from the Old Testament. He puts a great emphasis on Jesus as the King—both the promised King of the Jews and God the King who is establishing His Kingdom.

**WHAT ELSE DOES MATTHEW EMPHASIZE?** Matthew's focus is on Jesus' ministry in Galilee, though some of the events do take place in Judea, where Jerusalem is located. Jesus' teaching ministry begins and ends in Galilee, and Jesus' home being there is the fulfillment of two Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 2:23; 4:14). Galilee was not considered to be a purely Jewish area and was even called "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matthew 14:15). This is one of the reasons Jesus is despised and rejected by the Jewish religious leaders (John 7:41, 53).

The disciples also suffered similar rejection. Though we are not certain about the location of Judas Iscariot's hometown, the other 11 apostles were all from Galilee. That was part of their natural and family identity which would affect their ministry. Ultimately, they would entirely lose the Jewish identities they had prior to following Jesus. But Jesus gives them new identities: Kingdom identities.

Most of all, Matthew reveals the true identity of Jesus. He is the King who is worshiped by the "king-making" magi in chapter 2. He is the one who finds His identity with the Father in the midst of temptation in the wilderness in chapter 4. He is the Lord of the Sabbath and God's chosen Servant in chapter 12. He is identified as the Christ in chapter 16. His true, glorious identity is revealed before three of the apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration in chapter 17. He is the returning Son of Man in chapter 24. He is the wine and bread of chapter 26. He is the suffering servant on the cross in chapter 27. And finally, in chapter 28, He is the Risen One.

# **THE PROMISED KING**

## **Matthew 1:1—2:23**

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*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou  
shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save  
his people from their sins.*

Matthew 1:21

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Jesus came into the world to be the Messiah—to save all those who call on His name for salvation. He conquered sin and death so we could have victory over sin and death. He introduced the Kingdom of God, the new reign of God on the earth.

It is not a political kingdom; it is a kingdom that He establishes in the hearts of people—all people—regardless of tribe, nation, gender, or social status. All people—regardless of how they have ruined their lives by sin, because He came to pay for our sin and wash it away. All people—regardless of whatever limitations their past may have put on them—are welcomed into His kingdom by faith.

**MATTHEW 1:1-17**

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*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ,  
the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

Matthew 1:1

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When we come to genealogies in our Bible reading, many of us find ourselves scanning through a list of names that seems somehow boring and irrelevant to our lives today. At first glance, the first seventeen verses of Matthew seem to be nothing more than another list of names. Perhaps they would be of interest to Jewish historians, but is it beneficial to us?

The Bible tells us that “*all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable...*” (2 Timothy 3:16). When we look more closely at this list of names in Matthew 1, we find that Jesus is the Messiah for all people, that God’s grace is greater than our sin, and that we are not bound to the mistakes of our past.

God desires all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), and Jesus died for “*the sins of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2). God does not discriminate, and there is no room or excuse for discrimination in the church. The church is for any believer, regardless of age, ethnicity, or status.

THE PROMISED KING, Lesson 1

Matthew 1:1-17

**MATTHEW 1:18-25**

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*Then Joseph being raised from sleep  
did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him,  
and took unto him his wife.*

Matthew 1:24

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At first, some of this passage may seem confusing. Matthew says that they were pledged to be married, and then he refers to Joseph as Mary's "husband" and then later mentions divorce (put away). Jewish custom for marriage was a three-step process: engagement, betrothal, and marriage. Betrothal is similar to engagement in that they are not living together. But unlike engagement which can be cancelled at any time, betrothal is a much stronger relationship in which a spouse could only be "put away" through divorce.

It was during this second stage, the betrothal, that Mary was discovered to be pregnant. Joseph assumed Mary had been unfaithful since he knew that *he* was not the father! He must have been discouraged and heart-broken. He could have caused her to be humiliated publicly, but he cared about Mary and had decided to divorce her quietly, privately. By divorcing her privately, Joseph put his own reputation at risk instead of risking Mary's reputation. He was an honourable and compassionate man.



THE PROMISED KING, Lesson 2

Matthew 1:18-25

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**MATTHEW 1:18—2:2**

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*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and  
shall bring forth a son, and they shall call  
his name Emmanuel, which being  
interpreted is, God with us.*

Matthew 1:23

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Names have significance, and sometimes people live up to the meaning of their names.

In Matthew 1:18-23, three names are given to the Child inside Joseph's wife, Mary. These names were not chosen at random. They each have a special meaning. When we understand the names of Jesus, we begin to understand Him better, to know better about our relationship to Jesus and His relationship to us.

The name of Jesus is the name above every name (Philippians 2:9-10). There is power and authority in His name (1 Corinthians 6:11).

- He deserves to be your leader, ruler, king, priest, master, and Lord.
- He desires to be your companion and friend.
- He died to be your Saviour and Deliverer.

THE PROMISED KING, Lesson 3

Matthew 1:18—2:2

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**MATTHEW 2:1-23**

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*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of  
Judaea in the days of Herod the king,  
behold, there came wise men from the east to  
Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born  
King of the Jews? for we have seen his star  
in the east, and are come to worship him.*

Matthew 2:1-2

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Daniel writes of Babylonian astrologers, false prophets who studied the stars in order to interpret dreams and prophesy the future (Daniel 1:20; 2:27; 5:15). The “wise men from the east” (Matthew 2:1) would have had access to Daniel’s prophecies—genuine prophecies about the timeline of the Messiah’s coming (Daniel 9:24-27). Perhaps the wise men were simply curious. Perhaps they truly believed in the promised King. Regardless, they believed the timeline of the prophecy and came to worship with their best gifts.

Herod, on the other hand, had access to even more information about the Messiah. Rather than worshiping, he sought to murder the newborn King of the Jews. This created some tense moments for Joseph, but he was ready and willing to follow God’s leading. Joseph had already given up his reputation by marrying a pregnant Mary. Now, in escaping to Egypt, he gives up all his possessions, connections, and sources of stability—except the greatest Source: God!

THE PROMISED KING, Lesson 4

Matthew 2:1-23

# **THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM**

## **Matthew 3:1—7:29**

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*From that time Jesus began to preach,  
and to say, Repent: for the kingdom  
of heaven is at hand.*

Matthew 4:17

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Matthew's account of the life and ministry of Jesus jumps from His birth in chapters 1 and 2 to His adulthood in chapter 3. Jesus' cousin, John the Baptizer, is calling people to repentance and baptism—not for salvation, but as a commitment to separate from sinful actions and to do what is right. John is preparing “the way of the Lord” (Matthew 3:3) and preaching for people to repent (Matthew 3:2).

Jesus also comes to be baptized by John. John at first resists, but Jesus tells him “thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). God wants believers to be baptized (Matthew 28:19). It is right (righteous) for God's children to be baptized. It is a step of obedience, not a step of salvation or spiritual cleansing, for Jesus needed not to be saved, and He had no sin from which to be cleansed.

## The Preaching of the Kingdom

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Following His baptism and the Father's announcement that He is well-pleased in His Son, Jesus (Matthew 3:17), Jesus is led away by the Holy Spirit to be tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1).

Jesus overcomes this temptation through scripture, settles in Capernaum, and begins His ministry (Matthew 4:12). He soon calls the first disciples to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22) and preaches the Gospel of the Kingdom throughout Galilee (Matthew 4:23-25).

Throughout the Gospel of Matthew, we find a series of narratives (written accounts of events) followed by a major discourse (a sermon or formal teaching on a topic). In chapters 5-7, Matthew records the first of Jesus' discourses which is often called the "Sermon on the Mount."

Matthew repeatedly shows Jesus as the Promised King and as God who is establishing His Kingdom. In this first sermon, the phrases "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" appear often. These kingdoms are identified in contrast to the kingdoms of the earth and the kingdoms of man. Though Jesus does come as King, His kingdom is not of this world. It is God's Kingdom, a Kingdom of Heaven. In this discourse, Matthew describes the people of the Kingdom, the policies of the Kingdom, and the pathway to the Kingdom.

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**MATTHEW 3:1-17**

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*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Matthew 3:16-17

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John the Baptist is Jesus' cousin. His mother, Elisabeth, was a cousin to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and it was to Elisabeth's home that Mary went after she realized she was pregnant (Luke 1:39). John's purpose was announced to his father, Zacharias, before John was conceived (Luke 1:17), and he fulfills Isaiah's and Malachi's prophecy of the one who would "prepare the way of the Lord" (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:3).

John the Apostle records John the Baptist identifying Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) when Jesus comes to Him for baptism. As Jesus comes up out of the water from his baptism, the Spirit descends on Him in the form of a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:16-17).



THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 1

Matthew 3:1-17

**MATTHEW 4:1-11**

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*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

Matthew 4:1

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Hebrews 4:15 tells us that “*we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” Jesus overcame temptation so that you and I can overcome temptation.

Sometimes we think that because Jesus was God that it was simple and easy for Him to resist the temptation. But Jesus had been fasting for 40 days when He was tempted. He was weak, tired, and hungry. This passage shows the humanity of Jesus. We as humans can defeat temptation the same way Jesus defeated the temptation.

But we cannot defeat it in our own strength or with our own methods. Temptation is often deceitful and tricky. We must understand it and be aware of it. But we do not need to fear it. Temptation is not all-powerful; only God is all-powerful. And our God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57). Temptation is a fact of life. But we, in fact, do not have to give in to it!

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 2

Matthew 4:1-11

**MATTHEW 4:12-25**

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

Matthew 4:19

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After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River and tempted in the wilderness, He returned to Galilee and settled in Capernaum, a town along the shores of the Sea of Galilee about 65km from Nazareth where Jesus had grown up. Galilee was a region with about 200 towns, each with at least 15,000 people.

But Jesus' choice to begin His ministry in Galilee was not because of the population, the important roads that passed through the region, or the diverse culture present there. It was a fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 9:2).

Here, He preached His first recorded sermon and called His first disciples: four fisherman (Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John). Like these men, Jesus followed God's call to serve where and to whom God had chosen. Like these men, we each have a ministry to which God is calling us. Ours may not be a call to leave the job we have and begin going to all the towns and villages around Galilee. But Jesus does call to each one of us, "Follow Me."

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 3

Matthew 4:12-25

## **MATTHEW 5:1-16**

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*Blessed are the pure in heart:  
for they shall see God.*  
Matthew 5:8

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**THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.** Chapter 5 is the first of three chapters recording Christ's first sermon. Jesus begins with nine statements of who is "blessed." **THE BEATITUDES**, as these statements of blessing are often called, are written as a poem similar to the writing style of the Psalms.

At the time Matthew is writing this (around A.D. 60, about 30 years after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension), the early church is suffering terrible persecution. The Christians at that time were being forced out of the synagogues because of their faith and felt rejected, not blessed. Jesus' sermon, preached over 30 years earlier, would be a source of encouragement to the early church just as it is to us.

In this sermon, Jesus begins to reveal that His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world. Some have called it an "upside-down kingdom" because the poor in spirit, meek, abused and persecuted are considered "blessed." In verses 13-16, Jesus provides two illustrations of the identity of those who are part of His kingdom: salt and light.

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 4

Matthew 5:1-16

## **MATTHEW 5:17-32**

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*Think not that I am come to destroy  
the law, or the prophets: I am not  
come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

Matthew 5:17

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**KINGDOM LAWS.** Every kingdom has its laws. While the Kingdom of God does include believing Israelites, it is not the same as the Kingdom of Israel. While there are similarities between the laws of the Kingdom of Israel (the Law of Moses) and the Kingdom of God (the Law of God), they are not the same. We are still under the Law of God (Romans 7:22; 7:25; 8:7), whether Jew or Gentile, and God has written these laws in our hearts (Romans 2:15; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16). Here in chapter 5, Jesus begins to explain the Kingdom Laws.

Jesus explains that those who break His law are not removed from the Kingdom, but they will be considered “*the least in the kingdom*” (Matthew 5:19). So, obedience to the laws is important, but it is righteousness, not obedience, which is the basis of our citizenship in the Kingdom. As Jesus explains the Kingdom Laws, He references the Law of Moses (“*It hath been said...*”) and makes it an inward command. He takes the outward command from the Old Testament and expands it to govern our attitudes and hearts.



THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 5

Matthew 5:17-32

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## **MATTHEW 5:33-48**

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*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your  
Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

Matthew 5:48

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As we read earlier, righteousness is the requirement for citizenship in the Kingdom. Jesus said that our righteousness must “*exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees*” (Matthew 5:20). The Pharisees were known for their devout obedience to every detail of the Law of Moses, even tithing of the leaves grown on their herbs (Matthew 23:23)! Exceeding this righteousness seems impossible!

It is impossible! Jesus gives us another impossible statement at the end of this chapter: “*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*” But the challenge in our minds comes because we think that right actions make us righteous. Several passages, including Romans 3:10, Romans 4:6, and Titus 3:5, teach that works cannot bring righteousness.

Instead, all of the Kingdom Laws that Jesus is teaching in His sermon are right actions which come *as the result* of being made righteous, not the other way around. God makes Kingdom Citizens new creatures which have His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), and we are then able to do all these righteous actions!

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 6

Matthew 5:33-48

## **MATTHEW 6:1-18**

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*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

Matthew 6:6

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In Chapter 6 Jesus continues telling more about what He expects of those who are part of His Kingdom. He challenges the Jewish idea of humility and generosity by preaching about alms (giving money to the poor), prayer, and fasting. Simply, He tells us that these should be done in secret rather than for others to see and appreciate.

Regarding alms, Jesus says, “*let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*” (Matthew 6:3). Regarding prayer, He encourages short, simple prayers of confidence that God already knows what we need (Matthew 6:7-8). Regarding fasting, He instructs us not to let others realize that we are fasting because of our appearance or actions.

With each instruction on alms, praying, and fasting, Jesus also promises a reward from the Father (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18). He does desire for us to do these things, but He expects Kingdom citizens to do them “*to thy Father*” (Matthew 6:6) and not “*before men, to be seen of them*” (Matthew 6:1).

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 7

Matthew 6:1-18

**MATTHEW 6:19—7:5**

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*Take therefore no thought for the morrow:  
for the morrow shall take thought  
for the things of itself. Sufficient unto  
the day is the evil thereof.*  
Matthew 6:34

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Jesus promises rewards from the Father for right generosity, prayer, and fasting. As His sermon continues here, He challenges us about the treasures we seek. The topic of the next several paragraphs can be summarized with the question, “What is your focus?”

First, Jesus demands that we consider what kind of treasures we will focus on: earthly or heavenly. He warns us that the things we treasure will control our hearts (Matthew 6:22). Next, we are taught to consider what we will focus on in the midst of challenges. Will we focus on the problems or our Provider?

Then, in the first part of Chapter 7, we must examine whether we use God’s laws as a mirror or a window. Through a window we look out and focus on others to see whether they are obedient. In a mirror I must look at myself to see whether I am obeying. I cannot properly focus on helping someone else with a sin problem until I have first dealt with my own.

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 8

Matthew 6:19—7:5

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**MATTHEW 7:6-12**

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*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good  
gifts unto your children, how much more  
shall your Father which is in heaven give  
good things to them that ask him?*

Matthew 7:11

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This passage is perhaps the shortest passage we will study as a single lesson. But it is a lesson that is often misunderstood and misapplied. There is a theme of trust in this passage, and Jesus refers back to His teaching on giving and prayer from Chapter 6.

When we give, it should not be for others' approval or appreciation (Matthew 6:1-2), but it also should not be to those who make false promises of blessings. Jesus uses the term "dogs" to describe these false prophets who promise things they will never provide.

Instead of the promises of false prophets, we should turn to our heavenly Father. But we must understand His promises in order to claim them. This sermon is about God's Kingdom, and His promises of finding, receiving, and opening are in the context of His provision for what He has called us to do in the Kingdom.

He is our King, so we must obey Him. But God is also our loving Father, and we can trust Him to provide exactly what we need.



THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 9

Matthew 7:6-12

**MATTHEW 7:13-29**

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*Beware of false prophets, which come to  
you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly  
they are ravening wolves.*

Matthew 7:15

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Jesus warned about false prophets in Matthew 7:6, and He returns that topic here a few verses later. There are many people deceived into following religion and religious leaders down a path to destruction. The way to life is “narrow,” and few find it.

But the problem of deceivers is that they are deceptive! It can be difficult to know whether someone is speaking truth or deceit. Jesus tells us that we can identify them by their works. A good tree produces good fruit. A truthful person will build God’s Kingdom.

He also warns us that a religious attitude that calls out to God and uses His name in worship does not make a person a citizen of the Kingdom. Signs and wonders do not identify God’s representatives, truth does. A wise man puts actions to his faith in what Jesus has said. Man’s words will fail, but “*the word of the Lord endureth for ever*” (1 Peter 1:25).

THE PREACHING OF THE KINGDOM, Lesson 10

Matthew 7:13-29

## **MATTHEW 8:1—13:54**

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*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*  
Matthew 13:9

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In our next study, we will learn about Jesus' miracles which showed His power as King and the parables He taught which were intended to be pictures of the kingdom. These pictures were not like a digital photo in which you could see every detail. Rather, they were more like works of art which showed truths about the kingdom, but only those with sincere hearts would truly understand.

Jesus will also face opposition from the religious leaders He warned us about in the Sermon on the Mount, and He will warn His disciples of the cost to follow Him. Even some of those who believe in Him will start to question whether Jesus truly is the promised Messiah.

Join us as we continue our study through the Gospel of Matthew.