



Coffee & ConvoS

AUGUST 2019

UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM

The link between the Old and New Testaments, Matthew presents Jesus as Messiah and King, the fulfillment of divine prophecies since the beginning of mankind. Establishing the lineage through Abraham and David, Matthew not only reveals Jesus as the heir to Israel's throne, but the King of the entire human race.

Matthew introduces the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," which announces that citizenship in God's Kingdom is no longer about Jewish heritage, but faith in Jesus Christ. The people of God are united as salvation through Jesus is available to all nations.

More than any other Gospel, Matthew emphasizes the public teaching ministry of Jesus. This gospel account is organized into five major "discourses" or teachings of Jesus: (1) How citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven are supposed to live (2) Instruction for disciples on their missionary journeys (3) Mysteries of the Kingdom revealed in Parables (4) Warnings about hindering entrance into God's Kingdom and forgiveness (5) The delay, return, and judgment of the Messiah.

As we approach this study, we too can be challenged and encouraged by this "upside down Kingdom." Jesus transforms our understanding of the law, and establishes discipleship that is centered upon devotion and obedience to Himself. Learning about what Jesus did in His earthly ministry will strengthen our grasp of Jesus as King and Lord, and grow our understanding of who we are to be

How to use the reader ...

With each day's assigned reading, there are two or three primary questions that we hope will encourage you to reflect and draw out important truths from the passage. The questions listed in gray at the bottom of each page are additional study questions that will challenge you to read further into the text and spend more time in reflection.

There are a few questions that should be considered every time you read the Bible. If you have no time to consider any of the specialized questions, prioritize asking yourself these three questions:

- 1. What attribute of God stands out the most from your study of this text?**
 - 2. How does knowing this truth about Him change the way you see yourself?**
 - 3. How should knowing this truth change the way you live?**
-

Resources

Women of the Word, by Jen Wilkin (Crossway July 31, 2014)

Word Centered Womens Ministry, by Kathleen B. Nielson, G. Furman (Crossway 2015)

The Gospel of Matthew, A Bible Study from The Village Church
(tvresources.net)

Matthew 1-2

Matthew writes his gospel to a largely Jewish audience that had been anticipating the coming Messiah for generations. Amid a climate of political tension, the humble beginnings of Christ are both miraculous and sobering.

Why was it important for Matthew to establish Jesus's lineage?

What women are included in the genealogy and why are they significant?

Are there any names in the genealogy that are surprising? What does their inclusion reveal about God's character?

The wise men bring Jesus extremely valuable gifts, the kind offered in tribute to a king. In the midst of a passage about the actions and plans of King Herod, what ironic statement is Matthew's Gospel making about true kingship?

Compare 2:13 to Genesis 46:1-4. What earlier story mirrors the flight to Egypt recorded in the Gospel of Matthew?

Matthew 3

Jesus came to supernaturally fulfill all of the prophecies and accomplish the purposes of the Messiah. Today we turn our attention to those purposes as seen in the ministry of John the Baptist and the beginning of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

Why was Jesus baptized?

What is the significance of this happening before Jesus begins His earthly ministry?

What Old Testament character does John the Baptist resemble? (2 Kings 1:8)
What does this indicate about his mission?

What is the message of John the Baptist in 3:2? Why do you think repentance is central to the gospel message?

Is it surprising that Jesus asks to be baptized, considering He is perfectly holy and without sin? Why or why not?

Matthew 4

Centuries before, the Israelites were tempted in the wilderness. They failed to trust God for provision, protection and authority. Jesus does what no one else can; He is tempted and remains perfectly holy. Through His example we can learn how to resist the devil and trust in His righteousness.

How did Jesus respond to temptation? How does His response convict and instruct us when we are tempted?

List out two or three of your most common temptations. How can you follow the example of Jesus to resist them this week?

Ephesians 6:10-18 list out the Whole Armor of God. Which piece of armor do you need to spend more time cultivating so you are prepared when temptation comes?

Jesus was hungry and tempted with bread from stones. What are you tempted to believe will fill you up? What shortcuts are you tempted to take to fulfill your flesh's desires?

Did the devil have any authority to offer the kingdoms and lands to Jesus? What does the devil try to offer us that he has no authority to give?

Matthew 5:1-16

God gave the law to Moses on a mountain top in the midst of a cloud; the people trembled at His Majesty. In His longest recorded sermon Jesus sits down with His followers on a mountain side and transforms their understanding of the law and what it means to be the people of God.

Paraphrase each beatitude in your own words

Which character trait listed in the beatitudes do you struggle with the most?
How can you develop this trait more?

How does your character reflect the Kingdom of God? How can you demonstrate character that is salt and light at home, at work, at school...

How is your personal concept of what it means to be blessed challenged by the Beatitudes? How does the way Jesus describes blessedness point to a better way of living than our common conceptions of what it means to enjoy God's favor?

Salt is a preservative and a disinfectant. How does your life help keep and purify those around you?

Light reveals what is hidden and helps things to grow. Who can you help draw out of darkness and grow in the light of Jesus?

Matthew 5:17-48

Jesus came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law. He will continue to press us toward the deeper obedience that characterizes the citizens of His kingdom—an external righteousness motivated by internal righteousness.

What theme do you see repeated in these passages? Why is it important?

There is a contrast between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. How are we guilty of relaxing the commands of God?

Based on your understanding of His life and ministry, how does Jesus fulfill and accomplish the law?

The Law in scripture can be broken up into two categories: ceremonial law and moral law. Why do we no longer practice the ceremonial laws? Are the moral laws still applicable?

Matthew 6

Jesus knows that the treasures and masters we choose will affect our ability to live our lives focused on the Kingdom of God. He directs our view toward God and the Kingdom to come.

List the character qualities you see in this chapter of citizens of the Kingdom of heaven.

Are your righteous actions an outflow of righteous motives, or selfish attention?

How can you combat your pride and still fast, pray, and give generously?

If your prayers were written down like those in the psalms, what would those who read them learn about your concept of God.

What “treasures” can be laid up in heaven? How do you practically choose those treasures over earthly treasures such as wealth, security, or popularity?

Matthew 7

Offering instructions and warnings, we continue to learn from Jesus the importance of a deeper righteousness that characterizes a true disciple.

Is Jesus commanding that we can never judge others? What kind of judgment is Jesus warning about? Compare with Gal 6:1 and James 5:19-20.

How are false teachers like ferocious wolves? What kind of fruit reveals that they are false prophets? How is this type of discernment different from the judgment Jesus just warned about?

Will God give us everything we ask for? Look back at 6:11-13. What kinds of “good things” do these verses indicate our heavenly Father will always grant His children when they ask?

Why do you think Jesus chooses two objects made from the same material but of vastly different sizes to make His point? What does His illustration reveal about the types of sins we are most likely to judge others for?

How do Jesus’ warnings challenge our current culture that trumpets the message, “Live your truth”? What help and assurance should we as believers take from these warnings?

Matthew 8-9

The crowds responded with astonishment that Jesus was teaching with such authority. The supernatural displays of Christ demand reverence and worship.

List all the areas under Jesus's authority in chapter 8-9:8?

Like the centurion, do you trust in both the ability and the willingness of Jesus to work mightily in your life? Is it more difficult for you to trust His ability (His power) or His willingness (His compassion)? Why?

In 8:18-22 Jesus declares His authority over His followers. What hesitations are raised in following Jesus?

Why does our response to Jesus' authority matter?

Matthew 10

There is work to be done, not just by Jesus, but by His followers, too. Chapter 9 ends with “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” Chapter 10 calls his followers to participate in the mission of proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom.

There are parts of chp 10:5-15 that are descriptive and parts that are prescriptive. Identify the parts of the disciples missionary journey that we should still be doing today in our evangelism.

We live in a culture that is obsessed with finding and maintaining our lives (10:39). In what ways do you fall into this temptation?

In what areas of your life do you struggle to rightly fear the Lord instead of wrongly fearing man? How can the encouragement that you are valued, precious and known by your heavenly Father motivate you to “fear not”?

Consider the difference between the message being offense and the messenger being offensive. How are you guarding yourself from being a stumbling block to the gospel.

**Don't be
discouraged when
life is messy and
inconsistent. Take
today to catch up
on any reading
that you have
fallen behind on.**

Matthew 11

The Messiah was expected to come and bring political freedom. Instead Jesus came with the message of a greater Kingdom.

When have you placed expectations on God's plans? How has your understanding of God grown through that experience and others like it?

What misplaced expectations can be laid on the Church today, both by those within it and those outside it?

Jesus beckons those whose souls are weary and burdened to come to Him. What in your life is making you soul-weary?

What keeps you from bringing those things to the One who promises you rest?

Matthew 12

Jesus beckons those whose souls are weary and burdened to come to Him (11:28). Sabbath is transformed from a rest for the body to rest for the soul.

How does Jesus transform the way the Pharisee's were obeying the Sabbath?

The temple represented the very heart of Jewish worship; it was the epicenter of God's relationship with His people. How do you think the Pharisees took Jesus' statement in 12:6?

Jesus makes it clear to the Pharisees that people are more valuable than regulations. In what area(s) of your life are you tempted to value rules over relationships?

In what ways are you tempted to require some sign of proof from God in order to follow and trust Him? In what ways has God already proven Himself worthy of your trust, both in Scripture and in your own experiences?

Matthew 13

Parables—deceptively simple stories comprised of common, everyday images that teach extraordinary truths.

What is the significance of Jesus talking to the crowd, and then explaining it to a few?

Each parable in chapter 13 has a main theme about the Kingdom of heaven. Try to identify the themes.

Look back through 13:24-43. Where do you see the theme of waiting in these four parables? What hope is there for us as we wait to see the fruit of the gospel?

How is the extraordinary fruitfulness of the seed that falls on the good soil an encouragement to all who have heard and believed the gospel?

Matthew 14

Repeatedly Jesus denies Himself to care for His crowd of followers. We can rely on His compassionate response when we cry out for Him.

How does Jesus's miracle of feeding of the 5 thousand foreshadow His institution of the Lord's supper in Matthew 26:26-29. How does this connect to what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:6?

How quickly does Jesus respond when Peter cries out for help? What hope is there for you when you have doubt?

Jesus miraculously provides the food, but he sends his disciples to clean up the food. What does this teach us about work? How is it part of the gift of ministry?

List two of your most common faith-diminishing fears below. What practical step can you take this week to submit those fears to the One who calls you to follow Him?

Matthew 15-16

In the Old Testament those considered unclean were avoided because they would contaminate those who touched them. When Jesus arrives He not only touches them but then they become clean.

Who do we see as beyond, or unworthy of Jesus? What categories of people might we find it uncomfortable to welcome into the kingdom of heaven?

What incomplete descriptions do modern-day people use to answer the question, “Who is Jesus?”

What do you think it means that “the gates of hell shall not prevail” against the Church (16:18)? Does it sometimes seem that hell is prevailing? What hope does this provide his church today?

Peter declares that such a suffering-laden plan could not possibly be God’s will. Do you hear similar claims today? Remember Matthew 5:10-11, what does Jesus say is true about suffering in the Christian life?

Matthew 17

As Matthew begins drawing our attention to increasing rejection of and opposition to Jesus, he also records a growing recognition among the disciples of Jesus' true identity.

Of all the Old Testament figures who could have been present in this scene, why do you think Moses and Elijah appear? How does this emphasize Jesus coming to fulfill the law and the prophet?

How faithfully do you obey God's instructions to "listen to Jesus"?

What "mountains"—circumstances or sinful habits—do you believe are too difficult for the Lord to move? Where do you need to grow in your faith in the God who moves mountains?

What reason does Jesus give for His decision to pay the tax (17:27)? In many other places in Matthew, Jesus does choose to offend the ruling religious authorities of His day. Why do you think He chooses not to do so this time?

Matthew 18-19

In the "upside down Kingdom" every relationship, every social construct, every single priority is reordered and challenged for the sake of following Jesus.

What measures are you willing to take to cut sin out?

In what situations (or with which people) are you most likely to demand justice for an offense instead of extending lavish grace like the king in the parable?

What treasured possession or idea of yourself do you cling to in an unhealthy way, even as a child of God?

The disciples had a strong reaction to Jesus' words about marriage. What is your natural reaction to His words about commitment? What current cultural factors seek to alter the validity and importance of committed marriage or committed singleness?

Matthew 20-21

Jesus has been preparing His followers for His death along the way, teaching them how to live as His disciples. Now as Jesus enters Jerusalem He leaves no question about His position and authority as the Promised Messiah.

Describe a time you have wanted to accuse God of not dealing fairly with you. How does the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard reshape our perspective of what we receive fairly from God?

What kinds of things defile our personal or corporate worship—even without our noticing? What is one practice you can put in place to guide you into a focused and undistracted time of worship?

In what ways and/or areas does worldly greatness intrigue you? Through what relationships are you seeking status and importance where you should be seeking to serve?

Like the second son in the parable, we sometimes respond to a call to repentance over a particular sin with a penitent “yes,” but then never follow through. What sin have you confessed but neglected to address?

Matthew 22

Despite their best attempts to challenge Him, the Pharisees and Sadducees will never thwart the earthly ministry of Jesus.

Almost all Christians have a tendency to emphasize either the generosity of God or the judgment of God, to the neglect of the other. Which is your natural tendency? In what ways does your imbalance hurt you or cause you to hurt others?

Explain the Great Commandment in your own words (22:37-39). In what sense does every other commandment hang on these two?

How can having a right view of both God's generosity and judgment help you better love God and love others?

**All time in the
word is profitable.
Take today to
catch up on your
reading.**

Matthew 23

Hypocrisy and sin will not be tolerated. Jesus both burns with anger and heartache for the ones who do not repent.

In light of 23:4 - in what ways are we guilty of adding to the commands of God?

The people of Jerusalem "were not willing" to surrender to Jesus's care. In what area of your life are you "not willing" to submit to the authority and tender care of Jesus Christ?

What common element does Jesus point out about the Pharisee's actions? (23:5)
Confess any areas of your own life that are motivated by sinful attention seeking.

How would you characterize Jesus' tone in this passage? Does this passage fit with your concept of who Jesus is? Why or why not?

Matthew 24-25

Jesus will return gloriously. In His final teaching, He prepares us for what to expect.

There are many unknowns concerning our future. How does Jesus's description of the end times give warning and comfort about how we are to live in the waiting?

What comfort does 24:35 provide when considering Christ's return?

When you consider the return of Christ, what feelings does it stir in you and why?

What distractions are a hindrance to your posture as a believer in waiting?

Matthew 26

The passion narrative begins. Jesus, meek and lowly, walks faithfully the path to His death.

The passover meal was observed annually to remember God's deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians. The Israelites were spared when they sacrificed a spotless lamb and smeared its blood across the doorframe of their home. How does Jesus change the meaning of the Passover meal in 26:26-29?

How is Jesus' prayer in the garden an example to us?

Hymns were sung as a part of the Passover meal. They most likely sang Psalms 113-118 or Psalm 136. Read these chapters. How does it increase your worship knowing Jesus sang these hymns before being betrayed in the garden.

When you hear that the culture is growing increasingly hostile to your faith, is your reaction more like Peter's or like Christ's?

Matthew 27

On this day, we see the sovereignty of God, the cost of sin, the depravity of humanity and the love of King Jesus on display like no other day in history.

Compare 27:27-31 with Matthew 5:10. How do you see Jesus living out His earlier words in this section?

Why doesn't Jesus "come down from the cross" as the crowds challenge Him to do?

List the ways Jesus is mocked in verses 27:39-44. How are these statements similar to the ways Satan tempts Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11?

Look up Psalm 22. Read it slowly. Why do you think Jesus chose to reference this particular psalm?

Matthew 28

He is Risen! The story continues through us.

In a culture that didn't consider a woman's testimony to be legally binding, why is it significant that two women are the first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection?

What statements does Jesus make to encourage the disciples as He commands them to go out on mission?

Look all the way back to 1:21-23. Compare it to 28:20b. How does the last sentence of Matthew's Gospel point to its beginning? What does Matthew want us to conclude?

Comprehension

Interpretation



Application