

## **THE PURPOSE OF LEADER GUIDES**

These leader guides are intended for you, the leader, to help plan your discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the theology of the lessons and to ensure that you have understood what the students should have learned from completing their homework. Leader Guides are not designed to do the homework for you! Please refer to them after you have completed your assignment as a student.

These guides can assist you in preparing the lesson plans that you want to use for leading the discussions. This is not the only way to lead your discussion of the Scriptures, but it is one way that you could approach the material.

Please bathe your preparation time in prayer. The Holy Spirit must be your guide as you plan to lead these discussions. As you focus on God's Word, the Spirit will use the Word to work in whatever way is needed in each individual's heart—conviction, instruction, consolation, exhortation, etc.

Keep in mind that learning is enhanced when your students are encouraged to verbalize what they've learned. Asking questions will help them to reason through the Scriptures they have studied. Ask the "5 Ws and an H" kinds of questions (Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How). Asking these kinds of questions requires the student to reason and give more than a yes or no answer.

Visual aids can be a tremendous asset in helping your students to reason through the Scriptures, and you should make every effort to incorporate some sort of visual aid in your discussions. These discussion guides will give you some ideas for visual aids, but please feel free to adapt, change, or even replace these with your own ideas.

*Matthew Part 1 Leader Guide*

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## MATTHEW PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 1

### Lesson emphasis

- Jesus, Messiah and King
- Matthew 1–2

To begin this discussion you might ask your group what part of these chapters made the most impression on them and why. Give them a few minutes to share.

Then you might direct your class to look at their Observation Worksheets of Matthew 1–2 and their At A Glance charts as they discuss this lesson.

As an additional visual aid, you could list some of the descriptions of Jesus as your class mentions them. See the end of this guide for an example.

You might ask your students what the main emphasis is for Matthew 1 and then for chapter 2. What is the main point about Jesus in each chapter?

Matthew 1—Jesus is Messiah

Matthew 2—Jesus is King of the Jews

Then ask about the main events in chapters 3 and 4.

Matthew 3—John the Baptist preaching “Repent”/ Jesus’ baptism

Matthew 4—Jesus tempted / 4 disciples called / Jesus’ ministry begins

Ask if your students saw a common theme that ties together these four chapters.

Fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy

### MATTHEW 1

You could begin discussing chapter 1 by questioning your class about where Matthew 1 divides and what the two parts are about.

1:1-17 Jesus’ genealogy

1:18-25 His birth

## Matthew 1:1-17

What does verse 1 say about Jesus? Why was/is that important?  
Let your group discuss what they learned at each point.

He's Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham

Messiah means Christ—the Anointed One, the One God promised to send (John 1:41).

Son of David

—Jesus fulfilled the promises God made about David's descendant on his throne forever; 2 Samuel 7:8-13, 16; 2 Chronicles 13:5; 21:17; Psalm 89:3-4, 29; Isaiah 9:6-7 and Jeremiah 23:5-6.

Joseph was a son of David (descendant of David) Matthew 1:1-17, 20.  
The right to inherit David's throne and kingdom came through Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, Mary's husband.

Son of Abraham

—as a son (descendant) of Abraham, Jesus fulfilled the promise God made in Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6. He is the One from Abraham through Whom all families of the earth can be blessed, the seed (Galatians 3:16).

Why are verses 1-17 of Matthew 1 so important?

It gives verification for Jesus' legitimate place as Messiah and King of the Jews, His legal right to the throne of David. This genealogy begins the many Old Testament prophecies which Jesus fulfilled.

If your group studied Kings / Chronicles and any of the Old Testament prophets, you might ask if any of the names in this genealogy are familiar to them.

Also ask what they learned when they studied about the **women** listed.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the ones commonly called “the fathers” in the Old and New Testament. They're the fathers of Israel. God changed Jacob's name to Israel.

Jacob (Israel) had the 12 sons called the 12 tribes of Israel. Judah was one of them. Tamar, his daughter-in-law, deceived Judah and had twins by him.

When the nation of Israel went to inherit their land, the first city they conquered was Jericho. That's when and where Rahab the harlot lived. She believed in the Lord and became part of David and Jesus' genealogy.

Then when the judges ruled Israel, Boaz married the Moabite widow Ruth. She followed the Lord from Moab to Israel because of her mother-in-law Naomi. Ruth and Boaz were King David's (Israel's second king) great-grandparents.

Bathsheba was David's wife and Solomon's mother, but she became David's wife through the sins of adultery and murder.

The people in Jesus' genealogy were not perfect; only He is.

The list in verses 7-11 contains the names of the kings of Judah—the Southern Kingdom after the split from Israel.

God judged His people for their sins by destroying Jerusalem and sending them into captivity to Babylon for 70 years. That was a significant event of Israel's history as were Abraham and David significant men.

### **MATTHEW 1:18-25**

What significant event is the rest of Matthew 1 about?

Messiah's birth, Jesus the Christ

Mary, a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph, a righteous man, kept her a virgin until after Jesus' birth.

The angel of the Lord told him what to name Jesus and why.

His name and birth fulfilled Old Testament promises from the Lord God to Israel.

### **Why was Jesus' virgin birth important? Why did He become a man?**

Matthew recorded that it fulfilled the prophecy from Isaiah.

Romans 5:12; 6:23

Sin entered into the world and brought death to all men.

The payment for sin is death.

All men sinned.

Except Jesus—as He didn't have the sin of His father passed to Him.

His Father is God, and His mother was a virgin.

Hebrews 2:9, 14-17

Jesus became man to taste death for everyone.

No other man could pay the penalty for others because he would pay his own penalty.

John 1:29; Hebrews 10

The blood of bulls and goats didn't take away sins.

Jesus, the Lamb (sacrifice) of God did.

What are the names given to Messiah in these verses? Who named Him?

The angel of the Lord told Joseph to name Him Jesus—He'll save His people from their sins.

God through Isaiah prophesied that His name would be Immanuel, meaning, "God with us." The One Who was to save His people came to live among them.

## **MATTHEW 2**

You can use the map as a visual aid for this chapter. You have permission to show it with a projector for your discussion.

What, who, where, and when is this chapter about?

In the days of Herod, King of Judea, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea as the King of the Jews.

All fulfilled what was written by the prophets in the Old Testament.

What is the series of events in verses 1-12? Where was Jesus?

After Jesus was born, magi from the east went to Jerusalem to find "the King of the Jews." They had come to worship Him. So they were asking where to find Him.

Herod heard about it, and it troubled him. So he found out from those who knew the Scriptures (chief priests and scribes) where "Messiah" was to be born.

In this chapter "Messiah" is the same as the "King of the Jews," verses 1-4.

The chief priests and scribes quoted a reference from the Old Testament prophet Micah to tell Herod that Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem in Judah.

They also quoted that He was the ruler who was to shepherd God's people Israel.

Then Herod secretly met with the magi to determine the time of His birth. He sent them to Bethlehem to find the Child.

The star led them to the house where the Child was. They presented gifts and worshiped Him. God warned them not to return to Herod so they went home a different way.

What happened in verses 13-18? Where was Jesus?

The angel of the Lord told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt because Herod was about to look for Him to kill Him.

That was also to fulfill what the prophet Hosea wrote.

Enough time went by for Herod to determine that the magi weren't going to come and tell him where the Child, "the King of the Jews," was in Bethlehem.

He was so enraged that he had all the boys 2 years and under killed in Bethlehem and its vicinity. (Jesus was probably about 2 years old at that time.)

Why did Herod want to kill Jesus?

There was a clash of the Kings of Judea—Kings of the Jews.

Jesus was on the scene, and Herod was concerned he would lose his throne.

The horrible murders Herod ordered in Bethlehem were also prophesied in Jeremiah.

What were the events of verses 19-23?

The angel of the Lord told Joseph to return to Israel after Herod died.

As Herod's son Archelaus was King in Judea, the Lord warned Joseph to go to the Galilee area in Israel. They settled in Nazareth—also fulfilling what the prophets spoke.

Ask why Matthew began with Jesus' genealogy. And why did he quote so much of the Old Testament?

Matthew was showing who Jesus is—proof that He is the One promised, the Messiah, the One Who will save His people from their sins.

Matthew reasoned the Scripture as Paul did in Acts 17:1-3.

Encourage your class to ask the Lord to open the door of opportunity to share with others what they are learning. Many people, even some in churches, don't really know what God's Word says about Who Jesus is.

**Matthew 1:** Messiah  
son of David  
son of Abraham

Jesus—save

Immanuel—God with us

**Matthew 2:** King of the Jews  
Shepherd God’s people Israel  
God’s Son

## MATTHEW PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 2

### Lesson emphasis

- Jesus and John the Baptist
- Repentance and the kingdom
- Matthew 3–4

### REVIEW

To begin this discussion you might ask what Matthew 1–2 are about.

Suggest that your students look at their At A Glance charts for this part of the discussion.

*NOTE: You can do that each discussion to help them complete the At A Glance chart if they're not doing it on their own.*

**Matthew 1**—Jesus is Messiah; His genealogy and birth

Son of David  
Son of Abraham  
Jesus—will save His people from their sins.  
Jesus was born of virgin, fulfilling a prophecy of Isaiah.  
Immanuel, God with us.

**Matthew 2**—Jesus is King of the Jews  
Messiah and King are both prophesied in the Old Testament.  
God's Son

Does Matthew 3 immediately follow Matthew 2 in time?

No, chapter 3 is about Jesus as an adult.

What repeated element from chapters 1–2 is also repeated in chapters 3–4?

Prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus.

### MATTHEW 3

Who does this chapter begin with? How was he described? What did he do?  
You might list the main points of chapters 3 and 4 as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.  
See the last page of this guide for a suggestion.

**John the Baptist preached in the Judean wilderness.**

He wore clothes of camel's hair with a leather belt and ate locusts and wild honey.

His message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Isaiah prophesied that he was the one who made the paths straight for the Lord's coming.

Who do verses 5-6 tell about?

The people (Jews) of Jerusalem, Judea, and district around the Jordan River went to be baptized by John "as they confessed their sins."

It seems that they took his message of repentance seriously.

What / with whom is the contrast in verse 7?

"But . . ."

Many Pharisees and Sadducees went to be baptized by John.

John called them a brood of vipers and asked who had warned them to flee the wrath (they were facing) to come.

How did John explain his meaning in verses 8-9?

He called them to produce fruit (evidence) of repentance.

Just because they were Jews (sons of Abraham) didn't mean that they were ready for the kingdom of heaven.

Repentance was required. John said that repentance is shown in fruit.

Ask your students what "repent" means. Give time for discussion of the fruit in keeping with it.

Vipers are poisonous snakes, very deadly.

repent—*metanoēō*—to change the mind, relent <sup>1</sup>  
an *after-thought*, *different* from the former thought; then, a *change of mind* which issues in *regret* and in *change of conduct*.<sup>2</sup>

To bear fruit in keeping with repentance would mean a life that changes, showing that one's mind has changed.

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<sup>1</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G3340.

<sup>2</sup>Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002). 1:23.

Should the Pharisees and Sadducees have known from the Old Testament about repentance, confessing and turning from sins? Ask your group what they learned from the references they studied.

Isaiah

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts.  
And let him “return” to the Lord.

Jeremiah

“Return” to Me and acknowledge your iniquity.

Deuteronomy

“Return” to the Lord and obey Him.

It’s the same message as John preached. It involves a changed life.

How did John continue in verses 10-12?

If one does not produce good fruit, then that one ends up in the fire (the unquenchable fire of God’s wrath). This is illustrated in verses 10 and 12.

The One coming is the One Who will burn the chaff (the unrepentant ones).  
That One is Jesus.

What does verse 11 say about Jesus? What does this verse mean according to its immediate context?

John baptized with water for repentance.

Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

“Baptize” means to be identified with, united with.<sup>3</sup>

John called the people of Israel to repent because the kingdom was at hand.

Jesus is the One who places people into unity with the Holy Spirit and with the unquenchable fire (verses 11 and 12). One or the other—baptized with the Holy Spirit or judgment.

What are verses 13-17 about?

Jesus went to be baptized by John at the Jordan River, and John knew that he needed to be baptized by Jesus.

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<sup>3</sup>James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). G907.

Jesus' words in verse 15 changed John's mind.

“us”—John and Jesus

“in this way”

“at this time”

“fulfill all righteousness”

John 1:31 says that Jesus' baptism manifested (showed) Him to Israel.

What happened after Jesus was baptized?

The Spirit descended on Him as a dove.

God's voice from heaven declared Jesus as God's beloved Son, pleasing to Him.

The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus the Son and God the Father spoke—the Trinity.

#### **MATTHEW 4**

What's the next event right after Jesus' baptism?

The Spirit led Him to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

It's stated as though it were planned.

The devil didn't sneak up on God and catch Jesus by surprise.

What does Hebrews 4 say that relates this to us?

Jesus was tempted in all points as we are.

But He didn't sin.

We can learn how to resist temptation from understanding how He did.

Ask your group what they learned from Jesus' temptations.

Verses 2-4, 1<sup>st</sup> temptation

Jesus was hungry because He'd fasted 40 days and nights.

The devil tempted Him to turn stones to bread.

Jesus' answer was that man didn't live by bread alone—physical life—but by God's Word—spiritual life.

He quoted Deuteronomy.

When we're tempted to satisfy our own physical needs, we need to remember that God is the One who does that according to His promises.

We need to trust God's provision for our physical needs.

#### Verses 5-7, 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation

The devil tempted Jesus, as God's Son, to test God's care for Him.

Again Jesus quoted God's Word about not testing God.  
We need to trust God's care for us.

#### Verses 8-10, 3<sup>rd</sup> temptation

Jesus was the King, the One Who was to rule all the nations.  
But that's not until His second coming.

The whole world lies in the evil one's power, 1 John 5:19.

In the account in Luke 4, the devil indicates he could give it to whomever he wishes.

The devil tempted Jesus to take at the present what was to be His in the future.  
Jesus told the devil that God said not to worship any but Him.

Ask your class what they learned for their lives from how Jesus handled temptations.

Use the truth of God's Word to combat the false.

What are verses 12-17 about? What is the time reference?

From the time that Jesus heard John the Baptist was taken into custody, He began to preach the same message that John had.

Where was Jesus when He preached this message?

Direct your group to look at their maps to help with this part of the discussion.

He left Nazareth and settled in Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee.  
It's in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, "Galilee of the Gentiles."

Again that fulfilled what Isaiah wrote.

Those who sat in darkness saw the light of Jesus—the light of the world.

They heard His message of light—"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

What happened in verses 18-22?

Jesus called two sets of brothers to follow Him, and they did—immediately.

Repent—turn

Follow—go in Jesus' direction, not your own

Simon (Peter) and Andrew left their nets to follow Jesus.

James and John left their boat and their father to follow Jesus.

Ask what your class learned about the “kingdom” from the Old Testament references in this lesson.

1 Samuel 8:4-7

God was the King of Israel, but they wanted to be like the other nations so rejected Him as their King and asked for a man instead.

Psalms 47; 103:19

God's throne is in heaven, and He rules over all.

He's the King of all the earth.

He reigns over the nations and sits on His holy throne.

Daniel 4:24-26; 7:13-14

Daniel interpreted a dream for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon—the major world power at that time. He needed to realize that heaven (God Most High) ruled and gave rule on earth to whomever He chose.

One like a Son of Man was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all nations will serve Him. His kingdom will not be destroyed, His dominion is everlasting.

That was prophecy about Jesus. Those were some of the prophecies that the Jews of Jesus' time knew about God's kingdom and the coming King.

What did the other Gospels say about this?

Mark 1:9-15

After John had been taken into custody, Jesus said that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God (same as kingdom of heaven) is at hand.

Repent and believe.

“Gospel” means good news. The good news was that the kingdom was at hand.

Luke 3:2-9, 18; 4:14-15, 43-44

John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.

Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.

He preached the good news to the people as Jesus did.

Ask what your students learned from Acts about this.

For 40 days after Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to the 11 disciples and spoke to them about the kingdom of God.

Paul testified about the kingdom of God and Jesus from the Law and the Prophets.

The good news about the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, is still relevant for now. The King is Jesus. We need to be following Him and taking the message of repentance to the lost. It's good news that they can repent and become part of God's eternal kingdom.

You might end your discussion by asking what verses 23-25 are about.

This gives information about Jesus' ministry.

You could use the map at this point to show the various places mentioned.

Jesus was teaching in the synagogues,  
proclaiming the gospel (good news) of the kingdom,  
healing every kind of disease and sickness—demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics.

Large crowds followed Him.

Encourage your class to ask the Lord for opportunities to share the good news of the kingdom.

Matthew 3

John B  
repent—  
*kingdom* of heaven is at hand  
  
bear fruit in keeping with  
repentance  
  
Jesus baptized—God's Son

Matthew 4

Jesus tempted by the devil  
  
John B in custody  
Jesus: repent—  
*kingdom* of heaven is at hand  
  
healing and proclaiming  
gospel of the *kingdom*

## MATTHEW PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 3

### Lesson focus:

- Matthew 5
- Righteousness to enter the kingdom of heaven

### REVIEW

Begin by reviewing the main points of Matthew 1–4. Then help your students connect this to Matthew 5.

Ask what Matthew 1 and 2 are about.

Jesus is Messiah; His genealogy and birth  
Jesus is King; to Egypt and Nazareth

There is a possible visual aid at the end of this guide that will help your group see how chapter 5 fits with Matthew 1–4. You can add the points as your group reviews.

Ask about Matthew 3 and 4.

John the Baptist—repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand  
bear fruit in keeping with repentance

Jesus' baptism

Jesus tempted; beginning of His ministry

preached repent . . . , proclaimed gospel of the kingdom

What theme ties together these chapters as well as chapter 5?

King and kingdom

Though Matthew 1 does not say that Jesus is King, it does say that He is the Son of David.

*NOTE: As your group discusses, be careful not to let the discussion get more detailed than the lesson or you will run out of time. The Sermon on the Mount Precept Upon Precept course is a more detailed study of Matthew 5–7. Also available are two devotional studies, Lord, Only You Can Change Me (Matthew 5:1-16) and Lord, I'm Torn Between Two Masters (Matthew 5:17–7:29).*

## MATTHEW 5

Ask how chapter 5 relates to the end of chapter 4.

Large crowds from various places followed Jesus.  
He healed them, taught them, and proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom to them.

Matthew 5 describes the righteousness, fruit of repentance, of those who are part of the kingdom of heaven.

*NOTE: If someone asks about who Jesus spoke to, His disciples or the crowds, you can refer them to 7:28. His disciples were there with Him, and the crowds could hear Him too.*

Ask your class how they divided the chapter. What are the two main divisions? Why these divisions?

1-16: those who are blessed; salt and light

17-48 is about the Law.

### Verses 1-16

Since this is not a detailed study on Matthew 5, one way to encourage your students to discuss without getting too detailed is to ask how verses 1-16 divide and how the segments relate to one another.

1-2 give the setting for Jesus' teaching

3-12 seem to describe the character of those who are part of the kingdom of heaven, believers. It says they are blessed, their current condition.

Discuss the character described in the verses and how it applies to believers.

How do the cross-references relate to these verses?

This kind of character will involve denying ourselves, counting all things loss for His sake, learning to be content in whatever our circumstances.

Like Moses we may be faced with choosing the reproach of Christ rather than physical riches, because we are looking forward to what is promised, rather than at our circumstances. Our imperishable inheritance is reserved in heaven for us.

Persecution is momentary, light affliction compared to the glory in the future.  
The proof of our faith in these trials is more precious than gold.

Do we really look at it as a blessing when we are persecuted or when we must deny ourselves in order to live in a godly manner?

What's the last of these three segments?

13-16—a person with the character described in verses 3-12 is salt and light. And being salt and light can cause persecution and reviling from the world, just as the prophets were persecuted. Jesus gives the reason for the persecution: “because of Me.” But others in the world are looking for that light.

What is salt connected with?

The blessed are salt of the earth—those who are part of the kingdom.

Salt makes food taste better.

What do verses 14-16 say about light? Compare this with the 1 John 1 and Ephesians 5 cross-references.

The blessed are the light of the world.

Light has to shine.

God is light and in Him is no darkness.

Believers, the blessed, are not in darkness any more. They've repented, turned.

Walk as children of Light, trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

If we walk in the Light, we have fellowship with one another and Jesus' blood cleanses us.

The fruit will be goodness, righteousness, and truth.

Believers will call to those in darkness: Arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Encourage your class to examine their lives according to this.

#### Verses 17-48

How do verses 17-48 relate to verses 1-16?

It's about Jesus' relationship to the Law

and the relationship of the Law to those who are part of the kingdom.

The Jews knew that blessing came from keeping God's commandments.

In verses 17-48 Jesus explained how the character qualities of verses 3-16 fit with keeping the Law.

Ask what your group learned about the Law from verses 17-20, then help them relate this to 21-48.

Jesus came to fulfill it. It will all be accomplished.

He stressed the importance of obedience, keeping every command and teaching others to do the same in verse 19.

To enter the kingdom of heaven, one's righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Verses 1-16 describe this righteousness, which is the fruit of repentance.

How do verses 21-48 relate to this?

They also show what righteousness looks like.

Let your students share how any or all of this relates to them.

Verses 21-26

Jesus made anger equal with murder.

Even calling a brother a fool made one guilty to go to the fiery hell.

Be reconciled with your brother.

Seek to reconcile quickly even with opponents, before you're taken before the judge and must pay the penalty.

Verses 27-30

Jesus defined adultery as looking, lusting.

It's a matter of the heart, just as is anger toward a brother.

He did not mean to literally mutilate one's body to get rid of whatever part was leading to sin. This shows the seriousness of sin, that it must be dealt with.

Verses 31-32

Jesus said that divorce, except for unchastity, causes adultery.

Divorce is not simply a matter of giving the wife a certificate of divorcement.

*NOTE: Encourage your class to study the Precept Upon Precept course Marriage Without Regrets if they want to study more about marriage and divorce.*

Verses 33-37

Jesus said not to make oaths.

In situations where a vow is made, keep it.

How would this relate to verses 31-32?

Verses 38-42

Restitution—an eye for an eye, a life for a life, Exodus 21:22-25.

Jesus told how to respond to personal injury.

Go beyond the just penalty and do kindness to the one who was trying to harm you.

He again brought the Law back to being a matter of the heart. The character of one who is part of the kingdom will be seen—humility, gentleness, a dying to self, purity of heart. Turn the other cheek, give your coat also, go an extra mile, don't turn away from one who wants to borrow—these are all examples.

Verses 43-47

Love your enemies.

“Hate your enemy” had been added. It was not part of the Law.

Loving one's enemy, one's persecutor, is righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. It's easy to love those who love you.

Ask how Leviticus 19:18 relates and then how the other cross-references relate to Matthew 5:38-47.

Love your enemies. Don't take personal revenge. Wait for the Lord; He will repay.

Pray for those who persecute you. Bless them; don't curse. Overcome evil with good—give food and drink to the hungry and thirsty enemy.

Be at peace with all men as much as possible.

1 Peter 3:8, 14 sounds a lot like the description of those who are blessed: sympathetic, kindhearted, humble in spirit. If you suffer for the sake of righteousness, you're blessed.

It's better to suffer for doing what's right than for doing what is wrong.

The one who lives this way is bearing fruit in keeping with repentance—a heart change.

You could end by discussing verse 48. Ask your group what perfect means in this context.

*teleios*—that which has reached its end, complete, wanting in nothing<sup>4</sup>

One who is perfect as the Father is fulfilling the Law from the heart, not lacking in any area. This is bearing fruit in keeping with repentance, turning from how we used to live to living as one who is part of the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>4</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G5046.

- Chapter 1 }  
2 } Messiah / King
  
  - 3 John B: Repent, kingdom of heaven is at hand  
Bear fruit in keeping with repentance
  - 4 Jesus: Repent, kingdom . . . .
  - 5 Righteousness to enter kingdom of heaven
- } kingdom

## MATTHEW PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 4

### Lesson emphasis

- Matthew 6–7
- Seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness

### REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask what Matthew 1–4 is about.  
Tell your students to look at their At A Glance charts for this part of your discussion.

Matthew 1–2	Jesus is Messiah, Son of David, King of Jews
Matthew 3–4	John and Jesus preached
	“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

What is Matthew 5 about? How does this chapter relate to 1–4?

To enter the kingdom one must be righteous.  
But the righteousness must surpass the scribes and Pharisees’ hypocritical righteousness.

This righteousness is not merely an external keeping of the Law, but fulfilling the Law.  
Not angry, not lusting . . . love and pray for those who persecute you.

### MATTHEW 6

How does this chapter continue Jesus’ teaching on the mountain?

Beware of practicing your righteousness to be noticed by men instead of the Father.

Jesus continued His explanation of righteousness that exceeded the scribes and Pharisees’ righteousness. They paraded their “righteousness” to be noticed by men, but to God it was not righteousness at all.

They had no reward from the heavenly Father.  
Their reward was full on this earth—being noticed by men.

This chapter gives illustrations of practicing righteousness before men.  
Jesus continued to describe the character and actions of one who enters His kingdom.

As a visual aid, you might list the main points of Matthew 6–7 as your discussion progresses.

What are the three areas Jesus began with in this chapter? What did you learn about each?

Giving, verses 2-4

To the poor

Not as hypocrites who sound a trumpet to be honored by men  
They have their reward in full—now.

In secret, don't let left hand know what right is doing  
Before the Father in heaven to be rewarded by Him

Praying, verses 5-15

Not like the hypocrites (scribes and Pharisees, 5:20)  
They love to stand and pray in the synagogues, street corners  
To be seen by men

Inner room, in secret  
To the Father and He will reward  
Contrast with publicly to be seen by men  
Those have their reward in full—now.

There is another contrast in verse 7 with the way the Gentiles pray.  
They use meaningless repetition and many words.

What are verses 9-13?

This is usually referred to as the Lord's Prayer.

Did Jesus pray this prayer, or is it here for another reason?

Jesus said in verse 9 to “pray in this way.” He gave a pattern for prayer, taught how to pray. This is in the Sermon on the Mount which describes the righteousness of those who enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ask your group what they learned about the Lord's Prayer from Matthew and Luke.

Jesus gave a pattern for prayer.  
Worship and praise of the Father  
Praying according to His kingdom and His will—submission  
Asking for daily provision from Him  
Confession and forgiveness of sin  
Asking for deliverance  
Closing with worship / praise

How is this pattern a contrast to the way the hypocrites prayed?

Discuss application.

Fasting, verses 16-18

Don't put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites to be noticed by men.  
They have their reward in full.

Anoint your head, wash your face—look good, normal.  
Not noticed by men  
Noticed by Father in secret

You might ask your group what fasting is and why it's done.

It's doing without food / drink for a period of time.  
Fasting was for several reasons, one being for God to listen when connected with prayer.

Someone in your group might have noticed that “do not” is used ten times in this chapter, and three more times in chapter 7.

What did Jesus say not to do?

Mainly, don't be like the hypocrites—the religious leaders of the day.  
Don't practice righteousness before men to be seen by them.

What are verses 19-34 about, and how does this relate to verses 1-18?

Don't store up treasures on earth, but in heaven.  
Your heart will be where your treasure is.

Don't worry about life, food, clothing, tomorrow.  
Instead seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, then He'll add these things to you.

Relate this to asking Him for daily bread in the pattern for prayer.

Verses 8 and 32 both say that the Father knows the need even before He's asked to meet it. He knows, and He'll provide—no need for worry, anxiety.

How do the Proverbs 3 cross-references relate to this?

Similar to what Jesus said in Matthew are the statements to trust the Lord and His ways in one's life, not our own. Give from the first of one's wealth to Him, and He'll fill us with what we need. All these things will be added to us if we seek Him first.

Give your group time for discussing how this is relevant now.

Help them see the connection of seeking first God’s kingdom and His righteousness and what the hypocrites did.

## MATTHEW 7

How does Jesus’ flow of thought continue in this chapter?

Don’t judge by your own standard of measure . . . verse 5, hypocrite.  
“Judge” means to make a decision.

The eye is mentioned again here as in 5:29 and 6:22-23.  
Might this be about one’s focus? Heaven or earth / God’s righteousness or self-righteous?

Ask your group what they learned about judging from the cross-references in this lesson.

John 7:24

Jesus spoke of righteous judgment in Matthew 7.

Making decisions, judgments regarding brothers should be based on God’s righteous standard, not one man came up with.

Romans 2:1-3

This also parallels what Jesus taught about removing a beam from one’s own eye before trying to get a speck out of a brother’s.

Those who judge others for what they also practice will be judged by God.

James 2:13

Showing mercy is always a good thing to do. Mercy is part of righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful . . .

Direct your discussion back to Matthew 7:6-12.

Ask your students what these verses are about.

Asking, giving, and receiving

Verse 6 begins with another “do not.”

Use good judgment; make a wise choice about what to give to whom.

This can apply to giving out biblical knowledge. Be wise, use good judgment.

Those who keep asking, seeking, and knocking will find what they seek.

Seek first God’s kingdom and righteousness.

Hunger and thirst for righteousness and you’ll be filled.

The Father knows how to give good gifts to His children—ask Him.

Ask for needs

Ask for wisdom

How does verse 12 fit with Matthew 5:1–7:11?

The Law and Prophets can be summarized in treating others as you want to be treated.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught about righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. He told of righteousness toward God—seek His kingdom and His righteousness. But here is that righteousness directed also toward men.

What are verses 13-14 about? Relate this to Matthew 5:20.

Those who enter the kingdom do so by a small gate, narrow way.  
Few find the way to life.

Many go through the wide gate to destruction.

To enter the kingdom one must have righteousness—God’s not man’s.

How do verses 15-27 further describe surpassing righteousness? What is the warning? Who is it about?

Beware of false prophets—know them by their fruits. Relate this to Matthew 3:8-12.

Fruit of repentance = surpassing righteousness.

Bad fruit = thrown into fire.

There were those who did “wonderful things” in the Lord’s name, but they’d never truly known Him—He never knew them.

The same happens now. This is a warning your group can apply daily.

Wisdom is hearing His Word and acting on it, resulting in righteousness.

Foolish people hear, maybe even do “wondrous things,” but don’t really act on the Word of God.

Jesus taught with authority—He’s the Messiah, King. The crowds were amazed.

Encourage your students to take what they’ve learned from this study and share it with others to lead them to true righteousness, to God’s kingdom.

You might encourage them to lead a group study on the Sermon on the Mount Precept course. Or use the “Lord” studies on Matthew 5–7.

**Matthew 6**

Beware of practicing righteousness before men  
giving  
praying  
fasting

Don't store up treasures on earth  
Don't worry } Seek first His kingdom, righteousness

**Matthew 7**

Judging—first take log out of your eye

Ask→given

Enter narrow gate

Beware false prophets—know by fruits

Enter kingdom

does Father's will

hears and acts on Jesus' words

## MATTHEW PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 5

### Lesson focus

- Matthew 8–10
- Jesus' authority

### REVIEW

Begin with a review of the previous chapters. Each week you can help your students understand how the chapters fit together. There is a brief visual aid at the end of this lesson's guide that will help with this.

Matthew 1–4 Jesus is Messiah, Son of David, King  
John and Jesus: Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand  
Bear fruit in keeping with repentance  
Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, healing

Matthew 5–7 righteousness to enter the kingdom

Ask about the difference in Matthew 1–4 and 5–7.

1–4 events  
5–7 teaching

How else is Matthew segmented?

“When Jesus had finished . . . .”

7:28 ends one segment.

8:1–11:1 is another segment.

Which chapters in this segment are events? Which is teaching?

8–9 events  
10 teaching

### MATTHEW 8

How does Matthew 8 relate to chapter 7?

Jesus taught on the mountain (5–7) and in 8:1, He came down from the mountain.

The crowds who heard Him on the mountain were amazed how Jesus taught with authority. Chapter 8 begins to show His authority in what He does.

Verses 2-5

What are verses 2-5 about, and what does this show about Jesus' authority?

He healed a leper.

The man understood something about Jesus' authority. He bowed to Him and said, "Lord, if You are willing . . . ."

Immediately he was cleansed. Jesus instructed him to tell no one, but follow the law as a testimony, a witness to the priest.

Verses 5-13

You might use a map here and ask about Jesus and Capernaum.

4:13—He settled there.

What happened in these verses?

Jesus healed a centurion's servant.

A centurion is a Roman military officer who commanded 100 men.  
This man also understood Jesus had authority.

Jesus marveled at his faith—greater than anyone in Israel.

What did Jesus say about the kingdom?

Many will come from east and west—Gentiles like the centurion—and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Gentiles will be in the kingdom with the repentant of Israel.

The sons of the kingdom  
    descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob  
    the unrepentant of Israel  
    will be cast into outer darkness

Ask how this relates to Matthew 3:7-10.

John told the Pharisees and Sadducees not to depend on being physical descendants of Abraham.

God is able to raise up children to Abraham from stones.

Verses 14-17

What is the next event, and who did it involve?

Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

He healed many demon-possessed, cast out spirits with a word, healed all who were ill.

What does verse 17 say about these healings?

It fulfilled what Isaiah prophesied.

Verses 18-22

How are these verses different?

This is about following Jesus.

It's the first time in Matthew that Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man.

Although He had authority to heal, He had no place to lay His head—no permanent home on earth.

Jesus said to follow Him and let the dead (spiritually dead) bury the dead. There's an urgency to follow Jesus now.

*NOTE: Some commentaries say that the man was asking to go home and stay until his father died and then follow Jesus, perhaps indicating he wanted his inheritance first.*

Verses 23-27

What are these verses about?

Jesus rebuked the winds and sea—authority over nature.

The fearful have little faith.

What kind of man was Jesus?

The Son of Man who is also Messiah and King.

Verses 28-34

You could ask where Jesus went and show this on a map.

Across the Sea of Galilee in the country of the Gadarenes.

Ask what your class learned about Jesus' authority from these verses.

Even the two demon-possessed men knew Jesus is God's Son.

The demons had to ask Jesus for permission to go into the herd of swine.

How did the people react to this?

After the herd was destroyed, the city asked Jesus to leave their region.

At this point, you can list what chapter 8 shows Jesus has authority over, then add to it as chapter 9 is discussed.

## **MATTHEW 9**

Where did Jesus go? What did He do? What does He have authority over in this chapter?

He went back across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum (his own city).

### Verses 2-8

He healed the paralytic and said that He has authority to forgive sins.

Some scribes thought Jesus blasphemed, but He even knew their thoughts.

The people were awestruck and glorified God, who had given this authority to the Son of Man.

### Verses 9-13

How are these verses different, and who is mentioned?

Verse 9 is more about following Jesus.

He called Matthew, a tax collector, who followed Him.

He ate with tax collectors and sinners which caused the Pharisees to ask why.

Jesus explained that it's the sick who need a physician.

He challenged the Pharisees to learn the meaning of an Old Testament quote that God desires compassion and not sacrifice. He came to call sinners, not those who thought they were righteous.

Encourage your students that believers should be willing to associate with the despised of the world to offer salvation and hope to them.

### Verses 14-17

What's the point Jesus made in these verses?

The Pharisees and John's disciples fasted.

But while Jesus the bridegroom was there, His disciples (attendants) didn't fast. When He's gone, then they'll fast.

What do verses 16-17 mean, and how do they relate to verses 14-15?

Jesus gave two pictures that showed the relationship between His ministry and John's.  
The old and the new don't mix.

Don't try to make the new conform to the old. Don't expect Jesus to do as John.

John marked the end of living under the Law and pointed toward the kingdom living that Jesus presented. This gospel of the kingdom didn't fit into living under the Law.

He represented the new.

#### Verses 18-34

Ask what Jesus has authority over and what your students learned from these verses.

Jesus healed a woman sick for 12 years because of her faith.

He raised a girl from the dead, and "This news spread throughout all that land."

Jesus healed two blind men who asked Him for mercy. They believed and their eyes were opened . . . according to their faith. Compare the result in verse 31 with verse 26.

He cast out demons again. The crowds were amazed because a mute man spoke.  
"Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

The Pharisees credited this to the ruler of the demons.

#### Verses 35-38

What are these verses about?

The One with authority is also compassionate. Compare verse 35 with 4:23.

He told His disciples to beseech (ask) the Lord of the harvest to send out workers.

Who is the Lord of the harvest, and what did He do?

### **MATTHEW 10**

How does this continue from 9:38?

Jesus sent out the twelve apostles, verses 5 and 16.

*NOTE: This is the first use of "apostles," which is literally, "one sent forth."*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1996). 2:30-31.

What is this chapter about?

Jesus instructed His twelve disciples before sending them out. However, there are principles in these instructions for all believers, too.

Jesus sent out the 12 as workers in the harvest.

He gave them authority over unclean spirits, disease and sickness, death.  
They had limited authority compared to Jesus' authority.

They were only to go to the lost sheep of Israel and preach the same message about the kingdom as John and Jesus.

Ask about Jesus' instructions and the type of reception they could expect.

Don't take money, extra clothes. A worker is worthy of his support.  
Stay at the house of one who is worthy and give it your blessing of peace.

Shake the dust from your feet of those who don't listen.  
It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Some will hand you over to the courts and scourge you. The Spirit will tell you what to say.

Brother will betray brother. His enemies will be members of his own household.  
You'll be hated by all . . . because of His name. There is a cost for following Christ.  
A disciple is not above his teacher. Compare verse 25 with 9:34.

The one who endures to the end will be saved.

According to the context, this is spiritual endurance, because verse 21 says they may be put to death and verse 28 speaks of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul.

*NOTE: There are varied explanations for what is meant in the second half of verse 23. Some believe this is evidence that at least part of this chapter is for all believers from Jesus' time to when He returns. Don't lose time here.*

Ask what else your class learned from Jesus' instruction/ teaching.

Be shrewd and innocent.

Beware.

Do not fear

those who malign

those who kill the body—fear Him who is able to destroy soul and body in hell

you are more valuable than sparrows.

Jesus will confess those before God who confess Him before men.  
Those who deny Him before men, He'll deny before His Father.

Those not worthy of Jesus  
    he who loves father, mother, son, or daughter more than Jesus  
    he who does not take up his cross and follow after Jesus

Ask what is meant by His reference to the cross.

Death . . . to self. Lose his life for Jesus' sake.

How did Jesus end this teaching? What did He say about rewards?

Receives you = receives Me = receives Him who sent Me.

Those who receive a prophet or righteous man will receive a reward.

The one who gives a cup of cold water to a little one in the name of a disciple will not lose his reward. Compare this with "reward" in Matthew 6:1-18.

How many times did Jesus tell those He sent out, "Don't fear"?

Verses 26-31, three times

What are verses 32-39 about? What does it cost to really follow Jesus? To be His disciple?

Take up your cross—the symbol of death  
Lay down your life—death to self

What is the righteous man's reward?

The kingdom of heaven

As those sent out by the Lord of the harvest, how are we to look at the lost sheep?

With compassion

Matthew 1–4

Jesus is Messiah, Son of David, King  
Repent, kingdom is at hand

Events

Matthew 5–7

Righteousness to enter kingdom

Teaching

Matthew 8–9

Jesus' authority  
    demons  
    all diseases  
    winds and sea  
    forgiveness  
    death

Events

Matthew 10

Jesus instructed and sent out 12 apostles  
    Gave them some authority

Instructions

## MATTHEW PART 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 6

### Lesson focus

- Matthew 11–12

### REVIEW

Direct your class to look at their At A Glance charts.  
Then ask them what Matthew 1–10 are about.

Matthew 1–4	Jesus is Messiah, Son of David, King of the Jews John, Jesus preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”
Matthew 5–7	Surpassing righteousness to enter the kingdom
Matthew 8–9	Jesus had authority, compassion to heal and forgive
Matthew 10	He gave some authority to 12 and sent them out Told them to preach that the kingdom was at hand

Ask them what they’ve learned so far about Jesus, about their Father in heaven, about the kingdom of heaven.

How does Matthew 11 begin?

When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples

Compare this with Matthew 7:28.

It’s a similar statement made when Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount.

How might these statements show segments in Matthew?

Matthew 1–4 are events regarding the King and kingdom.

Matthew 5–7 is the teaching about those entering the kingdom.

Matthew 8–9 are events demonstrating Jesus’ authority and compassion.

Matthew 10 is His instructions to the 12 apostles to whom He gave authority.

What begins, regarding the King and kingdom, in Matthew 11–12?

Jesus warned about opposition in chapter 10.

It begins in the events of chapters 11–12.

## MATTHEW 11

Who and what are verses 2-15 about?

John the Baptist was in prison because he confronted Herod's sin (Luke 3:19-20).  
John preached "repent" to all, even Herod.

He sent to ask Jesus if He was the Coming<sup>6</sup> (Expected) One.

Relate this question to Matthew 3:1-12.

John said that One was "coming" after him.  
He was to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (judgment).

Jesus had come but hadn't baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire yet, and John was in prison. As a result, John might have had some confusion about Jesus.

What was Jesus' answer to John?

Blind receive sight, lame walk, lepers cleansed, deaf hear, dead raised  
gospel preached to the poor—quote from Isaiah

Blessed is the one who does not take offense at (stumble over<sup>7</sup>) Me.

Ask your group why they think that Jesus answered John's question in this way.

What John prophesied about Jesus had not yet happened, but other prophecies about Him were being fulfilled.

He was the Coming One. He reassured John so that even he wouldn't stumble.

What did Jesus say about John?

He was a prophet and more—he fulfilled prophecy.  
He was Jesus' messenger as Malachi prophesied.

There was none greater than John among men.  
He would have been even the fulfillment of the prophecy about Elijah if the Jews of the day had repented. But they didn't.

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<sup>6</sup>*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). Mt 11:3 marginal note.

<sup>7</sup>*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). Mt 11:6 marginal note.

But those least in the kingdom are greater than John.

The total fulfillment of the kingdom was not during John's lifetime.

John was not part of the new covenant which Jesus brought about.

What did Jesus say about the kingdom?

The kingdom suffered violence from the time of John's preaching to the time of Jesus' preaching. The violent men were those opposing both John and Jesus—those who didn't repent, who took offense at Jesus, who thought they'd be in the kingdom because they were religious leaders of Israel. And opposition from unrepentant sinners like Herod.

This segment in Matthew tells about those unrepentant, those who thought they were part of the kingdom but were not. They think they're righteous, but it's not the righteousness to enter the kingdom.

### Verses 16-19

Who and what are these verses about?

That generation didn't have ears to hear the truth. They didn't repent, but took offense at Jesus. They were like children.

They accused John of having a demon and the Son of Man of being a glutton and a drunk, a friend of sinners and tax collectors. They openly and verbally opposed the truth.

### Verses 20-24

What did Jesus do/say?

Woe to the cities in Israel where most of His miracles took place.

Corazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were cities in Galilee—in Israel.

In the time of judgment it will be more tolerable for the wicked of Tyre and Sidon, which are not in Israel, who didn't see the miracles they did.

You might ask your class if they observed how many times “judgment” is used in Matthew 11–12.

These chapters describe those who will face judgment because they didn't repent because they stumbled over, took offense at, Jesus.

### Verses 25-30

How does what Jesus said in these verses fit into the context of Matthew 11?

Jesus knew that the Father had hidden these things about the kingdom from those with earthly wisdom and intelligence. They're revealed by Him—those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

The Father is revealed by the Son to those whom He wills.  
Spiritual understanding and wisdom come from God, not man.

Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him for rest.  
His yoke, unlike that of the Pharisees, is easy.

Ask your group what they've learned about compassion, gentleness, and humility from the King.  
Do they have rest for their souls?

## **MATTHEW 12**

How does the flow of thought continue? Relate the cross-references when relevant.

The sabbath was the day of rest.

Jesus contrasted the rest He can give with that of the legalists of His day.

God made the sabbath for man, to give him a day of rest.  
Jesus offers a life of rest for those who repent and believe in Him.

The Pharisees were offended at Jesus and His deeds and teaching about the sabbath. He reminded them of what the Law and Prophets said about the sabbath.

Something greater than the temple and the sabbath was there.  
He's Lord (Master, Ruler) of the sabbath.

Compare verse 7 with 9:13 and Hosea 6:6.

A heart of compassion is more desirable before God than legalistic sacrifices.  
Jesus continually demonstrated compassion.

Where did Jesus heal on the sabbath? Why?

In a synagogue

He entered their territory and did good on the day of rest.  
He demonstrated compassion to one under the Pharisees' influence.

Therefore, they left to conspire with the Herodians to destroy Jesus (Mark 3:6).

*NOTE: The Herodians are only mentioned three places in the New Testament. These were probably "men who were politically devoted to the Herodian family."<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup>Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett Falconer Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962). Mk 3:6.

Verses 15-21

How did Jesus fulfill Isaiah's prophecy?

He is/was God's Servant Whom God put His Spirit on.  
He proclaimed justice, which His opposition didn't like.

Jesus withdrew when the Pharisees conspired to destroy Him.  
He didn't quarrel with them, cry out against them...

He healed the needy ones . . . battered reeds, smoldering wicks.

Even though the leaders of Israel wanted to destroy Him, that was not the end of His ministry, proclamation—the justice He proclaimed was also offered to Gentiles for their hope.

Verses 22-37

What are these verses about? Bring in cross-references where they are relevant.

For the second time the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by the ruler of the demons.

He reasoned with them that Satan's kingdom was not divided against itself.  
Neither is God's kingdom which had come on them.

They spoke against the Holy Spirit being the One by whom Jesus cast out evil spirits, which was a testimony of who Jesus is. Compare this with 12:18. They spoke from their hearts as evil men who were to face judgment for their words. They were the bad trees with the bad fruit. They were the unrepentant ones, not forgiven, condemned by their own words.

Jesus has authority to forgive—the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, the propitiation for our sins. Even speaking against Him can be forgiven if one repents. Paul is a good example of this.

All have sinned, but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But those who spoke against the Holy Spirit were not only denying that Jesus is the Son of Man, but also that He is from God. They deliberately accused Him of working with the devil.

*NOTE: Some of those who initially spoke against Jesus, like Paul did, came to believe in Him and therefore were forgiven. But resisting the Holy Spirit / speaking against Him is unbelief.*

Verses 38-45

What is repeated in these verses? Who was Jesus still talking about?

Something greater than . . . is here.

He still spoke of “this generation,” the evil generation—specifically, Pharisees.

They asked for a sign. He said no, except for Jonah as a sign—3 days and nights.

Even evil Gentile Nineveh repented at Jonah’s preaching, but this generation didn’t repent at Jesus’ preaching—the One greater than the prophet Jonah.

Compare verses 41-42 with 11:20-24.

Another illustration of a Gentile who sought God’s wisdom was the Queen of the South in Solomon’s day. This is probably a reference to the Queen of Sheba.

Jesus is greater than Solomon, whom the scribes and Pharisees knew to be the wisest and wealthiest king of Israel. Jesus is greater than the greatest king.

The last point Jesus made about them was that their last state will be worse than their first. They were evil men when alive, but condemned to judgment.

They became more and more evil as He illustrated with telling about the evil spirits gathering others more wicked.

Verses 46-50

Who are these verses about? What truth is here?

Jesus’ family consists of the ones who do His and their Father’s will.  
Compare this with 7:21.

This is a contrast with that generation who didn’t repent and faced judgment.

Jesus’ family has rest, peace.

You might close by asking your class if they know for sure that they are a part of Jesus’ family. Have they repented? Do they do the will of the Father?

Matthew

1–4	Jesus—Messiah, Son of David, King Repent, kingdom of heaven at hand	Events
5–7	Righteousness to enter the kingdom	Teaching
8–9	Jesus’ authority	Events
10	Instructions and authority to apostles	Instructions
11–12		Events
	Jesus—Expected One healing, dead raised, gospel preached rest for weary, heavy-laden Lord of the Sabbath something greater than Jonah or Solomon	
	John—Messenger to prepare the way Elijah	
	This generation did not repent more tolerable for Tyre . . . in day of judgment evil and adulterous—crave for sign	



**MATTHEW PART 1**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 7**

**Lesson focus**

- Matthew 13
- Parables about the kingdom / judgment

**REVIEW**

To begin this discussion you can ask your group to look at their At A Glance charts.

Where were the statements about Jesus finishing words (teaching) or instructions?

Matthew 7:28            “When Jesus had finished these words . . . .”  
He finished the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 11:1           “When Jesus had finished giving instructions . . . .”  
He instructed His twelve disciples before sending them out.

Matthew 13:53           “When Jesus had finished these parables . . . .”  
He taught about the kingdom in parables.

What are chapters 1–4 about?

These are events that establish Jesus as Messiah and King.

John the Baptist was introduced. Both Jesus and John preached the same message,  
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

What was the teaching about in chapters 5–7?

Jesus described the righteousness of those who enter His kingdom.

He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets.

What are the events of chapters 8–10 about?

Jesus’ authority; He healed the sick, had compassion on sinners.

What did He give the twelve before sending them out to preach? What were they to preach?

He gave them some of His authority, but not all.

They were to preach, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

What's repeated in Matthew 11–12?

These chapters have a lot to say about those facing judgment, those who are unrepentant, the evil generation.

Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to follow Him to receive rest for their souls.

He's greater than the temple, the Sabbath, Jonah (a prophet), and Solomon (the wisest King of Israel).

Gentiles repented in the past, and He called those of Israel who could hear His message to repent, also.

### **MATTHEW 13**

What is this chapter about?

Jesus taught about His kingdom in parables.

#### Verses 10-17

Why did He speak in parables? What was the discussion about parables between Jesus and His disciples in these verses?

Most of the crowds following Him didn't see, hear, or understand.  
He spoke to those who didn't have ears to hear, those who didn't want to hear.

“Hear(s),” “hearing” is used 16 times in this chapter.

Jesus said that it was not given to them to know.  
Their lack of hearing and understanding fulfilled what Isaiah said about the people of Israel during His time and Jesus' time.

Weighed down with iniquity  
Revolted against God, abandoned Him, despised the Holy One

They turned away instead of repenting and turning to Him.  
They refused to listen to His call to repent and be cleansed.  
Their hearts were insensitive and their lips unclean.

Compare this with the Pharisees of Jesus' time.  
They accused Him of demonic activity and power.

Who can understand what He said in the parables?

His disciples, those who follow Him are the ones who know the mysteries of the kingdom. He's the One Who gives understanding.

“Understand(s),” “understood” is used six times in this chapter.

“Those who are outside [the kingdom] get everything in parables” (Mark 4:11).

What's the question Jesus asked in verse 51? The answer?

Have you, His disciples, understood all these things? Yes.

You might help your students apply this to themselves.

Are they willing to repent? Understand? Live righteously? Completely follow His leading? Do they really want to know the truth about the kingdom of heaven?

#### Verses 3-8, 18-23

What's the first parable? What does it mean?

The parable of the sower

The word of the kingdom was sown on four different types of soil.  
All four types initially responded to it, but only one truly understood it.  
Only one bore fruit.

Review what Matthew said about fruit and bring in the cross-references from Luke and John.

Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.  
False prophets are known, recognized, by their fruit.  
Bad can't produce good fruit, and good can't produce bad fruit.  
Fruit determines the outcome; bad cut down and burned.

Fruit shows what is in the heart (Luke 6:43-45).  
It shows one who is abiding in the vine, a proof that one is His disciple (John 15:1-8).

What does that indicate about the other three types of soil?

The devil snatched away the word of the kingdom.  
No fruit, no repentance

Affliction or persecution because of the word of the kingdom causes one to fall away.  
No fruit, no repentance, no following Jesus

Worry and wealth of the world choke the word of the kingdom.  
No fruit, no repentance, focus on this world

None of these enter the kingdom.

You might ask your students if this parable reminds them of any other teaching in Matthew. If so, allow a brief time for discussion.

Verses 24-30, 36-43

What's the second parable and its meaning?

The wheat and the tares

The devil mixes his sons in among the true sons of God's kingdom.  
The separation won't take place until the end of the age.

The angels will gather all stumbling blocks and those who commit lawlessness out of the kingdom and throw them into the fire of judgment.

Judgment is a repeated theme in Matthew 11–13.

Stumbling blocks and lawless ones are the unrepentant.

The righteous ones will shine in their Father's kingdom.

Compare the end of verse 43 with 11:15 and 13:9.

Verses 47-50

How does this parable compare with the tares and wheat?

The good are mixed in with the bad until the end of the age.

The sons of the devil, stumbling blocks and lawless ones, are called wicked.  
They're the ones headed for the fire of judgment.

The contrast is still with the righteous.

You might ask your group how this truth about the kingdom applies now. Give time for discussion.

Verses 31-33

What are these parables about? What truth about the kingdom of heaven?

God's kingdom began smaller on earth than the other ones, but becomes greater.

Ezekiel 31 and Daniel 4 are also passages where a tree represents a kingdom as in Matthew 13:32.

If appropriate, relate this to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6—focus on heavenly rather than earthly. At the time of Jesus' words, very few truly followed Him.

Relate this to the narrow and small gate of Matthew 7.

But what's the end of His kingdom?

Greater than all

Verses 44-46

What do these parables teach about the kingdom?

It's worth the price, the earthly price.

Seek first His kingdom and righteousness.

Verse 52

Who is this verse about? What is his benefit?

The scribes were the ones who wrote copies of the Law and the Prophets, God's Word. Jesus said that if one of them became His disciple, then he'd have the benefit of knowing God's Word already (treasure of Old Testament) and following the Lord Himself (treasure of new).

You might ask if any in your class knew God's Word before being saved. What is the benefit? Encourage them to teach the Bible to children and others who are not yet saved but will listen.

Verses 53-58

How did Matthew end this segment of his writing?

"When Jesus had finished these parables. . . ."

Parables about the kingdom, especially about those who are not part of it. Again, in this segment Jesus spoke about judgment repeatedly.

Where did Jesus go? What happened?

He went to His "hometown," here probably a reference to Nazareth and not Capernaum.

They knew His family.

It was a place of unbelief, not honoring Him for who He is. They took offense at Him. Compare this with Matthew 11:6. Even though they saw His power and were astonished at His teaching, they didn't honor Him.

It's a sad way for this study to end. But encourage your group to continue to study Matthew Part 2.

To conclude your discussion of the first part of Matthew, you might ask your students what they've learned in these seven weeks.

- About their compassionate King Who has authority over all?
- About His kingdom?
- About the message they need to give?
- About the lifestyle they need to live?
- About the price they should pay?

Give time for discussion.

Matthew

1–4	Jesus is Messiah and King Repent, kingdom of heaven at hand	King, kingdom, righteousness
5–7	Righteousness to enter His kingdom	
8–9	Jesus' authority, healing, to sinners	King's authority, apostles
10	Apostles sent out, authority	
11–12	Jesus—Expected One/ evil generation opposed	Opposition to kingdom
13	Parables of the Kingdom, judgment	