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Matthew

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Matthew

Overview and Summary.

A. The book of Matthew was written by the Apostle Matthew, formally called Levi, the tax collector. Matthew was his other name meaning “gift of the Lord”. He was an eyewitness of the events of Jesus’s ministry and left all to follow Him (Luke 5:27,28). He was one of the 12 disciples and according to church tradition, died a martyr in Ethiopia from a sword wound. The gospel is dated possibly as early as 50 AD, but certainly prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It is written from a Jewish perspective to demonstrate that Jesus is the King and Messiah of Israel. There are over 60 quotations from Old Testament prophecies emphasizing that Jesus is the fulfillment of those prophecies related to the Messiah.

B. Chapter One.

1. The chapter details the genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham, which again shows its Jewish emphasis. When compared with the corresponding genealogy contained in Luke, there are striking differences. Matthew’s genealogy contains the names of four gentile and one Jewish women. Tamar (Vs. 1:3) was the daughter-in-law of Judah, who posed as a prostitute to have Judah impregnate her. This preserved the bloodline that Judah had promised her but failed to deliver due to his first two sons dying. Rahab (Vs. 1:1) was a Canaanite inn keeper who the Bible calls a “harlot” (Vs. Joshua 2:1). She hid the spies sent from Joshua and later married Salmon (Vs. 1:4) who sired Boaz.
2. Boaz married Ruth (Vs. 1:5), a Moabite woman who, after her husband died, accompanied her Jewish mother-in-law back to Israel. The Moabites were descended from Lot and his daughters, and were excluded from the assembly of God for 10 generations (Deut. 23:3). Lot’s daughters feared that they were the only ones left after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra. They slept with their father after getting him drunk and were impregnated by him. Bathsheba is referred to as she “who had been the wife of Uriah” which recounts David’s adulterous relationship with her. She was the wife of one of his valiant men. She was most likely a Hittite, as was her husband. The last woman mentioned is Mary the mother of Jesus. She was a virgin who agreed to have the baby Jesus by means of the Holy Spirit, suffering the disgrace of what was viewed as having a

child out of wedlock. So, the genealogy of Christ shows the working of Divine grace in their lives.

3. Many have noted the difference of the genealogy recorded here with that of Luke 3:23-38. Matthew's genealogy presents Christ's lineage from Abraham whereas Luke works backward from Jesus to Adam. The differences can be reconciled when one realizes that Matthew's genealogy represents that of Joseph, while Luke's is that of Mary. The royal line is recorded through Matthew, while Christ's physical descent from David is recorded through Mary.
4. The balance of the chapter records how an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and assured him that Mary's pregnancy was of the Holy Spirit. Verse 24 is a reference to Isaiah 7:14 that "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son". Some Bible skeptics attempt to say that the Hebrew word virgin is "almah" which could mean young woman and not necessarily a virgin. However, Matthew is quoting from the Septuagint which was the Greek translation of the Old Testament by Jewish rabbis and Hebrew scholars who used the Greek word "parthenos" which is the specific word for virgin and not a more generic word for a young woman. Additionally, as the virgin birth was to be a sign, a child born to a young woman in itself is not a sign. The virgin birth was a fulfillment of prophecy of the coming Messiah.

C. Chapter Two.

1. Chapter 2 begins with the story of the Magi who came from the east (Vs. 2:1). Many scholars link them to the prophet Daniel, who was head of the magi due to his interpretation of dreams and prophetic visions. It is believed that he imparted his knowledge of a coming Messiah to the magi who would follow him. They inquire: "where is he that is born king of the Jews?" (Vs. 2:2). Although traditionally, they are depicted as being only three due to the three gifts they bring, in reality they were probably escorted by mounted troops to guard their journey. This is why Herod, who was very jealous of his position, was "disturbed and all Jerusalem with him" (Vs. 2:3). Herod inquires of his scribes who tell him of the prophecy in Micah that he would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2,4). Herod tries to trick the magi to go and find Jesus so that he can kill him. But they are warned in a dream not to return to Jerusalem and depart for their own country by another way.
2. Joseph is warned by an angel to flee with his family to Egypt, as Herod would kill the baby Jesus. Herod is furious and orders the death of all male boys under the

age of two in the region of Bethlehem. This fulfills another prophecy of “Rachel weeping for her children” (Jeremiah 31:15).

3. When Herod dies, an angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him to return to Israel with his family. He does so, but due to fear of Herod’s son Archelaus, settles in Nazareth. This fulfills still another prophecy that “out of Egypt I will call my son” (Hosea 11:1). Although Jewish readers of Hosea’s time would recognize this as referring to the nation of Israel, Matthew is pointing out the similarity of Jesus being called out of Egypt to Jewish readers as He being their Messiah. This is what is called a type or figure. That he is called a Nazarene is a little more difficult to pin down to a specific prophecy, as there is nothing in the Old Testament to that effect. However, as Nazareth was considered a place that was despised in first century Jewish thinking (John 1:46), it can be linked to Isaiah 53:3 “He was despised and rejected by mankind”.

D. Chapter Three.

1. We are introduced to John the Baptist. He is a wild man who dressed in clothes of camel hair and ate locusts and wild honey (Vs. 3:4). He is linked with the prophecy that one will be crying in the wilderness “prepare you the way of the Lord” (Vs. 3:3; Isaiah 40:3). His message was to repent “for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Vs. 3:2). He was baptizing those who came to him confessing their sins in the river Jordan (Vs. 3:5-6).
2. Jesus comes to John to be baptized. At first, John refuses, but Jesus tells him that it is to “fulfill all righteousness” (Vs. 3:15) and John consents. This seems confusing as John’s message was of the need for repentance of sins (Vs. 3:6). Jesus was sinless, so there was no need of confession and baptism for sin. Although there are several reasons the commentators present, they all agree that this was the announcement of Jesus’s public ministry as the one who is “God’s chosen one” (John 1:34).
3. When Jesus emerged from the water, the Holy Spirit like a dove descended upon Him and a voice from heaven declared: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Vs. 3:17). This was a manifestation of the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit were present.

E. Chapter Four.

1. After His baptism, He is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where he fasted for forty days and forty nights. The devil comes and tempts him with three

things: 1) to turn stones into bread 2) to jump off the highest temple where angels would prevent him from being hurt 3) to worship him and receive all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus resists him by quoting Scripture, the devil leaves him, and angels come and minister to him.

2. When Jesus hears that John has been put into prison, He returns to Galilee and moves to Capernaum, fulfilling another prophecy that the people in Galilee living in darkness have seen a great light (Vs. 4:15-16; Isaiah 9:1-2).
3. The remainder of the chapter records Jesus calling of His first disciples: Peter, Andrew, James and John. They were all fishermen. He then goes throughout Galilee preaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing the sick. Word begins to spread, and many come and begin to follow him.

F. Chapter Five, Six and Seven begin with the beatitudes, called such because of the blessings contained in verses 1:3-10. These chapters also contain what is called the greatest sermon ever preached, called the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus delivered it on a hillside above the shores of Lake Galilee. As it is a notable record of Jesus teaching, it needs to be read frequently in its entirety, and for that reason, will not be summarized here.

G. Chapter Eight records many healings Jesus performed, including a man with Leprosy, a gentile Roman centurion's servant and Peter's mother-in-law. He crosses the sea of Galilee in a boat and calms a storm. On the other side, he restores two demon possessed men. Some Bible critics point to the fact that the gospels of Mark (5:1-16) and Luke (8:26-39) only mention one man. All three gospels are correct as the authors record what they believe was important to them. Only one man delivered from demons desired to follow Jesus as is recorded in Mark and Luke. Matthew does not record what happened to the man after deliverance. All three gospels record that the demons pleaded with Jesus to be sent to a herd of pigs which then ran down to the ocean and drowned.

H. Chapter Nine records several miraculous acts of Jesus and His teachings.

1. Jesus heals a paralyzed man brought to him by several men. Seeing their faith, he tells the man: "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven" (Vs. 2). The teachers of the law accuse Him of blasphemy, as they know only God can forgive sin. Jesus knowing this, asks them what is easier to say, "your sins are forgiven" or to say,

“get up and walk”? (Vs. 5). Jesus then demonstrates His authority on earth to forgive sin by healing the man.

2. He calls Matthew to follow Him. Matthew is the author of this book and a tax collector. Tax collectors were despised by the Jews, as they worked for the Romans and often unjustly took more than what was owed for their own enrichment. Matthew follows Him and hosts a dinner at his house for Jesus and his disciples which was also attended by other tax collectors and sinners. When questioned by the Pharisees why he ate with sinners, Jesus responds: “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners’” (Vs. 12b-13).
3. John the Baptist’s disciples come to Jesus asking why they fast and his disciples do not. Jesus responds likening Himself to a bridegroom, and that when He is present, they do not fast but when He will be gone, that will be a time of fasting (Vs. 14-15).
4. Jesus gives the parable of the unshrunk cloth and new and old wineskins. This parable has been the topic of much discussion among the commentators. One interpretation is that the gospel of grace cannot be poured into the old covenant and laws and traditions; it could not contain it.
5. A synagogue leader comes and asks Jesus to come and lay His hands upon his sick daughter. It is interesting that the gentile Roman Centurion had more faith than this man who was a leader among the Jews. The Centurion only asked that Jesus speak a word and his servant was healed (Vs. 8:5-13). Jesus begins His journey to the house. A woman with an issue of blood touches Jesus’ garment and is healed due to her faith (Vs. 9:20-22). Jesus goes to the synagogue leader’s house and raises her from the dead. News of this spread throughout that region (Vs. 9:23-27).
6. Jesus heals two blind men and casts out a demon from a man. “But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons”” (Vs. 9:34). Jesus then goes throughout all the towns and villages teaching, proclaiming the good news and healing, He tells His disciples: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field”” (Vs. 9:37-38).

I. Chapter 10.

1. Jesus empowers the twelve disciples to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. He sends them out with many instructions. Only a couple are recorded here: to go only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel proclaiming the message that the kingdom of heaven has come near. He tells them, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Vs. 10:16).
2. Jesus continues with His instructions: "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Vs. 10:26-28). "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven" (Vs. 10:32-33).

J. Chapter Eleven.

1. The chapter opens with John the Baptist in prison. He tells his disciples to go to Jesus and ask Him: "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Vs. 11:3). Jesus responds by pointing to the various miraculous things He has done. As John's disciples were leaving, He quotes from Malachi 3:1: "This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you'" (Vs. 11:10). In doing so, He Pes that prophecy with John and Himself as the Messiah.
2. The chapter concludes with a promise to those who come to Jesus: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (vs. 11:28-30).

K. Chapter Twelve.

1. Jesus and his disciples go through a grain field on the Sabbath. They pluck grains from the stalks and eat them. The Pharisees accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath. He responds by pointing to King David's taking the showbread from the temple while fleeing from Saul. He declares that "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Vs. 12:8). The title "Son of man" is the primary title that Jesus used 81 times to refer to Himself. It's a title that carries several connotations. It does convey His humanity as the perfect God-Man but also conveys His divinity as He used it

when He was being questioned by the High Priest. Jesus quotes from Daniel 7:13-14 which is a direct reference to His divinity. This was, in the eyes of the Pharisees, blasphemy. He then heals a man with a withered arm. This enrages the Pharisees so that they plot how they can kill Him.

2. They bring to him a demon possessed man who is both blind and mute. He healed him so that he could both talk and see. The Pharisees accuse Him of being empowered by Beelzebul. Jesus responds by pointing out that a house divided against will fall. Jesus then declares: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. And so, I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Vs. 12:30-32).
3. The Pharisees and teachers of the law ask Him for a sign. Jesus tells them that the only sign that He will give them is that of Jonah, who spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. Jesus too, will spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. In doing so, He foretells of His death and resurrection.
4. He is told that His mother and brothers were outside waiting to speak to Him. He says: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Vs. 12:48-50).

L. Chapter Thirteen contains several key parables of Jesus.

1. Jesus tells the parable of the Sower, the seeds and the various types of soil. The Sower scattered the seeds representing the gospel. Some fell into the hearts of those who did not understand it, and the evil one came and snatched what was sown into their hearts. Some fell into those who at first received it with joy, but as they had no root, it lasted only a short time. Some fell into thorns representing those whose cares and worries of this life and the desire for riches chokes the making it unfruitful. The seeds that fell into good soil are those who understand it and produce fruit, representing fruits of the Spirit, some 100, some 60, some 30.
2. The parable of the weeds recounts how an adversary sowed weeds among the soil that had good seed planted in it. The master's servants ask if they should pull them out. But because the weeds are the type that look like that produced by the good seed, He says no, as some good produce could be mistakenly ripped out.

They will grow to maturity and then the difference will be apparent. There are those in our churches and fellowships today who are false believers and, from all appearances, are good fruit. But they will ultimately be revealed as to their true nature.

3. The parable of the mustard seed is often misinterpreted as a good thing by most commentators. Normally, the mustard seed produces a small garden plant. But this one grows into a tree that harbors birds. This is unnatural growth and could be likened to what happened to the church when it became the religion of the empire under Constantine about 315 AD. Many false teachers and believers flocked to the official state church, and it harbored much evil.
4. The parable of the woman who mixed leaven into 60 pounds of flour can be related to the false doctrine injected into the church. Leaven in the Bible is always negative. Jesus warned about the leaven of the Pharisees who injected false laws and practices into the kingdom of heaven.
5. The parables of the hidden treasure and the valuable pearl represent one who gives all to obtain a reward in the kingdom of heaven. Salvation is a free gift, but it will cost our natural selves to pursue righteousness.
6. The parable of the net represents end times when the wicked will be separated from the righteous.
7. The chapter closes with Jesus' remarks that a prophet is not without honor except in his own town and his own home (Vs. 13:57).

M. Chapter Fourteen.

1. The chapter opens with the account of Herod giving a banquet for his guests. He had previously put John the Baptist in prison. John had accused Herod of sin due to taking his brother Phillip's wife Herodias, as his own. At the banquet, Herodias's daughter danced and so impressed Herod that he offered to give her anything she asked for. Herodias told her to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter. Herod did not want to do this, but due to his promise, he complied. John was beheaded in prison and his head brought to Herodias's daughter, who gave it to her mother. John's disciples took his body and buried it (Vs. 14:1-12).
2. When Jesus heard about John's death, He departed to a solitary place. The crowds followed Him and He had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, His disciples told Him to send the crowds away so that they could buy food. Jesus told His disciples that they did not have to go away and to feed them. The disciples said that they only had five loaves and two fish. Jesus

had the crowd sit down and the crowd of about five thousand men plus women and children were fed with 12 baskets of food left over (Vs. 14:13-21).

3. After this, Jesus dismisses the crowd, tells his disciples to get into a boat and go before Him. He then goes up onto a mountain to pray. Later that night, the boat is being tossed by the waves. Jesus goes out onto the lake, walking on the water. The disciples see Him and are afraid that it is a ghost. Jesus tells them to not be afraid that it is He. Peter says that if it is really Him, to tell him to come on the water. Jesus tells him to come and Peter goes, but begins to sink. Jesus catches him and admonishes him of his little faith and his doubt. They climb into the boat and the wind dies down. They land at Gennesaret and again, crowds come and are healed even by touching the edge of His cloak (Vs. 14:22-34).

N. Chapter Fifteen.

1. The Pharisees come to Jesus accusing Him, saying that His disciples are not following the traditions of the elders by not washing their hands before eating. Jesus uses the incident as an object lesson to show the fallacy of tradition nullifying the Word of God. He quotes the prophet Isaiah: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules" (Isaiah 29:13).
2. A Canaanite woman comes to Jesus begging Him to heal her daughter. He at first refuses saying that He came only to the lost sheep of Israel. He says that it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs. She appeals by saying that even the dogs eat of the crumbs falling from the master's table. Jesus praises her for her great faith and her daughter was healed at that moment.
3. Jesus departs and goes along the sea of Galilee. Crowds come to Him and He heals them. Jesus tells His disciples that He has compassion on them and that they have been with him for three days with nothing to eat. He does not want to send them away hungry as they may collapse on the way. Between the disciples, they have seven loaves and a few small fish. Jesus tells the crowd to sit down and they are fed. After eating, the disciples pick up seven baskets of broken pieces that were left over. The total number of men that were fed were four thousand plus women and children.

O. Chapter Sixteen.

1. The Pharisees come to Jesus demanding a sign. The only sign He gives them is Jonah, who spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. Jesus will

spend three days and three nights in the belly of the earth before rising.

2. Jesus warns His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. As leaven changes the composition of the bread, the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees will change the pure message of the Word of God.
3. When Jesus comes to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asks His disciples who do the people say that He is? They told Him John the Baptist, Elijah, Jerimiah or one of the other prophets. He then asks His disciples who do you say that I am? Peter responds, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God” (Vs. 16:16). Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah” (Vs. 16:17-20).
4. The above passage is a matter of great difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Catholics believe that Jesus was pronouncing Peter as the head of what would become the church as he would be the rock upon which the church would be built. This is the basis for the Papal system. Protestants point out that the “rock” in Greek is “petra” meaning foundation boulder and that Jesus was referring to the revelation given to Peter by God. Protestants also point out that Jesus’s word to Peter was “petras” meaning little stone. Christ is the only foundation upon which the church is built (1 Corinthians 3:11). Peter himself refers to believers as “living stones” by which the church is being built (1 Peter 2:5).
5. Jesus from that time onward began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer much at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law and that He would be killed and on the third day be raised to life (Vs, 16:21). Peter rebukes Him, but Jesus strongly admonishes him saying, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (Vs. 16:23b).
6. Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his

Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Vs. 16:24-28).

P. Chapter Seventeen.

1. After six days, Jesus leads Peter, James and John up a high mountain where He was transfigured before them (Vs. 17:1-2a). This is what many Bible scholars believe is the fulfillment of Jesus's words in the previous chapter about "some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom". His transfiguration was partial fulfillment of His coming in His kingdom. There was great expectation of those living at the time of Jesus's death and resurrection that He would return before they died. Obviously, that did not happen, but we today should live in the expectation of His imminent return.
2. Moses and Elijah appear and were talking with Jesus. Peter, overwhelmed by what he was experiencing, tells Jesus that they should build three shelters, one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. A bright cloud covers them and a voice from heaven says: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Vs. 17:5b). The disciples fall to the ground afraid. Jesus comes and touches them and tells them to get up and not be afraid. They see no one but Jesus. This was God the Father's affirmation that Jesus was greater than Moses, who represented the Law, and Elijah who represented the prophets. We, like the disciples, should hear Jesus.
3. As they were coming down the mountain, The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist (Vs. 17:10-13).
4. The balance of the chapter deals with Jesus casting out a demon from a boy that his disciples were unable to. When asked privately, why they could not, His reply was that they had so little faith. "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Vs. 17:20). Jesus also confirms His death a second time. The chapter concludes with a humorous account of Peter affirming to the temple authorities that Jesus paid the annual temple tax but Jesus

giving him a reminder that He, as the Son of God was free from such an obligation. But as He did not want to give offense, tells Peter to go down to the lake and throw in a line. The first fish he would catch would have a four-drachma coin to pay Jesus' tax and Peter's.

Q. Chapter Eighteen.

1. The chapter begins with a question from the disciples about who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus responds by saying: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Vs. 18:3-5).
2. Jesus then speaks about those who cause someone who believes in Him to stumble. He tells them that it would be better that a millstone be hung around their neck and to be drowned in the sea. He then says it would be better to enter life crippled than to be thrown into hell, meaning that we need to deal harshly with our tendency to sin.
3. Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep. "If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish" (Vs. 18:12-14).
4. Jesus addresses sin in the church and gives a procedure that should be followed. First, if someone offends you, go to them privately. If they do not listen to you, take two or three others as a testimony. If they still do not hear you, tell it to the church. If they do not listen to the church, they should be treated as a pagan or tax collector, meaning they are to be put out of the assembly.
5. The chapter concludes with the parable of the unmerciful servant. A king desires to settle accounts with his servants. A man is brought to him who owes ten thousand bags of gold, a tremendous debt. The king orders he and his family to be sold to repay the debt. The servant begs for mercy and the master forgives his debt. But the servant takes another servant who owes him one hundred silver coins demanding payment or he would throw him into prison. The other servant begs for mercy but, the first servant refuses and has him thrown into prison. The other servants are outraged and go to the master. The master calls him in and

tells him: “You wicked servant,” he said, “I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart” (Vs. 18:32-35).

R. Chapter Nineteen.

1. The chapter begins with the Pharisees coming to Jesus to test Him. They ask if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason. Jesus responds by saying that in the beginning God created male and female and that they would become one flesh. He continues with “Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Vs.19:6). The Pharisees continue to press him with the question of why Moses allowed a man to give his wife a certificate of divorce. Jesus replies: “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery” (Vs. 19:8-9).
2. People brought little children to Jesus in order for Him to pray for them. The disciples rebuked them. But Jesus responded: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Vs. 19:14).
3. The chapter concludes with a young man coming to Jesus and asking what he should do to get eternal life. Jesus responds by pointing him to the Ten Commandments. He says that he has kept these from his youth. Jesus tells him that if he wishes to be perfect, he must sell what he has and give to the poor and then he will receive treasure in heaven and then to follow Him. The man goes away sorrowful as he had great wealth. “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Truly I tell you; it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I tell you it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God’” (Vs. 19:23-24). This passage has been the center of much debate by Bible scholars with various schools of thought as to its meaning. The best answer is that Jesus was using a hyperbole, which is an exaggeration for emphasis. Jesus did this in Matthew 7:3-5 regarding a “plank” in one’s eye or also in Matthew 23:24 about “swallowing a camel”. Although the young man had done what was right according to the

commandments, he still had a heart issue regarding riches. He was unable to do what Jesus asked and went away sorrowful (Vs. 19:22).

S. Chapter Twenty.

1. The chapter opens with the lengthy parable of the workers in a vineyard. Matthew is the only gospel in which this is found. A vineyard owner goes out early in the morning to hire workers. He offers them a day wage of one denarius which was generous. He goes out again at nine, noon, three and lastly at five to hire more workers. No offer of wages is given but when the others come, they are given the same wage as those hired at the beginning of the day including ones who had only labored for one hour. The workers hired early in the morning complain as they had shouldered the burden of the entire day including the hot mid-day sun. They expected more but received their agreed upon denarius. The owner tells them: "I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?" (Vs. 20:13-15). Some attempt to use this parable to demonstrate that rewards in heaven are the same for everyone, but Scripture affirms that there are different rewards for different service. The best way to interpret this parable is to know that, like the vineyard owner, God is gracious and merciful bestowing His generosity and blessing as He chooses. Eternal life is not a reward, it is a free gift of God based upon the atoning work of Christ on the Cross. Some believers have labored their entire lives for Jesus while others, only a short time such as the thief on the Cross. We all can receive the same gift of salvation regardless of when we come to salvation early, or later in life.
2. Jesus concludes this teaching by saying: "The last will be first, and the first will be last" (Vs. 20:16). This is identical to what He said in the previous chapter after the wealthy young man left, sad that his riches and Jesus' direction to him was more than he could bear. It is believed that this means that there are those today who are rich in the world's eyes, or are prominent in some fashion. But in the kingdom, they will be last before others who now live humble lives.
3. He takes His disciples aside and tells them: "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" (Vs.

20:18-19). This was the third time recorded in this gospel that He tells them of His death and resurrection.

4. The chapter continues with the mother of Zebedee's sons coming to Him and asking that they sit on His right and left in His kingdom. "When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers". Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Vs. 20:24-28).
5. The chapter concludes with an account of two blind men sitting by the road calling out to Jesus to heal them as He leaves Jericho. He does so and they immediately follow him. Bible critics point out that this differs from what is commonly believed to be same incident as recorded in Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43. Here, two blind men call out to Jesus while in Mark and in Luke, only one blind man cries out. In Mark, he is identified as Bartimaeus while he is not identified in Luke. Additionally, here in Matthew, Jesus is leaving Jericho while in Mark and in Luke He is approaching Jericho. The seemingly disparity in the accounts is reconciled by pointing out that neither Mark nor Luke say that there was only one man. Also, there were two Jerichos. One is the ancient mound of the city destroyed by Joshua and the other, a more modern city rebuilt afterward. Jesus was probably leaving one and entering the other.

T. Chapter Twenty-One.

1. Jesus approaches Jerusalem and instructs His disciples to go into a village and untie a donkey with her colt and bring them to Him. This was in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey". It is not clear precisely how Jesus rode in on the donkey. One suggestion is that he sat sideways on the mother donkey and placed His feet on the foal like a king would sit on His throne. As He was fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah as a king entering Jerusalem, this may hold some merit. Others point out that it is customary to train a foal by placing a light burden upon it and tie it to the mother. As the disciples placed their garments on both the donkey and the foal (Vs. 21:7), this also could be the case. In any sense, that the prophecy in Zechariah was fulfilled, is the crucial point.

2. Jesus entered the temple courts and throws out the money changers and those selling doves and overturns their tables. He tells them: “My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers” (Vs. 21:13 and Isaiah 56:7b). People would bring animals to the temple courts to be examined by the priests before they could be offered for sin. It was very common for the priests to reject the animals destined to be offered even those with minor blemishes. A trade had developed where those who wanted approved animals, particularly doves which was all the poor could offer, to buy them from vendors at the temple court. As the vendors were often in cahoots with the priests and charged exorbitant prices, this angered Jesus greatly.
3. Early in the morning, as Jesus was going back into the city, He was hungry. He goes up to a fig tree with leaves but finds no fruit. He curses the tree by saying “May you never bear fruit again” and immediately, the tree withered (Vs. 21:19). To interpret this incident, some knowledge of fig trees is necessary. Fig trees can display leaves as well as fruit even early in their life cycle. So, it was not unusual for Jesus to approach one seeking something to eat. The fig tree has also been symbolic of the nation of Israel such as in Hosea 9:10: “When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree”. Taken in context with the incident of casting out the money changers the day before and with the knowledge that Israel would reject Him as Messiah, Jesus places a curse on the tree signifying the temple worship. This curse was fulfilled in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem including the temple. God seeks fruit, or evidence of true worship and faithfulness to Him.
4. Jesus is approached by the chief priests and elders who ask Him by what authority He was doing these things. Jesus outsmarts them by asking about John’s baptism, was it of God or human origin. They know that if they say human origin, they know that the people held him as a prophet. If from God, then Jesus would ask them why did you not believe him? Jesus then tells them that He will not tell them by what authority He is doing these things.
5. Jesus tells the parable of the two sons. One said he would do his father’s bidding but didn’t. The other said he would not do it but did. The point being that the one who changed his mind and did what the father asked, was the one who did his will. In the same manner, we may at first refuse to do the will of the Father, but He honors a repentance in our heart to do His will.

6. The chapter concludes with the parable of the tenants. A wealthy landowner prepares his vineyard and lets it out to some farmers before moving to another place. When the time for harvest comes, he sends his servants but they are beaten, killed and stoned. Again, he sends more servants and they are treated the same way. Lastly, he sends his son thinking they will have more respect. But the tenants say, let's kill him and take his inheritance. So, they kill him and throw him off the vineyard. Jesus is likening this parable to the Old Testament prophets and Himself as the son. He then tells the chief priests and Pharisees: "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed" (Vs. 21:43-44). They realize that He is speaking of them and seek a way to arrest Him but don't, as they realize that the people believe He is a prophet.

U. Chapter Twenty-Two.

1. Jesus tells a parable of the wedding banquet. A king prepares a wedding banquet for his son. He sends out his servants to the invited guests, but they are ignored or mistreated and killed. The king is enraged and sends his army to destroy the murderers and burn their city. He then tells his servants to go out into the street corners and invite anyone they find. The wedding hall is then filled with people good and bad. The king comes in and finds a guest without a wedding garment. He has him bound and thrown out into outer darkness. Jesus then says: "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Vs. 22:14). This parable pertains to God the Father preparing the marriage supper of the lamb, who is Jesus, for the Jewish people. However, they reject Him as Messiah and the invitation goes to others, the Gentiles who are both good and bad. The person without a wedding garment represents one who attempted to come to the banquet on his own merit and not wearing the righteous garment given by the king which is salvation. A call has been given to many, but only a few are chosen by God.
2. The Pharisees along with the Herodians, then attempt to trap Jesus by asking if it is right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar. The Herodians were supporters of Herod, a vassal of Rome and were loyal to Caesar. They were attempting to put Jesus into a dilemma. If He said "no" then He could be accused of insurrection. If "yes" then He could be accused of being a Roman sympathizer. They thought they had him regardless of how He answered. Jesus shows His wisdom by asking them: "Whose image is on the coin and whose inscription?" (Vs. 22:20). They

responded “Caesar’s”. Jesus then says, “then give what is Caesar’s to Caesar and what is God’s to God” (VS. 22:21).

3. The same day, the Sadducees, who do not believe in the resurrection, came to Jesus attempting to trap Him in a hypothetical question about a woman who marries seven brothers in succession. They ask Him whose wife will she be in the resurrection. Jesus provides information that only He would know as the Son of God: “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Vs. 22:29-32). The Sadducees did not accept any Scripture except the five books of Moses. If they had accepted other books, they would have realized from the book of Job that there is a resurrection where Job says: “And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God!” (Job 19:6).
4. Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees attempted to entrap Him by asking “What is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Vs. 22:36). Jesus responded by telling them: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Vs. 22:37-40).
5. The chapter concludes with Jesus asking the Pharisees a question about the Messiah and David addressing Him as Lord. How could he then be David’s son? No one could answer Him and after that, they did not ask any more questions.

V. Chapter Twenty-Three is a lengthy expose’ of the hypocrisy of the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees who placed heavy burdens upon the people but are like white-washed tombs. White and clean on the outside but full of decay and corruption on the inside.

W. Chapter Twenty-four contains one of three narratives called the Olivet Discourse; called such because it takes place on the mount of Olives. The other two instances are found in Mark 13:1-35 and in Luke 21:5-36.

1. The disciples are leaving the temple with Jesus and point out the majesty of its construction. He responds by saying that not one stone will be left upon another. At the mount of Olives, they ask Him two, or as some Bible teachers say three

questions in 24:3: “When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” This prophecy is another example of near and far fulfillment of prophecy. The first question was fulfilled in 70 AD when the temple and Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. The second, or as some scholars say, are actually two questions, will be fulfilled during the Great Tribulation and Jesus’ second coming at its end. “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Vs.23:30-31). “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Vs. 23:36).

2. The chapter closes with admonitions about watching for the master’s return. “Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come” (Vs, 23:42). The last of the chapter pertains to a master who put his servant in charge of giving the other servants food in their time. A faithful servant will be put in charge of all the master’s possession upon his return. But to an unfaithful servant, the master will “cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Vs. 23:51).

X. Chapter Twenty-Five.

1. The chapter opens with the parable of the ten virgins. Five are wise, but five are foolish. The parable relates closely with the practices of a wedding as it was at the time of Christ. A man and a woman are betrothed to one another. The man goes back to his father’s home to prepare a place for his bride. The work can take a long time, and the bride does not know when he will come to get her. When he does return, he comes with his party through the city streets blowing a trumpet. Invited guests then join the procession back to the father’s house. In this parable, the virgins all fall asleep indicating that it has been a very long time. Five have prepared themselves with oil and five have not. Oil in the Bible often depicts the spirit. The five wise have lived lives that enabled them to receive more of the spirit which has transformed their lives. The foolish have not. When the bridegroom comes, they have to go to those who sell oil to get more, but it’s too late and they are excluded from the wedding banquet. We too must be diligent to get oil in the life and be prepared for the Lord’s return.

2. The parable of the bags of gold is another admonishment to do the Lord's work faithfully. Two servants are rewarded for using the master's gold to gain more and are rewarded. The third servant hides the bag in the ground. He is chastised by the master and he is thrown outside into outer darkness. The bags of gold are likened to gifts that the Father has given us to serve Him. We must be faithful to use them to further His kingdom.
3. The last parable is about the sheep and the goats. When Jesus returns, He will separate those who have done righteous deeds from those who have not. The setting is at the end of the Tribulation. The sheep are those who were saved during the tribulation and ministered to others which Jesus considered ministering to Himself. The goats were not saved and did not care for others. The sheep enter into the kingdom prepared for them since the creation of the world showing that it is God's doing and not as a result of their good works. The goats are sent to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Y. Chapter Twenty-Six.

1. The chief priest and elders assemble at the High Priest Caiaphas' house and plot how they can kill Jesus. Judas agrees to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
2. Jesus gives instructions for preparation of the Last Supper. Judas leaves to betray Him. "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body'. Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom'" (Vs. 25:26-29).
3. After singing a hymn, they go to the Mount of Olives. Jesus tells them that they all will fall away that night because of Him. Peter affirms that he will not. Jesus tells him that before the rooster crows, he will deny Jesus three times. At the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prays while telling the disciples to watch with Him. He asks the Father to take the cup of His future suffering from Him if possible. He finds the disciples asleep. He prays again: "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done" (Vs. 25:42). He finds the disciples sleeping again and prays the same prayer the third time. Judas comes with a large armed crowd. "In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?"

Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled" (Vs. 25:55-56).

4. Jesus is brought before the High Priest. "The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God, Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.' 'You have said so,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Vs. 25:63-64). Jesus was quoting from Daniel 7:13-14). The High Priest realized that Jesus was claiming to be God which was blasphemy. This was Jesus' death sentence in their eyes.
5. The chapter concludes with Peter denying Jesus three times; the rooster crows. He goes outside and weeps bitterly.

Z. Chapter Twenty-Seven.

1. Early the next morning, the chief priests and elders bind him and take him before Pilate. Judas, seeing what they are doing, is filled with remorse and attempts to return the 30 pieces of silver. He tells them that he has sinned and betrayed innocent blood, but they say, "What is that to us, that is your responsibility". He throws the money into the temple and goes and hangs himself (Vs. 27:3-5). "The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So, they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me" (Vs. 27: 6-10).
2. Jesus is brought before Pilate who attempts to release Him as he finds no fault with Jesus. The priests and elders demand that Pilate crucify Jesus. Pilate washes his hands, saying that he is innocent of Jesus's blood. The people say that Jesus' blood is upon them and their children.
3. Jesus is turned over to the soldiers who mock him. They take Him to the place called Golgotha where He is crucified. They divide his clothing and cast lots for his seamless garment, another fulfillment of a prophecy in Psalm 22:18.
4. Jesus cries out in a loud voice and dies. The curtain of the temple is torn from top to bottom signifying that the way to God is now open and of God's doing, not of

men. Joseph of Arimathea asks for Jesus' body and he buries it in his own newly made tomb.

5. The priests go to Pilate and tell him that Jesus claimed that He would rise from the dead. Pilate tells them to take a guard and set a watch. They do so and place a seal on the tomb.

AA. Chapter Twenty-Eight.

1. Jesus rises from the dead on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are the first to come to the tomb. They are met by an angel who rolls away the stone sealing the entrance. He tells them that Jesus has risen and to go and tell His disciples that He has gone ahead of them and that they will see Him in Galilee.
2. The guards report to the high priests what has happened, and they are told that Jesus' disciples came while they were sleeping and took His body. This false report circulated among the Jews.
3. Jesus meets His disciples in Galilee and gives them what is called the Great Commission. "Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Vs. 28:18-20).

BB. Discussion Questions, Application and passing it on.

1. Does the fact that Jesus' genealogy includes four women with a sinful or a tainted past, give you any assurance that in spite of what may be sin in your past, you can be used by Him?
2. Are you able to defend the virgin birth to someone who says that the Hebrew word could also mean a young maiden?
3. Does the method of how Jesus resisted Satan's temptations give you any insight of how you can do the same?
4. Are you familiar with the Sermon on the Mount? When was the last time you read through it? Set a goal to do so, frequently.
5. Do the words of Jesus: "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven" give you any thought as to your

testimony of Jesus before others? What are you going to do about any realization of a lack here?

6. What does it mean to “blaspheme the Holy Spirit” in that it will not be forgiven of them in this age or the next mean?
7. Regarding the parable of the seed sown into various types of soil. What kind of soil are you?
8. Jesus gives specific instructions about dealing with sin or offense in the church. Unfortunately, most churches do not practice this procedure. Why do you think this is the case? What damage to relationships have you seen this cause?
9. Jesus allows divorce in only two situations: death and sexual immorality. Sadly, Christian marriages have almost the same ratio of divorce as secular marriages. Why do you think this is the case?
0. The parable of the ten virgins should be a sober reminder that we need to “buy oil” in this life by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us. Are you buying oil now? When Christ returns, it will be too late.
1. The parable of the bags of gold should be a reminder to use our spiritual gifts to further the work of the Lord. Are you doing so?
2. The Great Commission is sometimes called the “Great Omission”. Are you carrying out His commands with the gifts He has given you?

This New Testament survey was provided by Joshua Nations (JoshuaNations.org)