
OWNit365 Bible Reading Tips

To assist you in making the most of your Bible reading, we offer the following:

- Background and overview information about the book
- Thoughts and questions for your personal reflection and observation
- Questions that you can use in a small group setting
- Something to look for in each chapter

Matthew

The book of Matthew is the first of four gospels. It serves as a bridge between the Old and New Testaments, introducing Jesus as the King and promised Messiah of the Jews.

The New Testament begins with four gospels, each telling the story of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. The first three gospels share so many stories they are called the Synoptic ("seen together") gospels. Though the gospels share a common story and format, each gospel emphasizes a different aspect of who Jesus is:

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
King of Israel	Perfect Servant	Son of Man	Son of God

The book of Matthew's first verse asserts that Jesus is the Son of David and Abraham, inheriting their promises and covenants. The book documents Jesus' genealogy, establishing His right to be **King of Israel**. In Matthew, wise men arrive seeking the King of the Jews.

Author

Matthew was a tax collector (publican). Matthew became a new person when he opened his heart to Christ. He lost his old friends and a large amount of income when he accepted Christ.

Key Word and Verse

The word **kingdom** occurs 56 times.

Mat 27:37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (NKJV)

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5-7 is the Sermon on the Mount, arguably the greatest sermon in history, where Jesus interprets the Old Testament Law and presents His kingdom of righteousness. For details, view the "The Way Up is Down" message series on the Resources > Media Center > Messages page of: www.VisitGraceChurch.com

The Church

In [Matthew 16:18](#) and [Matthew 18:17](#), the Bible records Jesus using the word “church” for the first time. The word in Greek is “ekklesia” which means “assembly” or “called out.” Of the 115+ mentions in Scripture, one-third refer to the global body of “called out” believers and two-thirds refer to a local “assembly.”

Parables

In [Matthew 12](#), Israel’s leaders accused Jesus of performing miracles by Satan’s power. After being rejected, Jesus began teaching in parables (story form). Parables both revealed truth to those who accepted Jesus and hid truth from those who rejected Him.

[Matthew 13](#) documents seven of Jesus’ parables, illustrating different aspects of the “kingdom of heaven.”

	Parable	Kingdom Meaning
1	Sower and Soils	The Kingdom’s Start
2	Wheat and Tares	The Kingdom’s Judgment
3	Mustard Seed	The Kingdom’s Growth
4	Leaven	The Kingdom’s Growth
5	Hidden Treasure	The Kingdom’s Value
6	Costly Pearl	The Kingdom’s Value
7	Dragnet	The Kingdom’s Judgment

Old Testament References

Jesus often quoted the Hebrew Scriptures. In the book of Matthew, there are references to:

OT Book	Matthew
Genesis	19
Exodus	22
Leviticus	22
Deuteronomy	4
Psalms	25, 26, 27
Isaiah	13, 26
Jeremiah	21
Daniel	24
Hosea	9
Micah	10
Zechariah	24, 26, 27
Malachi	11

High-Level Outline

Rejection of the Kingdom	Rejection of the King
<p>Mat 1-4 presentation of the kingdom</p> <p>Mat 5-7 proclamation of the kingdom</p> <p>Mat 8-12 power of the kingdom</p>	<p>Mat 13-15 rejection of the King</p> <p>Mat 16-20 preparation of the disciples</p> <p>Mat 21-28 passion and climax</p>

Personal Reflection and Application

- Being **poor in spirit** (**Mat 5:3**) doesn't mean you view yourself as worthless. It means you have a healthy sense of unworthiness. What is the difference (**Isa 6:5**, **Luke 5:8**, **1John 1:9**)?
- If you are experiencing tension and disagreements in your marriage or other relationships, what actions could you take to prevent them from damaging your relationship with God (**Mat 5:23-26**)?
- When we pray for our enemies, we find it easier to love them. It takes the "poison" out of our attitudes. Love is a mark of maturity. It is God-like (**Mat 5:45**). Think about a person who is an enemy (has treated you poorly). Return good for evil as an investment of love. Pray for the spiritual welfare of that person.
- Notice that the Lord's prayer illustrates the importance of not only asking God to forgive us, but notes that we are to forgive others.

Mat 6:12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Why is it important to forgive others (**Mat 6:14-15**)?

- The **eye** is a gate through which temptation comes (**Mat 6:22-23**). What can you do to prevent your eye from seeing things that promote lust?

- What should be the primary concern for believers (**Mat 6:33**)?
 - ▶ How can you focus more on doing what God wants and less on worrying on what you need?
 - ▶ What should your attitude be towards earthly wealth?
- Do you judge yourself before you judge others? What are some reasons for judging yourself first?

	Mat 7:1-2
	Mat 7:3-5

- Consider the broad way versus the narrow way (**Mat 7:13-14**).
 - ▶ Did your profession of faith cost you anything?
 - ▶ Did you give up the baggage of sin and your focus on worldly things?
 - ▶ What are some reasons there are few who find the narrow way?
- For our lives to not be wasted, our lives must have purpose. If we have Christ as Lord and Savior, what is the purpose of our lives (**Php 2:13-16**, **Mat 13:23**)?

Small Group Conversation Guide

- How do the following verses describe the **poor in spirit** (**Mat 5:3**)?

Psa 10:17
Rom 12:3

- ▶ In what areas of your life do you tend to depend on your talents and possessions?
- ▶ What would it take for you to fully rely on Jesus Christ?
- What does Jesus say happens to our relationship with God when we are angry with someone else (**Mat 5:23-24**)? In which area of your life are you most prone to struggle with anger? What are some things you can do to begin to transform that area of your life?
- Discuss how not always doing what you say you will do can cause an incremental loss of integrity (**Mat 5:37**). What are some practical ways to make sure you honor your commitments?
- What are some examples of ways you could go the extra mile (**Mat 5:41**) to reflect Christ in situations where people are demanding things of you?
- According to what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:43-45**, how can you become a true child of God?

- Discuss whether we should always keep giving a secret (**Mat 6:3-4**). What are our motives in having someone see us when we give?

<i>verse</i>	<i>motive</i>
Mat 6:1	
Mat 5:16	

Considering the motives noted in the verses above, when would it be okay for someone to see our good deeds (including giving)?

- It is not wrong to possess things; however, it is wrong to let things possess you. Discuss how materialism can enslave you in the following ways.

heart	Mat 6:19-21
mind	Mat 6:22-23
will	Mat 6:24

- Discuss your experiences in applying the “golden rule” (**Mat 7:12**).
 - ▶ How would the golden rule look differently through the eyes of a believer and a nonbeliever?
 - ▶ When you want what God wants for others, how might they oppose your good intentions?
- In what ways does hunger and thirst for **righteousness** please God (**Pro 15:9, Mat 13:43**)?
- At what point does looking become lust? What is the origin of lust (**Mat 15:19, Pro 6:25**)?

Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to look for in each chapter.
Try these:

01. How Jesus' genealogy proves His right to the throne	02. How Jesus' time in Egypt fulfilled prophecy (Hos 11:1)
03. What God said aloud when Jesus was baptized	04. How Jesus battled temptation by quoting Scripture
05. How Jesus intended to affect the Old Testament Law	06. What Jesus said happens if you do not forgive others
07. What Jesus compared to someone disobeying Him	08. Why the centurion's faith was greater than Israel's
09. What Jesus said to pray for regarding the harvest	10. Who Jesus forbade the disciples from preaching to
11. What John the Baptist began wondering in jail	12. What story foreshadowed Jesus' three-day burial
13. What Jesus said was the purpose of parables	14. Why Peter was able to walk on water with Jesus
15. How the Pharisees valued tradition over the Bible	16. Why Jesus called Peter both "Blessed" and "Satan"
17. How long the apostles had to wait to tell their story	18. What steps Jesus gave us to resolve conflict
19. Who finds it difficult to enter God's kingdom	20. How natural and Christ-like leadership styles differ
21. What Israel's rejection of Jesus meant to Gentiles	22. What Jesus said was the greatest commandment
23. Whether people are cleansed outside or inside first	24. What will characterize the days of Jesus' return
25. How people can feed or provide a drink to Jesus	26. How Jesus prayed in the garden to avoid the cross
27. What was torn when Jesus died on the cross	28. How Jesus charged us to make disciples worldwide