**Matthew: Introduction**

**Tentative Schedule:**

Week 1 - 4/11 - Intro

Week 2 - 4/18 - Matthew 1-4

Week 3 - 4/25 - Matthew 5-10

Week 4 - 5/2 - Matthew 11-13

**No Class - 5/9 - Mother's Day**

Week 5 - 5/16 - Matthew 14-18

Week 6 - 5/23 - Matthew 19-25

**No Class - 5/30 - Memorial Day Weekend**

Week 7 - 6/6 - Matthew 26-28

**How to Study a Book of the Bible:**

**1. Read, read, read.**

There is no substitute for reading the Scripture. You really can’t read the Bible enough, especially if you plan to learn it and teach it. **Challenge:** read the Gospel of Matthew through at least once a week for the next eight weeks. If you can, also read the passages that are coming up on the next Sunday every day that week. So, for next week, that would mean reading through the whole Gospel by next Sunday and reading Matthew 1-2 every day until Sunday. That sounds like a lot of reading, but it really isn’t. The entire Gospel of Matthew is less than 40 pages. Three or four chapters in Matthew is only three or four pages of daily reading.

**Why read ahead?** Matthew isn’t an anthology of stories. It isn’t a series of verses. It isn’t a collection of chapters. It is a book. That means that Matthew knew what he was going to write in Chapter 28 when he wrote Chapter 1. And that means that if you are going to study or teach Matthew 1, you have to understand Matthew 2-28.

**2. Read good books.**

You need to read the Bible, and you need to read really good books about the Bible. Good books about the Bible are not a replacement for the Bible. The Bible is God’s Word. The Bible is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. Good books about the Bible are none of those things. But good books about the Bible will help you 1) see how other Spirit-filled Christians have understood and taught the Scriptures for 2,000 years, 2) avoid some common mistakes about the biblical material you are reading, 3) answer some really difficult questions about the Bible that experts are typically so helpful with, and 4) become a better reader of the Bible yourself.

**3. Receive the Word.**

You don’t just “study” the Bible. You receive God’s Word in obedience to Jesus.

* **God wants you to teach Matthew.**
* **God wants you to obey Matthew.**
* **God wants you to use this opportunity to become a better reader of the Bible.**
* **God wants you to be a good teacher.**

**Authorship, Date, and Provenance:**

Matthew the disciple wrote the Gospel of Matthew, and he likely wrote it prior to the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (though there are plenty of faithful scholars who hold to a later date for Matthew). All of the earliest evidence for the authorship of Matthew, most of it prior to the middle of the second century, affirms Matthew’s status as author. And during that time, there is not a hint of doubt about that. While it is true that Matthew is not named anywhere within the text of Matthew as its author, all of the early external evidence (titles of manuscripts, references by early Christians, etc.) as well as evidence from within the text of Matthew itself (the author was clearly Jewish, clearly an eyewitness, etc.) make a great case for the traditional view of authorship and date. Matthew was probably written somewhere in or near Palestine, and there is some specific evidence that would indicate somewhere in Syria, perhaps Antioch.

**Purpose and Themes:**

Unlike Luke and John, who have explicit written purpose statements, we have to play detective a bit to determine Matthew’s overarching purpose. It is common to hear teachers say something like: “Matthew wrote his Gospel for Jewish people.” This is probably not far from the truth. There appear to be three common themes that Matthew comes back to over and over in his selection, adaptation, and arrangement of the material about Jesus in his Gospel. And those three themes, when taken together as a whole, point us most likely to a Jewish audience. Here are the three things that Matthew appears to most want us to understand about Jesus and the Gospel:

**1. Jesus is the Messiah of the Old Testament but that doesn’t mean what you think it means.** Jesus and Matthew both want to be sure we understand that Jesus is the Messiah, the one promised from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament. And as the Messiah, Jesus ushers in the Kingdom of God. What is very surprising to many Jewish people in Matthew’s Gospel, however, is the fact that the Kingdom of God is not inaugurated by the defeat and overthrow of Israel’s enemies. Nor is the Kingdom of God inaugurated by the restoration of Israel to its former political and economic glory. The Kingdom of God, according to Matthew (and Jesus!), is inaugurated by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (see Matthew 16:13-23). This appears to be a very different expectation about Messiah and the Kingdom from what the religious experts and even the disciples have in Matthew’s Gospel.

**2. The Old Testament is ultimately about Jesus.** In Matthew’s Gospel one of the things that is most surprising to Jesus’ hearers (and perhaps to Matthew’s readers as well) is that the Old Testament, in all of its various parts, was ultimately about Jesus. Jesus claims this truth for himself throughout Matthew’s Gospel (e.g. Matthew 21:16), and Matthew claims this truth for Jesus over and over again (e.g. Matthew 8:17). Near the beginning of the Gospel, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes the claim that he came to fulfill all of the Law (Matthew 5:17-20). Matthew then sets out to showcase time after time where Jesus proved this to be true, even in the most unlikely of places (even the “clean and unclean” law codes were about Jesus!—Matthew 9:18-26).

**3. God has always intended to save all the nations not just Israel.** As we move through Matthew’s outline, from the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Matthew continually demonstrates that Jesus is not just the Jewish Messiah; he is also the manifestation of God’s love for the nations. Matthew includes gentiles in Messiah’s lineage (Matthew 1:1-17), instructs us on Messiah and the nations from the Old Testament (e.g. Matthew 12:15-21), and shows us Jesus performing sign miracles among the gentiles (e.g. Matthew 8:5-13 and 15:21-28). Jesus discusses the eschatological future of the nations (Matthew 25:31-46), and, of course, Jesus commands his disciples to take the good news of the gospel to all the nations (Matthew 28:18-20).

**Outline of Matthew:**

**I. Section 1 - Introduction to Jesus and the Gospel** – 1:1-4:11

A. Genealogy and Birth (1:1-2:23)

B. The Beginning of Jesus’ Ministry (3:1-4:11)

**II. Section 2 – The Gospel of the Kingdom** (4:12-7:29)

A. The First Set of Narratives (4:12-25)

B. The First Discourse – the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

**III. Section 3 – Jesus’ Messianic Credentials** (8:1-10:42)

A. The Second Set of Narratives (8:1-9:38)

B. The Second Discourse – Instructions for the Twelve (10:1-42)

**IV. Section 4 – The Proclamation of the Kingdom** (11:1-13:53)

A. The Third Set of Narratives (11:1-12:50)

B. The Third Discourse – Parables of the Kingdom (13:1-53)

**V. Section 5 – Rising Conflict** (13:54-18:35)

A. The Fourth Set of Narratives (13:54-17:27)

B. The Fourth Discourse – Life in the Kingdom (18:1-18:35)

**VI. Section 6 – The Kingdom and the End** (19:1-25:46)

A. The Fifth Set of Narratives (19:1-23:39)

B. The Fifth Discourse – Life in the Kingdom (24:1-25:46)

**VII. Section 7 – The Passion and the Resurrection** (26:1-28:20)

A. Passion Narratives (26:1-27:66)

B. The Resurrection and the Great Commission (28:1-20)