



NEW TESTAMENT

in a year -January

Daily Bible Reading Plan

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It is customary to see in Matthew's Gospel the fact that Jesus is presented especially as the Messiah, the promised Son of David. This is true; but it also declares that He is the Savior from sin (1:21) and the Son of God (1:23; 3:17; 6:16-17); and although the writer was obviously a Jew to the core, and wrote primarily for Jewish Christians, yet he recognizes that Jesus is the Savior, not of the Jews only, but of all nations (2:1, 11; 28:19-20). Nevertheless, this is the most Jewish of the Gospels. It is significant that our Lord's genealogy is traced back, not to Adam, as in Luke's account, but to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race.

The story of the birth of Christ shows distinct signs of being derived from Joseph's side, as the story given by Luke would seem to come from Mary's.

The Gospel is characterized by the large place it gives to the teaching of our Lord, and in particular to his teaching in parables and about 'things to come'.

JANUARY 1 MATTHEW 1

DONE

1. Consider the names in the genealogy and note how sinful some of them were. How does this chapter indicate that the coming of Jesus was in God's plan from the beginning? In what ways does it demonstrate that in Jesus Old testament prophecy is fulfilled? What truths are indicated here concerning his person and work?
2. What do verses 18-25 teach us about the virgin birth? What is the importance of this truth for the Christian?
3. Examine the character of Joseph as revealed in these verses (cf. 2:13-23). What can we learn from his courageous obedience?

JANUARY 2 MATTHEW 2

DONE

1. Consider the significance of the coming of the wise men from the East in the light of such passages as Is 49:6, Luke 2:32, John 10:16.
2. Note the different reactions to the birth of Jesus from the wise men, the chief priests and scribes, and Herod. How does this prove the truth of John 9:39, 18:37?
3. Notice the accuracy of fulfillment of prophecy in our Lord's infancy (verses __, 17, 18, 23). What does this teach us about the nature and authority of prophecy?

JANUARY 3

MATTHEW 3

DONE

1. John the Baptists saw himself as preparing the way for Christ (verse 3). In what ways did he do this through: (a) his preaching, and (b) his administration of baptism?
2. What do verses 13-15 tell us about the importance of his baptism to Jesus? How do you link this moment with the cross? Cf. Ps 40:7-8; Luke 12:50; 2 Cor 5:21. Can you see the Trinity clearly at work in these verses?

JANUARY 4

MATTHEW 4

DONE

1. Consider the temptations of Jesus as a testing of the kind of ministry he was going to exercise. What was the special point of appeal in each temptation? Can you link these three typical temptations with the threefold division of 1 John 2:16?
2. In what way do verses 1-11 help us to understand the meaning of temptation and the way in which Satan may be defeated?
3. What was Christ's first message? Try to define repentance. Cf. Acts 2:38; 20:21; Luke 15:18; Mat 3:8. What further demand did he make on those who became disciples, and why? Has your response to Christ been of this kind?

JANUARY 5

MATTHEW 5:1-16

DONE

1. Describe the qualities of the happy life as detailed in verses 1-12. What makes them such? To what rewards do they lead, and why?
2. Verses 13-16. What is the significance of the two metaphors with which our Lord describes the relation to the world of those who belong to the kingdom? And in what ways does he warn them that they may fail to exercise their proper function?

JANUARY 6

MATTHEW 5:17-48

DONE

1. Our Lord demonstrates his respect for the law in verses 17-20. What does verse 20 mean? Does it leave us any hope? Cf. Rom 3:20-22; 8:3-4. In what way does our Lord make the law more demanding?
2. What is the relevance in our modern world of Christ's teaching in verses 33-48 on the subject of oaths and taking vengeance? Consider the application of the question in verse 47, 'What are you doing more than others?' to the whole subject of Christian love.
3. Comparing verses 31-32 with 19:3-9, what is our Lord's teaching on the sanctity of marriage and the possibility of divorce?

JANUARY 7

MATTHEW 6

DONE

1. What was wrong with the religion of the scribes and Pharisees, here called 'hypocrites', and what kind of religion does our Lord commend in contrast? Cf. Jer 17:10. How do you do your 'acts of righteousness' (verse 1)?
2. In the Lord's prayer, what can we learn: (a) from the order of the petitions, and (b) from the kind of subjects that are particularly mentioned? What must be our relation: (a) to God, and (b) to our fellow men, if we are to make it our prayer?
3. Verses 19-24 are a word to the rich. What should be a Christian's attitude to material possessions? In what way do these verses portray the character and danger of worldliness?
4. Verses 25-34 are a word to the not-so-rich. Note the recurrence of the phrase 'Do not worry', and list the reasons given why anxiety is wrong.

JANUARY 8

MATTHEW 7

DONE

1. Compare verses 1-5 with verses 6, 16 and John 7:24. If judging is not always wrong, what is our Lord condemning here?
2. What is the teaching of verses 7-12 on the practice of prayer? What place is there for persistency, and what place for trusting? Is there any conflict between these two ideas?
3. In verses 13-23 what threefold responsibility does our Lord lay on those who would enter his kingdom: (a) as to a right choice at the beginning (verse 13-14); (b) as to a right discrimination between false and true (verse 15-20); and (c) as to the condition of being acknowledged by him at the last (verses 21-23)?
4. To what categories of men do verses 24-27 refer? In what way do the two houses differ? How is it possible to be building – yet building foolishly?
5. Verses 15-20. In what way can we tell the false prophet? Cf. Deut 13:1-5; 1 John 4:1-6. Can you think of any modern guise in which he appears?

JANUARY 9

MATTHEW 8:1-22

1. Consider how different the people were who received healing, and how different our Lord's methods with them were. What does this teach us concerning: (a) his power, and (b) our work for him?
2. What was so remarkable in the centurion's faith as to elicit Christ's great commendation? Contrast John 4:48. Note how the statement of verses 11-12 anticipates the revolutionary developments recorded in the Acts. See Acts 13:45-48.

3. Verses 18-22. Why did our Lord leave the crowds, and why did he check two would-be disciples? Cf. Luke 14:25-27.

JANUARY 10

MATTHEW 8:23 - 9:8

DONE

1. In 9:6 and 9:8 the word 'authority' is used to characterize Christ's ministry. In what three realms is this seen in this passage?

2. 9:1-8 reveals Christ's power to deal with the deepest trouble of man. What is this? How do these verses illustrate the means whereby a man may find this healing? What follows from it as a visible proof of it?

3. Demon-possession was clearly treated seriously by our Lord. What may we understand by the demons' witness to Christ in 8:29 (cf. Mark 1:24; 3:11-12; Acts 16:16-18)? In what way does the incident of 8:28-34 have any parallel in the ministry of the Spirit today?

JANUARY 11

MATTHEW 9:9-34

DONE

1. In what ways do verses 9-17 disclose the revolutionary character of the ministry of Jesus? What do they teach us of the character of God (verse 13), and of the way a Christian ought to live amongst sinners?

2. Considering the miracles as signs, define the lessons we can learn from the incidents of verses 18-34 about the ability of our Lord to deal with the spiritual problems of weakness, deadness, blindness, dumbness. Have you such a problem that ought to be dealt with?

JANUARY 12

MATTHEW 9:35 - 10:23

DONE

1. Some of the instructions given to the twelve here are clearly temporary and would not apply to every situation. But what principals of Christian service can you find, which are always applicable?

2. Verses 16-23 offer the prospect of both persecution in, and power for, service. In this situation, what is to be the attitude of disciples?

JANUARY 13

MATTHEW 10:24-42

DONE

1. With all the realism of the warning in verses 24-25, Christ encourages his disciples not to fear. Consider the reason given in verses 26-33 to encourage confidence.

2. In what way do verses 34-42 demand of the Christian both militancy and tenderness? How do you equate the statement of verse 34 with the thought of Christ as Prince of Peace?

JANUARY 14

MATTHEW 11:1-24

DONE

1. What can we learn of the character of John the Baptist from his problems and doubts concerning Jesus, and from our Lord's commendation of him (verses 1-19)?
2. Verses 20-24. We can discern here some important principles behind God's judgment of mankind. What are they, and what relevance do they have in our situation?

JANUARY 15

MATTHEW 11:25 - 12:21

DONE

1. In 11:25-30, there is an amazing combination of Christ's claims to unique authority and to humility. Can both be true? What do these verses teach concerning: (a) his person, and (b) the attitude he asks from us?
2. Summarize the main principles of Sabbath observance outlined in 12:1-14. In what way may we be guilty of the sin of the Pharisees? How are we to avoid a secularization of the Lord's day?
3. 12:15-21. These verses indicate the significance of the Suffering Servant passages in Isaiah for an understanding of Jesus and his ministry (Cf. 8:17; Luke 2:29-32; 22:37; John 12:37-38). What are the outstanding features of this ministry?

JANUARY 16

MATTHEW 12:22-50

DONE

1. Verses 22-32. What do you understand by the 'unforgivable sin' interpreted in the light of its context here? Consider the solemnity of these warnings; and note the connection with them of verses 43-45.
2. What is taught in verses 33-37 about the dangers of evil or foolish speaking? In what way can a Christian deal with failure at this level?
3. Why does Christ refuse to give a special sign to the Pharisees (verses 38-39)? What is the significance of his references to the Old Testament in verses 40-42? What can we learn from verses 41-42 and 50 concerning our right response to Christ?

JANUARY 17

MATTHEW 13:1-52

DONE

1. In the parable of the sower what were the reasons why the same seed produced such different results? What conditions are signified by the different kinds of soil? What is indispensable to fruitfulness?
2. Verses 31-33 record two parables on the theme of growth. What is the main message of these verses? Do these verses include warnings against possible dangers?
3. Verses 44-50 illustrate different ways by which individuals may enter the kingdom. What are these? Why is there a mixture of good and bad? What is the condition of true enjoyment?

JANUARY 18

MATTHEW 13:53-14:12

DONE

1. What can we learn from the closing verses of chapter 13 about the nature of prejudice? Of what can it deprive us, and why?
2. In the story of 14:1-12, identify the distinctive characteristics of both Herod and John the Baptist; what is the difference between John's faithfulness and Herod's keeping of his promise?

JANUARY 19

MATTHEW 14:13-36

DONE

1. Consider the miracles of these verses as parables in action. What particularly do you learn from the response and failure of the disciples? For what qualities do we need to pray if we are to be found faithful?
2. From the same stories consider the light cast on the person of Christ. What characteristics are unmistakably revealed?

JANUARY 20

MATTHEW 15:1-20

DONE

1. For what reasons does Christ condemn the religious outlook of the Pharisees? How may we be in danger of similar failure?

2. These verses emphasize the importance of man's heart Cf. 5:8, 28; 12:34; 18:35. What is meant here by the word 'heart'? Cf. Isa 10:7. How then can a person's actions be put right?

JANUARY 21

MATTHEW 15:21-39

DONE

1. Verses 21-28. Why did our Lord treat the Canaanite woman in this way? Do you see the purpose behind it? Cf. Luke 11:8; 18:1; 1 Pet 1:7. Contrast Matt 8:23,26; 15:28, 30-31.

2. In all the miracles in this passage Christ seems to be dealing with Gentiles. Note the phrase 'the God of Israel' in verse 31. This seems to be contrary to the principle of verse 24. What was our Lord thus beginning to reveal concerning the full purpose of his mission? Cf. matt 24:14; 28:19; Rom 1:16 (the last eight words).

JANUARY 22

MATTHEW 16:1-20

DONE

1. Christ condemns, in verses 1-4, the Jews' inability to read 'the signs of the times'. What does he mean by this? How were the disciples similarly guilty? See verses 5-12. What response should such signs produce?

2. Verse 13-20. This incident at Caesarea Philippi is clearly the 'hinge-point' of the Gospel narrative. From now on Christ withdraws from the crowds, and concentrates on teaching the disciples. Why is the question about his person so crucial? Cf. 1 John 4:2-3; 5:1, 5.

3. Note the three things that our Lord says to Peter in verse 17-19. With verse 17, cf. 1 Cor 12:3; with verse 18, cf. 1 Cor 3:11 and 1 Pet 2:4-6; and with verse 19, cf. Matt 18:18 and John 20:23.

JANUARY 23

MATTHEW 16:21-17:13

DONE

1. 16:21 indicates Christ's clear awareness of the cross ahead. The word 'must' expresses a sense of inward necessity. What does this reveal about the character of Christ's death?

2. What are the terms of discipleship (verse 24)? What incentive does Christ put forward in verses 25-28 to encourage his disciple to pay the cost? What did Peter particularly need to learn (verse 22-23)?

3. In the story of the transfiguration (17:1-13), can you see its purpose: (a) for Christ himself, and (b) for his disciples?

JANUARY 24

MATTHEW 17:14-27

DONE

1. Verses 14-20. What were the reasons of the powerlessness of the disciples? What does Chris tell them is the one indispensable secret of success?

2. Verses 24-27. What practical lesson is enshrined in the story of the temple tax? What does it teach about the Christian's responsibility toward his fellow-men? Cf. 1 Cor 10:31-33; Rom 13:6-7.

JANUARY 25

MATTHEW 18

DONE

1. Verses 1-14. Consider Christ's teaching on children (see also 19:13-15). What are the qualities of the childlike spirit suggested in verses 3-4? How should the Christian act towards children or those young in faith?
2. What do verses 15-20 teach us about the way of reconciliation? What do we also learn here concerning the nature and the ministry of the local church, and concerning the practical value of acting together with others?
3. How does the parable in verses 23-25 answer Peter's question in verse 21? What other lessons does it teach?

JANUARY 26

MATTHEW 19:1-22

DONE

1. In Christ's answers to the Pharisees and the disciples on the subject of marriage (19:1-12), what does he teach about the place and character of marriage, and what does he say about the celibate life?
2. Verses 16-22. What do you find commendable in the young man in the incident? What were the factors that nevertheless made him turn away from Christ?

JANUARY 27

MATTHEW 19:23-20:28

DONE

1. Consider the teaching of Jesus on riches and possessions. With verses 23-26, cf. Luke 6:24; 18:14; 12:13-21. Compare Paul's teaching in 1 Tim 6:7, 10, 17. But note that Christ gladly received help from the rich (cf. Luke 8:2-3).
2. Is there a place for the concept of reward in Christian service? What do verses 27-30 teach about this?
3. Verses 1-16. What is the main teaching of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard? What does it have to say about the legalistic spirit in Christian service?
4. Verses 17-19 are the third predictions by Christ of his own passion. Cf. 16:21; 17:22-23. What new details are added here? What do verses 22 and 25-28 reveal of the mind of Christ with regard to what was ahead?

JANUARY 28

MATTHEW 20:29-21:22

DONE

1. What claims concerning the person and work of Jesus are here: (a) publically made by Jesus himself, and (b) openly acknowledged by others? What particularly provoked either rebuke and indignation, or prayer and acclamation? Can you keep silent?
2. What was Christ condemning in his cleansing of the temple (21:12-13), and in his cursing of the fig tree (21:18-19)? If he similarly came into our church or examined our lives, what would he see and say?

JANUARY 29

MATTHEW 21:23-46

DONE

1. Verses 23-27. People often ask for more understanding or for more proof before they respond to Christ. How did Christ himself answer such a demand? What are the conditions of receiving more light? Cf. John 7:17. In what way does the brief parable of verses 28-32 underline the same teaching?
2. Verses 33-34. What is taught by this parable concerning the character of God, the person of Christ, the responsibilities of men and women, and the reality of judgment? Do you find anything significant in the reaction of the Pharisees in verses 45-46?

JANUARY 30

MATTHEW 22

DONE

1. In this parable what are we taught about the pattern of Christ's ministry, and what challenge do you find to evangelistic outreach?
2. In verses 11-13 what do you understand to be the significance of the wedding garment? Cf. Zech 3:1-5. Consider the balance in these verses of the free invitation of the gospel and the demand for holiness, 'without which no one will see the Lord' (Heb 12:14).
3. Comparing the teachings of Jesus in verse 15-22 with Paul's teaching in Rom 13:1-7, outline the duty of the Christian to the state.
4. Verse 41-46. Christ's counter-question here makes some clear claims. What are these? Ps 110:1 is cited in verse 44. Consider the use made of this elsewhere in the New Testament. Cf. Acts 2:33-36; Heb 1:13; 10:11-13. Of what truths and hopes are we thereby assured?

JANUARY 31

MATTHEW 23

DONE

1. Verses 1-12 are an indictment of the Pharisees because of their concern for personal prestige and outward show. Do you see how this may happen within the Christian church? In what ways may this temptation come?
2. Note the repetition of the word 'hypocrite' or 'play-actor'. How is this seen in the attitude of the Pharisees to others (verse 13-15), and in their vows and promises (verse 16-22)? What do we need to do to avoid becoming like them?
3. The Lord accuses Pharisees in verses 23-26 of a serious lack of proportion in their practice of religion. Can you find modern examples of this dangerous tendency?
4. The chapter comes to a climax with our Lord's teaching on the inevitability of judgment (verse 29-39). Yet consider the love of Christ for Jerusalem, which is clearly shown. What was it that made judgment inevitable?