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MATTHEW

*Jesus is the King of the Jews*

WRITTEN

60-70 AD

KEY VERSE

*"Above his head they placed the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."*

27:37

Last updated February 7, 2023

PURPOSE

To show that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah and was the king of the Jews

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## Introduction

The Gospel of Matthew has almost 130 references to the Old Testament and forms a nice transition to the New Testament. Therefore, it fits well that Matthew comes first among the gospels. It was written to show that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah and was the king of the Jews, even if he was not a political and military messiah who would free them from the Romans as they expected.

It seems that most of the readers were Jews, probably Jesus-believing Jews in conflict and debate with non-Christian Jews. The whole story also begins with a family tree. This may not be the most exciting thing for us, but for the Jews, it was very important to know Jesus' lineage. In particular, it was important to see if he was a descendant of David, as Messiah was supposed to be according to the Old Testament. Matthew also shows how Jesus fulfilled the prophets in the OT with the expression *"So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets... "* or similar. He also uses "the kingdom of heaven" whereas Mark and Luke have "the kingdom of God" because the Jews often avoided mentioning God directly and instead used other words to show respect.

Matthew also presents Jesus as a new Moses, the great liberator of the Jews. They both came out of Egypt (2:13-15), were almost killed as children (2:16-18), were in the desert for 40 days/year, delivered the people, and made a covenant. Therefore, it is probably no coincidence that the Gospel of Matthew includes five longer speeches by Jesus as a parallel to the five books of Moses. These speeches can be the starting point for dividing the book.

The ancient church tradition of attributing the authorship to the apostle Matthew still holds. In the early church, it was also believed that Matthew was the oldest of the gospels. It is often dated somewhere between 60 and 80 AD.

**Distinctive for the Gospel of Matthew:**

* The most famous speech of Jesus: the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7
* The most famous version of the mission command (28:18-20)
* The most "Jewish" gospel
* Contains more prophetic quotations than any of the other books in the NT

### Who were the first readers?

Many Jews among them:

* Opens with a family tree
* Shows how the prophecies were fulfilled
* Does not explain Jewish customs like the other evangelists
* Jesus is called *"King of the Jews"* 4 times
* *“Kingdom of Heaven”* is used instead of *“Kingdom of God”*
* Looser OT quotations, something Jews were more used to

Probably Jewish Christians in conflict and debate with the larger group of non-Christian Jews

**Topic**

Is Jesus the Messiah?

**Briefly about the Gospel of Matthew**

* The most "Jewish" gospel → it is fitting that it comes first in the NT
* 130 references to GT
* More prophetic quotes than in any other book in the NT
* Fulfillments: *"that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet"* (10x + many times without this expression)
* Purpose: To show that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah and was the king of the Jews
* Contains the most famous speech of Jesus: the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7
* Has the best-known version of the mission command (28:18-20)

### The main theme in the Gospel of Matthew:

The Old Testament's promises of salvation for Israel and the whole world → The Cross → The Church's response: Make disciples of all nations

### Moses/Israel vs. Jesus

*“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.”* Deuteronomy 18:15

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MOSES/ISRAEL** | **JESUS** |
| Out of Egypt | *“And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”* 2:15 |
| almost killed by the pharaoh as a child | almost killed by Herod as a child |
| in the desert for 40 years | in the desert for 40 days |
| frees the people (great liberator of the Jews) | frees from a deeper form of slavery |
| the Passover is instituted | the Passover is fulfilled (Jesus = the Passover lamb) |
| enters into a covenant | enters into a new covenant |
| 5 books | 5 major speeches |

### Structure

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Intro | Ch 1-3 | Jesus' genealogy and birth, and John the Baptist as a precursor to Jesus. | Galilee |
| Part 1 | Ch 4-7 | Jesus begins to preach that the kingdom of heaven is near, i.e. God's plan of salvation for the world is coming through Jesus. He heals as a sign that God's kingdom intervenes. Concludes with the first speech: the Sermon on the Mount (ch. 5-7). |
| Part 2 | Ch 8-10 | Jesus performs several miracles and ends with another speech to the disciples as he sends them out (ch. 10). He says that they must expect both positive and negative responses to the preaching of the kingdom of heaven. |
| Part 3 | Ch 11-13 | Jesus himself also receives both a positive response from the people and a growing opposition from the people's leaders. The third speech (chapter 13) consists of parables about the kingdom of heaven and especially the fact that the kingdom will not fully appear until later, which becomes an encouragement to endure. |
| Part 4 | Ch 14-18 | More wonders and confrontations. In chapter 16 he begins to teach the disciples more privately and begins to speak about his death and resurrection. Peter reveals that he still expects a military and not a suffering messiah. Ends with a fourth discourse on discipleship (ch. 18). |
| Part 5 | Ch 19-25 | Jesus comes to Judea and Jerusalem and has several confrontations with the various groups of leaders in Israel. The fifth speech is about the destruction of the temple and the return (ch. 24-25). | Judea |
| Climax | Ch 26-28 | The Easter meal takes on a new meaning. Jesus is arrested and sentenced to death for blasphemy but rises again. The Gospel ends with the mission command where he, as the king of the universe, sends his disciples out to make more disciples. |

## 1:1-17

14 + 14 + 14 generations. 14 → David

5 ladies (unusual), connected more or less with scandal:

Tamar → Judah (Genesis 38)

*“Uriah's wife”* → David's great sin

Ruth, Rahab → Gentiles

Maria: out of wedlock

Jesus came for both men and women, sinners and righteous, Jews and Gentiles.

## 1:21-23

"Jesus" means "Jehovah saves". Nevertheless, it is Jesus who "will save his people"

→ Jesus is Yahweh incarnate

Immanuel from Isaiah 7:14 (ch. 7-11)

*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”* Isaiah 7:14

No one expected a divine Messiah.

Matthew links the divine Immanuel to the Messiah

## The Magi Visit the Messiah (2:1-12)

The beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah 60

Matt 2:10 *“When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.”* → *“Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come.”* Isa 60:5

*“Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.”* 2:11b

Isa 60:6b mentions gold and incense:

*“And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.”*

Gold → Jesus is king

Incense → Jesus is a priest

Myrrh → the cross? (anesthesia + anointing of the dead)

The nations began to come as soon as he was born.

## “Rama's cry” in 2:18

From Jer 31:15 — where it is about when the people were taken to Babylon. How then can it be fulfilled when Herod killed the boys?

Israel has been in exile ever since Babylon (5th century BC) until Jesus came.

Or in other words: The return from exile pointed towards salvation in Jesus. Although the captivity in Babylon ended in 539 BC, the even more fundamental captivity was over when Jesus came.

Now, in Jesus, they will really be allowed to return from exile.

***"So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene."* (2:23b)**

*"The prophets"*: No text that says the Messiah should be called a Nazarene... (Nazareth is not mentioned in the OT, the Apocrypha or rabbinic literature)

1. The Nazarite promise from Numbers 6:1-21 and Judges 13:5-7 (a vow of dedication to the Lord as a Nazirite, abstaining from wine and other fermented drink, must let the hair grow long and can’t go near any dead body. This does not fit)
2. A fulfillment of Isaiah 11:1: The word for branch (wə·nê·ṣer in Hebrew) contains the same consonants as in Nazareth. (But among the prophets, only Isaiah uses this word to describe the Messiah)
3. An expression of the Messiah's low status (Isa 53, Ps 22, Ps 69, Dan 9:26...) since it was a low status to come from Nazareth (John 1:46).

*“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.”* John 1:46

## Chapter 3: John the Baptist

Preached the same as Jesus: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near"* (3:1-2, 4:17)

*“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”* 3:1-2

*“From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”* 4:17

Isa 40:3 (about the exit from the exile) → a new exit comes with Jesus (v. 3)

*“A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* Isa 40:3

*“This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”* 3:3

v. 4: Cloak of camel's hair/leather belt: Elijah in 2 Kings 1:8. (Malachi 4:5 → Matt 17:10-13)

*“They replied, “He had a garment of hair and had a leather belt around his waist.” The king said, “That was Elijah the Tishbite.”* 2 Kings 1:8

*“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.”* Malachi 4:5

*“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.”* Matt 17:10-13

People confessed their sins and were baptized (vv. 6, 11, cf. Luk 3:3)

John's baptism → Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire (salvation and judgment, vv. 11-12)

## Pharisees ("Separatists")

Occurred approx. 160 BC

A party. Many were scribes by education.

Leading roles in the synagogues. Priests could also be Pharisees.

Kept the "traditions of the fathers" (the oral Torah) in addition to the law (Mark 7:3). The Sabbath, the purity regulations, and the tithe were particularly important.

The ideal was to follow the laws of purity in the temple also outside the temple, especially regarding meals. The oral law was supposed to be "a fence around the law" to prevent the Mosaic Law from being broken.

Paul was a Pharisee: Acts 22:3, 26:5, Gal 1:13-14, Phil 3:5-6

## The Sadducees

Probably named after the high priest Zadok (1 Kgs 4:2)

*“And these were his chief officials: Azariah son of Zadok—the priest;”* 1 Kgs 4:2

Was connected to the priesthood and the temple. Many priests were Sadducees, but probably not all. They may have been a kind of upper class.

Loyal to the Romans

No Oral Torah. Did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or angels/spirits.

Disappeared soon after the temple's destruction in AD 70.

## Scribes

A profession: Teachers who were to explain the law to the people.

Also called *"experts in the law"* (Luke 11:45) and *"teachers of the law"* (for instance in Matthew 5:20) in the NT. Was called "Rabbi".

Should have a job in addition.

Almost synonymous with Pharisees (Matthew 5:20, ch. 23), although they can be distinguished (Mark 2:16).

*“When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him…”* Mark 2:16a

Ezra is called a scribe (Ezra 7:11)

## The Sermon on the Mount (ch. 5-7)

**Who is this speech for?**

Disciples of Jesus (5:1)

Jesus wants them to follow him and not the religious leaders

Primarily about how followers of Jesus should live with each other, the "Ethic of Eternity" is introduced

## 5.3-12: The Beatitudes (“surprising congratulations”)

*"Blessed"* = Happy in the deepest sense

Important: Said to disciples, not general statements. Not ideals to aspire to. Precisely because of their situation, they will understand God's kingdom and want to enter it. Therefore they are blessed.

Promises of salvation to people in need. Pointing forward to the day God intervenes. (Passive verb: God is the subject)

The situation is turned around (vv. 3-6), or they are promised a reward (vv. 7-10).

This is an appropriate introduction to the Sermon on the Mount because it reminds us that God blesses before he demands.

### Who are the *“poor in spirit”*? (5:3)

The disciples were not directly economically poor (fishermen, tax collectors), but still a connection.

*“For this is what the high and exalted One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”* Isaiah 57:15

Isa 61:1 - *"the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor..."* (*"poor"* is never used as a contrast to *"rich"* in the OT)

*"the good news is proclaimed to the poor."* (Matt. 11:5b)

*"Poor"* = "a spiritual beggar", one who has nothing to offer God, but stands empty-handed before him.

### Blessed are…

**…those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

This probably reflects their spiritual situation (Is 61:3). Because they were poor and without influence (powerless), they would generally be open to the gospel and therefore blessed.

Jesus was sent *“to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion — to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.”* (Is 61:2b-3a).

**…the meek, for they will inherit the earth.**

Humility was seen as a shortcoming, not a moral positive. The disciples were "humble" when they could not claim their rights.

*"But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity."* Ps 37:11

The land" in Ps 37:11 → the new earth (NT)

The kingdom of God does not come by worldly power, but by humility.

those who hunger and thirst for justice → a just judgment will come

those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness (Jesus) → they will win eternal life

Explains how we should read the rest of the speech: Jesus is not going to contradict or abolish the OT with what he says.

*“For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.”* 11:13

"Righteousness" should not be interpreted as obedience to a law, but as a life that follows Jesus in perfect accordance with God's will.

The entire OT applies to Jesus' followers, but it cannot be interpreted correctly until one understands how it has been fulfilled in Jesus.

We relate to the law via Jesus and his interpretation of it: The double love commandment (22:37-40) and the golden rule (7:12).

OT: The law = requirements →NT: The law = examples of how to love God and one's neighbor

*"It is inadequate to say either that none of the Old Testament applies unless it is explicitly reaffirmed in the New or that all of the Old Testament applies unless it is explicitly revoked in the New. Rather, all of the Old Testament remains normative and relevant for Jesus' followers (2 Tim 3:16), but none of it can rightly be interpreted until one understands how it has been fulfilled in Christ. Every Old Testament text must be viewed in light of Jesus' person and ministry and the changes introduced by the new covenant he inaugurated."* Craig Blomberg

## What does "righteousness" mean in the Gospel of Matthew?

Paul: Legal acquittal (a judgment that a person is not guilty)

1:19 - Joseph was righteous. This does not mean that Joseph was sinless but "law-abiding".

**Used of good people (5:45):**

*“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”* 5:45b

**good works (6:1):**

*“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”*6:1

**as a parallel to *"prophet"* (10:41, 13:17):**

*“Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward.”* 10:41

*“For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”* 13:17

**about that which is "right" (20:4):**

*“He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.”*

**about John's message (21:32):**

“For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

**about the image of the Pharisees (23:28):**

*“In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”*

**about Abel (23:35):**

*“And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”*

**about the sheep being separated from the goats (25:37):**

*“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?”*

A lifestyle characterized by honoring God and living according to his will. The same is found in the OT and Jewish literature from the time of Jesus. Can be said to be the result of salvation.

## “The Antitheses” (5:21-48)

A misleading name: Some have thought he corrects the OT (but 5:17!)

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”* 5:17

*“You have heard it said…. but I tell you…”*

The prophets: *"Thus says the Lord..."*

Jesus wants the people to follow him instead of the leaders.

The point is to expand the Law to include the attitude behind the action and thus bring out the Law's real meaning and show how this surpasses the Law of Moses without contradicting it.

vv. 21-26: You shall not kill → Anger and strife are sins (and can lead to murder)

vv. 27-30: Do not break the marriage → lust is sin (and can lead to adultery)

vv. 31-32: Divorce = okay → divorce is okay only if the reason is adultery

vv. 33-37: Use of God to increase your credibility → be credible no matter what

vv. 38-42: The right to revenge → tolerate being offended and "go the extra mile"

vv. 43-47: Everyone treats his own well → love your enemies as well

v. 48: Not an unattainable ideal, but a call to become more like God as explained in chapter 5.

*“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* 5:48

## The Lord's Prayer / Lord's Prayer / Our Father (6:9-13)

God is our Father in heaven, both near and majestic, who knows what we need before we ask.

**3 prayers related to God (which we need to remind ourselves of)**

1. Name: In the kingdom of God, God’s name is hallowed, at the same time he is our Father.

2. Kingdom: The kingdom that entered our world with Jesus will one day come completely

3. Will: Jesus' attitude that God's will must be done should be our attitude (26:36-46)

**3 prayers related to ourselves (that we need to remind ourselves of)**

1. Trust: A daily dependence on God, like Israel with manna in the desert. The attitude of a day laborer.

2. Forgiveness: A reminder to forgive one another to preserve community

3. Dangers: Be aware of temptations. Ask for help to get away from evil.

### “Lead us not into temptation…”

Temptation can also be translated *"hard testing"* (CJB) and *"trial"* (RGT).

Suggestion 1: Do not let us be tempted as Jesus was.

Suggestion 2: Do not give in to temptation.

*“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”* 4:1

*“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”* 26:41

*“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”* James 1:13-14

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,”* James 1:2

*“These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”* 1 Pet 1:7

*“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”* 1 Corinthians 10:13

## Listen and obey (7:24-28)

This conclusion should get the listener to consider what he has said and take action.

If you are wise, you live by the Sermon on the Mount.

Foolish: Not the one who doesn't hear what Jesus says, but the one who hears and doesn't put it into practice. He throws away his wisdom.

*“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”* Matthew 24:35

## 3rd speech: Parables about the kingdom of heaven (13:1-52)

The sower: God's kingdom has varying responses

The weeds in the wheat and the tares: The congregation is a mix. God will judge in judgment.

The mustard seed and the leaven: God's kingdom begins small but grows in secret

The treasure and the pearl: The kingdom of heaven is worth more than anything else.

God's kingdom is different than they expected.

The parables made the message available to those who were open to it - before Jesus' death and resurrection. Those who have spiritual insight (or are open), will understand the parables and gain even more insight (vv. 10-17).

## How does Jesus fulfill the OT?

*“The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”* Genesis 12:1-3

Israel's history in the OT is fulfilled because Jesus is the reason why God chose Abraham in the first place. Jesus was going to come through Israel. Jesus is the whole point of Israel's history (Matthew 2:15, Matthew 26:26-29).

*“And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”* Matthew 2:15b

*"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."* Matthew 26:26-29

➡ The new Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15)

*“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.”* Deuteronomy 18:15

➡ David's descendant - the great King who will rule over the whole earth forever

The law: Should only apply until the promise to Abraham was fulfilled (Gal 3, Rom 10:4)

*“Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.”* Gal 3:23-25

*“Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”* Rom 10:4

➡ The sacrifices fulfilled in Jesus' death (Heb 9, Rom 3:25)

*“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”* Heb 9:12

*“God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.”* Rom 3:25

➡ "The civil laws" for Israel were fulfilled because God's people became greater than ethnic Israel when Jesus came (Hebrews 4)

*“Now we who have believed enter that rest”* Hebrews 4:3a

➡ "The moral laws" were fulfilled because Jesus is the only one who has managed to keep the whole law, and he has kept the law for us (Rom 8:1-4). The law shows what is required to be "righteous" in God's eyes, and it is now given to all who believe (Romans 3:22).

*“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”* Rom 8:1-4

*“This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,”* Rom 3:22

## Ch 16:13-28

People: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah and another prophet. A spokesman for God.

Did not expect a divine Messiah, but a man sent by God to set Israel free and become their king.

Peter (on behalf of the disciples): *“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”* 16:16

Understanding that Jesus is the divine Messiah and incarnate Son of God does not come from human reasoning, but from God's revelation.

Interpretations of *“On this rock”* (You are Petros, and on this petra…):

1. The Church is to be built on Peter and all popes after him (Catholic). No one seems to have interpreted it that way until 2-300 years later. Even up to 1560, there were many different Catholic interpretations, but Luther's reaction led to holding on to Peter. No successors of Peter are mentioned. Petra is female.
2. The church must be built on the revelation/confession/truth that Jesus is the Messiah. Especially after the Reformation. But it is probably said about Peter.
3. Peter became the pioneer of the church and represents the church. 16:19 is repeated about all disciples in 18:18 and probably applies to the forgiveness of sins (John 20:23).

*“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.”* 16:19

*“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* Matt 18:18

*“If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”* John 20:23

The church is built on all the apostles (Eph 2:20). Peter is first chronological (the first time Jesus is called the Messiah in Matthew), not hierarchical.

*“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”* Eph 2:20

## 4th speech: Disciple relationships (ch. 18)

Question: Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (v. 1)

Answer: He who makes himself small (“takes the lowly position”) like a child. (v. 4)

A child does not take the lowly position consciously, it comes naturally - primarily because they are dependent on adults.

No one can save themselves, they must be aware that they are dependent on God for this. Those who realize this are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

A surprising answer that turns everything upside down. God's kingdom is incredible.

Does Jesus say that no one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, since everyone must make themselves equally small to enter? (v. 3)

Humility in practice (v. 5): Disciples must welcome all other disciples (10:42) into the community

vv. 6-14: Serious to cause *"one of these little ones—those who believe in me"* (a disciple) to fall, or despise them.

vv. 15-20: What should we do when someone in the congregation sins?

vv. 21-35: Parable explaining the importance of forgiveness in the Christian community (6:12, 14-15)

*“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”* 6:12

*“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* Matt 6:14-15

## What about our discipleship relationships?

What can make us make ourselves great?

Do we treat other disciples as if they were Jesus himself or do we treat them differently? Do we tend to focus on some particular ones and overlook others? (James 2:1-4)

What do we do about conflicts? What can destroy the community?

Are we ready to always forgive when someone asks us to?

## The Parable of the Tares in the Wheat (13:24-30 + 36-43)

**Who is the audience?**

The crowd (v. 34) and the disciples (v. 36)

**What is useful background information?**

The weeds are similar to wheat and the difference is difficult to see until they are ripe. Poisonous. Will destroy all the flour if it is grounded together with the wheat.

**What do the metaphors mean?**

The man = Son of Man

The field = The world

The good grain = The children of the Kingdom

The weeds = The children of the wicked

The enemy = The devil

Autumn = The end of the world/judgment

Those who reap = The angels

**What's the surprise?**

They must not weed the field!

**What is the main point?**

The whole world is seen as God's kingdom, which according to the judgment will consist only of the kingdom's children. The kingdom of God is in this world now, but will not be evident until the end. Are any of the weeds within the congregation?

**Application:**

Only God can judge justly, we must not judge prematurely and try to single out the children of the Kingdom now. We can harm if we try to judge.

## The Parable of the Leavened Dough (13:33)

*“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”* 13:33

Audience: The people (vv. 2-3, 34, 36)

Leavened dough: Usually a negative symbol in the NT, but not here.

Point: Although the kingdom of heaven was not visible to them, it will eventually transform everything.

Application: Our work for God's kingdom sometimes seems futile and unimportant. Can the church change history? Can a principle make a difference? We often don't see the results along the way. God's kingdom grows in secret, but it will be visible in the end. We just have to be faithful.

## The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (13:44-46)

Audience: The disciples (v. 36)

Repetitions: *“…went and sold all he had and bought …”*

Point: One can stumble upon God's kingdom, and one can search purposefully for it. God's kingdom deserves full surrender anyway.

Application: God's kingdom is so precious and important that it must be more important than anything else in our lives. Our lives should revolve around God's kingdom, our lives change when we become part of God's kingdom. Sometimes drastic action is required.

Audience: The disciples (19:25)

Context: *“What then will there be for us?”* (19:27) ... *“will receive a hundred times as much... But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”* (vv. 29-30) *For the kingdom of heaven is like…*

Metaphors: Land owner = God; Vineyard = Israel (Is 5:1-7, Jer 12:10)

Historical background: One denarius = a normal daily wage

Surprise: Everyone gets the same salary!

Point: Verse 16. The disciples would not get any benefit from having been with Jesus the longest. Those who enter God's kingdom last are put on an equal footing with the rest and get a kind of advantage. God's grace is so great that it can feel unfair to those who think they deserve something.

Application: Do we who have worked hard and for a long time expect that we will receive something more from God than others who have been Christians only for a short time?

## The parable of the two sons (21:28-32)

**Who is the audience?**

The chief priests and the elders of the people (v. 23)

**Context:**

They refused to accept John and his message (vv. 27, 32)

The first of three parables about the faithlessness of Israel's religious leaders

**Metaphors:**

The Father = God The Vineyard = Israel

1st son = The tax collectors and the harlots

2nd son = The elders and chief priests

**The elders and chief priests:**

Are calling God *"lord"*, but are not doing his will (→ 7:21)

"Said yes" to the Law and the Prophets, but rejected John, the greatest of the prophets (11:11)

Whoever rejects John rejects Jesus (both preach “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” 3:2 = 4:17)

The publicans and harlots were seen as traitors. They did not claim to keep the law and the prophets, but they believed in John.

Application: Doing God's will is more than words (7:21-27, 25:31-46). It's not about keeping the law, but about saying yes to the gospel no matter who you are.

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* 7:21

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”* 7:24

*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.”* Matt 25:41-43

## 5th speech (part 1): Matt 24

Mark 13,4: *"Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"*

Luke 21:7: *“Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”*

Matt 24:3: *“Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”*

vv. 4-14: Signs that do not mean the end of the world, but only *“the beginning of birth pains"* (v. 8).

vv. 9-13 = 10:17-22 (2nd speech, the sending of the apostles). The end of the world will not happen until the gospel has been preached throughout the whole world to all peoples. (??)

*“Oikomene”* = Roman Empire 6 of 14x

*“your faith is being reported all over the world.”* Rom 1:8b

*“…the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world…”* Col 1:6

*“…This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven…”* Col 1,23

NB: Despite all the opposition, the gospel will spread!

Matt 24:9: *“you will be hated by all nations because of me.”*

Luk 21:24: *“They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”*

Acts 2:5: *“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”*

Rom 1:5 KJ21: *“by whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name”*

2. Tim 4:17 CEB: *“But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that the entire message would be preached through me and so all the nations could hear it.”*

A. Because The Bible's "loose" definition of all peoples ("the Gentiles in general") and the NT's view of the world *(“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* Matt 24:14) is probably about the general spread of the gospel in the Roman Empire before the year 70. After that, the end of the world can happen at any time.

B. This time of tribulation may lead to a general spread of the gospel to people groups all over the world (which has also happened a long time ago) before Jesus' return takes place.

vv. 15-21: Signs that the temple will be destroyed (the Jewish war 66-70 AD, a "time of great tribulation")

*"the abomination that causes desolation"* (Dan 8:11-13, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11) = Jerusalem surrounded by armies (*“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.”* Luke 21:20)

*“How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord’s people?”* Dan 8:13b

*“He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”* Dan 9:27

*“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.”* Dan 11:31

*“From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.”* Dan 12:11

Eusebius, Church History 3.5: *“The members of the church in Jerusalem, by means of a word given by a revelation to trustworthy persons there, were ordered to leave the city before the war began and settle in a village in Perea called Pella. To Pella those who believed in Christ emigrated from Jerusalem.”* (approx. year 68)

vv. 22-28: In this time of tribulation until the end of the world (vv. 4-14) they must not be led astray.

vv. 29-31: As soon as the time of trouble is over, Jesus will return.

vv. 32-36: Both the time of tribulation and the destruction of the temple will happen within a generation, and that means that the return can happen at any time after this. But unlike the fall of the temple, no one knows when the return will occur.

*“All these preliminary events in fact occurred before A.D. 70, though most if not all have recurred many times since then as well. Various messianic pretenders arose, most notably Theudas (Acts 5:36; Josephus, Ant. 20.97-99, 160-72, 188, who describes other false claimants as well). The war of Israel against Rome began in A.D. 66-67 and was preceded by the growing hostility incited by the Zealots. Famine ravaged Judea, as predicted in Acts 11:27-30, datable to ca. A.D. 45-47 by Josephus, Ant. 20.51-53. Earthquakes shook Laodicea in A.O. 60-61 and Pompeii in A.D. 62 (cf. also Acts 16:26). Persecution dogged believers' footsteps throughout Acts; internal dissension so tore apart the church at Corinth (1 Cor 1-4) that God even caused some to die (l Cor 11:30). Numerous New Testament epistles were written primarily to warn against false teachers and perversions of Christianity, most notably Galatians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Peter, and Jude. Arguably, the concept of "love running cold" most aptly characterized the days of the Neronian persecution of Christians in the midsixties. Paul, finally, with whatever rationale, could claim that by at least the late fifties, the gospel had gone out to all the oikoumene - known world or empire (Rom 10:18).”* Craig L. Blomberg, The New American Commentary. Matthew.

We cannot time the return, nor postpone it by not evangelizing (vv. 36, 42, 44, 48-50).

*“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* 24:36

*“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”* 24:42

*“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”* 24:44

Jesus can always come again tomorrow!

*"It demonstrates that everything necessary for Christ's return was accomplished within the first generation of Christianity, so that every subsequent generation has been able to believe that Jesus could come back in their times."* Blomberg

vv. 37-51: The main point of Jesus is *"Keep watch!"* He does not give information about when the return will occur but encourages faith and perseverance.

## 5th speech (part 2): Matt 25

vv. 1-13: The parable of the bridesmaids. Everyone falls asleep, but the wise were prepared. No one knows the time of the return. It may be delayed, but we must be prepared anyway.

vv. 14-30: The parable of the talents. Serve the Lord while you wait. Do not neglect what you have been given and entrusted, and be obedient to the assignment.

vv. 31-46: The judgment. Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead. The basis for judgment is what has been done to *"the least of these brothers and sisters of mine"*, probably Jesus' disciples (10:42, 11:11, 18:6, 10, 14) and thus Jesus himself. Probably because they accepted their message (by faith). The surprise is not that they are saved or not, but that they did it to Jesus.

*“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”* 10:42

*“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”* 18:6

*“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”* 18:10

## The mission command (28:16-20)

*“I have received all power in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations: Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always until the end of the world."* Matt. 28:18-20

*“Going, therefore, making disciples, baptizing them and teaching them…”*

Make disciples, not just evangelism.

*"God with us"* 1:23 → *"And surely I am with you always..."* 28:20

## While we wait for Jesus…

What are we doing? How do we live our lives?

In what ways is it easy to be led astray while we wait? What can cause us to lose faith?

God's word is not bound (2 Tim 2:9). How does it encourage you that the gospel goes forward even when we face opposition?