

---

TWENTY PAGES A WEEK

---

MATTHEW - REVELATION

# THE GOSPEL



HAL HAMMONS

**TWENTY PAGES A WEEK:  
THE GOSPEL**

Matthew-Revelation

**Hal Hammons**

Copyright © 2021 by Spiritbuilding Publishers. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher.

Published by  
Spiritbuilding Publishers  
9700 Ferry Road, Waynesville, OH 45068

TWENTY PAGES A WEEK: The Gospel - Matthew-Revelation  
by Hal Hammons

ISBN: 9781733850834

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

**Spiritbuilding**  
P U B L I S H E R S

[spiritbuilding.com](http://spiritbuilding.com)

*Spiritual Equipment for the Contest of Life*

## Section 4

# The Gospel

(Matthew-Revelation)



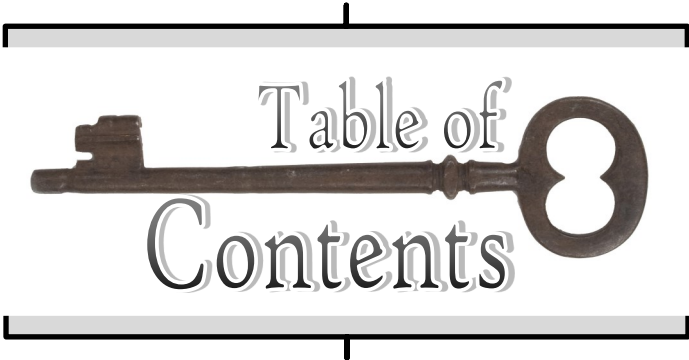


Table of  
Contents

1. Week 40: Matthew ..... 7

2. Week 41: Mark .....15

3. Week 42: Luke ..... 23

4. Week 43: John ..... 31

5. Week 44: Acts 1-12 ..... 39

6. Week 45: Acts 13-28 ..... 47

7. Week 46: Romans ..... 55

8. Week 47: 1 and 2 Corinthians..... 63

9. Week 48: Galatians-2 Thessalonians ..... 71

10. Week 49: 1 Timothy-Hebrews ..... 79

11. Week 50: James-Jude ..... 87

12. Week 51: Revelation ..... 95

13. Week 52: Review..... 103

Afterword: Going on from here ..... 107



# Week 40: Matthew

*25 Pages*

The story of Jesus can hardly be contained on paper, let alone a couple dozen pages. But the Spirit has blessed us with four different perspectives on the greatest life ever lived.

Matthew, writing to a mainly Jewish audience, stresses the fulfillment of Scripture and the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah and His kingdom. His non-linear storytelling style can be confusing, but it is completely in keeping with Old Testament texts such as Jeremiah.

## **The kingdom has arrived, but only the faithful may enter in**

Matthew wastes little time in getting to the core of Jesus' message for mankind — what

he calls "the kingdom of heaven." Called "the kingdom of God" in Mark and Luke, it denotes the fulfillment of God's promises to restore Israel to its former glory. The Jews of Jesus' day expected this to be accomplished mostly through political or military action, in keeping with the literal language of prophets such as Isaiah and Ezekiel. But Jesus quickly assured his listeners that He had no intention of creating a political brouhaha. The kingdom was spiritual, its focus was heaven, and its King was to be crucified on His way to glory.

The "Sermon on the Mount" presented in Matthew 5-7 may be a distillation of the kingdom principles preached by Jesus throughout His ministry. Or it may have been preached all at once and then reiterated at various times and for various audiences. In any case, it puts in stark contrast the difference between His idea of service and ours, and leaves it to us to choose Him.

**The kingdom is about seeking God, not seeking comfort.** The Beatitudes (5:3-12) make it clear that conventional approaches to success in this life — assertiveness, strength, originality,





**Week 40: Matthew**

What must it have been like for Jews in the first century? After generations of waiting, someone comes along with the power and dignity, the teaching “with authority,” that we might have expected from the Messiah. But every attempt our neighbors made to turn Him toward an armed rebellion in the vein of Moses or Gideon was either ignored or flat-out rebuffed. Would I have had enough faith in the King to accept the kingdom He offered, or would I hold out hope for something more to my taste?

**What is your initial reaction to the reading?**

---

---

---



*My Initial Reaction*

popularity, etc. — are not necessarily conducive to success in His world. Beginning the list with “poor in spirit” sets the tone. Some are more interested in demonstrating their ability and knowledge than in submitting to their King. Such ones will find themselves left out of Jesus’ kingdom.

**The kingdom is about our heart, not our actions.** Many of Jesus’ listeners prided themselves on their willingness to avoid adultery, murder, theft, and the like. But Jesus was just as concerned about the attitude of the one who would claim loopholes as with the one who ignored the law entirely (5:33-37). Tithing mint, dill and cumin without adopting a spirit of justice, mercy and faithfulness — considerations Jesus called “the weightier provisions of the law” (23:23) — betrays a spirit that is incompatible with His calling.

**The kingdom is about kindness, not fairness.** Jews in Jesus’ day balked at the notion of carrying a load for a Roman. Jesus no doubt disappointed them by saying a kingdom-worthy attitude would willingly go two miles instead of one (5:41). The same goes for His extension of the “love your neighbor” mandate to enemies (5:44). His critics would have scoffed, as they do now — saying one who “turned the other cheek” would just get slapped again. But Jesus was simply saying that others’ rotten attitudes and behaviors are no justification for our own. We act as Jesus acted, all the time; then we trust God to work out justice from His throne.

**The kingdom is about trust, not competence.** We come to Jesus with some assumptions: that we are not good enough, that His way is best, and that He will amply provide for us. His model prayer (6:9-13) emphasizes the sovereignty of God, as well as our own need for forgiveness. His admonition to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (6:19-21) comes with an assurance that He knows about our physical needs and will amply supply us when we put spiritual things first (6:33).

**The kingdom is about judging His way, not our way.** The oft-quoted prohibition on judging

(7:1-5) is really condemning hypocrisy. We will meet with hypercritical attitudes when we demonstrate a mote-picking tendency ourselves. Jesus would not condemn all judging, or even all negative judging, and then turn around and tell us not to cast pearls before swine (7:6). How can we identify the “swine” without judging? No, the context going through the famous “golden rule” (7:12) is emphasizing the fair treatment of others. Be reasonable in your dealings, and you will find much of the same attitude coming back. Be generous, and (to use the words from the parallel text in Luke 6:37-38) kindness will come back in “a good measure — pressed down, shaken together, and running over.”

**The kingdom is about obedience, not intentions.** This point may seem incompatible with a gospel that stresses God’s ability to save over our ability to save ourselves. Still, that clearly is an obstacle we need to overcome. Jesus’ emphasis on obeying God’s rules provides bookends for the sermon (5:20; 7:21). Building on another foundation (7:24-27) might make for easier digging in the short term. But this King requires that we choose His construction zone and building methods. They may not be of our choosing, but they will serve us well when the storms of life begin to blow.



- **Matthew 12:30 — “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”**

There is no middle ground with Jesus. You either deliberately choose up sides with Him and His cause, or you have implicitly chosen up sides against Him. Those who are not furthering the cause of Christ in their lives are by necessity hindering it, as they are asserting their lack of need for His salvation.

- **Matthew 16:26 — “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”**

Jesus always emphasized the priority of eternity over life on earth. The most pleasant and satisfying life that could be achieved here and now will eventually end. If, on that day, the one who enjoyed that life has made no provision for the next, his life was ultimately in vain.

- **Matthew 25:13 — “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”**

The narratives and parables of Matthew 24-25 have been applied to end-time events, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the general need for preparedness in the face of an uncertain future. All of these applications share the same central point: God has expectations, both for His people and the world at large; we need to spend quality time getting ready for the day we will be held accountable for our actions.



*What is your favorite "Beatitude," and why?*

---

---

---

*Is "turning the other cheek" a prohibition against all efforts at self-defense? Explain.*

---

---

---

*What does it mean that Jesus taught "as one having authority"?*

---

---

---

- **Pharisees**

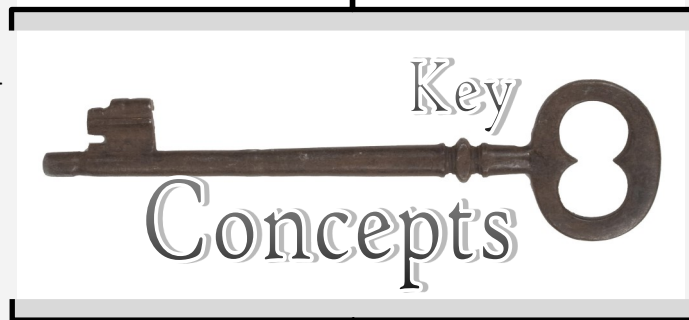
The conservative element of the Jewish theocracy, Pharisees stressed a literal application of the Law. They had a reputation for being self-righteous and judgmental.

- **Sadducees**

The ruling class, Sadducees tended to be wealthy and politically connected. High priests Caiaphas and Annas were Sadducees. Emphasizing God's dealings with His people in this life, they denied the resurrection and the afterlife.

- **Apostles**

The term, defined as "one sent out," generally refers to Jesus' chosen 12 ambassadors (10:1-4). The term "disciples," which means learners, is frequently used interchangeably with "apostles."





## **Judas: Greed turns to betrayal, and betrayal turns to despair**

The last lesson in the previous quarter's material touched on the part of the Jesus story as prefigured in Zechariah 11:12-13. The one who would shepherd his

people was rejected, paid off with 30 pieces of silver which were subsequently thrown to the potter. It is as poignant a story as it is repugnant.

Judas was a thief (John 12:6). The love of money is "a root of all sorts of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10), and such was certainly the case with Judas. He agreed to turn Jesus over to His enemies in a private way, so as to avoid public involvement (26:14-15). He shared his Master's final meal, literally eating from His hand (26:20-25). Passages such as Psalm 41:9 — "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" — were never so perfectly and horribly fulfilled as they were on that fateful night.

Did Judas think Jesus would allow Himself to be taken? Surely Jesus had done more remarkable things since He had met Judas. In any case, when it became obvious Jesus would indeed go to the cross, Judas regretted his actions and returned his ill-gotten gains. But instead of finding true repentance in his heart, Judas found only despair (27:3-5). His name lives on today as the ultimate insult — the one who would turn on his Lord and greatest friend for money.

Many other Judases have come along, following much the same path. They desire something the Lord does not offer — perhaps money, perhaps public acclaim, perhaps personal achievement. Then, upon realizing they cannot have their heart's desire and the Lord at the same time, they choose the former. Ultimately, they come to the realization of what they have lost, but they do not have enough faith to trust in their Savior's forgiveness. Despondent and regretful, they spend the rest of their days regretting their choices, wondering what might have been.

*What might I do that would make me more like Judas (for better or worse)?*

---



---



---

**T**he spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." These were Jesus' words to Peter, James and John in the middle of the night at Gethsemane. He had asked them to stay awake with Him while He prayed, and they had been willing. But they had not been physically up to the task. They fell asleep at their posts three times while their Master contemplated His pending death and the terrors that would accompany it.

"Flesh" is a frequent figure of speech in the Bible, signifying that which is not "the spirit." Although our hearts turn to God and desire the things of God, often our "flesh," our carnal appetites and weaknesses, keep us from behaving as we should. Such was certainly the case with Judas. His desire for money caused him to identify Jesus in the darkness to His enemies, allowing them to arrest Him without having to explain themselves to the masses (26:47-50). The "Judas kiss" is a phrase used even today to describe the deepest, darkest betrayal imaginable.

Peter showed his weakness of the flesh by attacking the party of the high priest, cutting off the ear of one man (26:51). Again, as before, Peter had confused his own vision for the kingdom with the Lord's. He was warned in the harshest of terms about this before (16:21-23); the rebuke he received from Him while trying to defend Him by the sword must have cut even deeper.

The greatest fleshly failure of the hour, though, was the flight of the disciples (26:56). Evidently unwilling to be arrested themselves, they abandoned the Lord to His fate. Their failure becomes that much more poignant when we consider that they had been told of their failure beforehand and vowed such would never happen (26:31-5).

**How does our "weak flesh" show itself? How can we strengthen ourselves?**

---

---

**Do "big" mistakes matter more than "little" ones? Explain.**

---

---

*Wonderful Story  
of Love*

**"Jesus Christ is the same  
yesterday and today and  
forever." – Hebrews 13:8**

**M**uch of Jesus’ language in His final days, as well as several of his parables, dealt with God’s pending judgment against Jerusalem and the Jews. Their repeated transgressions, culminating in their rejection of Jesus Himself, were enough for God to bring a complete destruction to the nation. Similar warnings and punishments had been meted out repeatedly throughout previous generations; the woes coming through the Romans in A.D. 70, however, would be far worse.



Matthew 24:1-3 places the prophecies of doom and destruction squarely in the context of the destruction of the temple of Herod. Although “the end of the age” may seem to refer to end-time events, in truth it simply means the culmination of events within time. The parallel text in Luke 21:7 does not leave room for any “latter-day” fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy.

That said, it is easy to apply the principles of readiness and accountability found in this text to our own preparations for final judgment. If indeed Jesus is returning to judge us one day (2 Corinthians 5:10), we would do well to begin planning for it right away.

**What have we left out that you wish had been included, and why?**

---



---



---



---

If you have a red-letter edition of the Bible, you may have a headache after reading Matthew. The words of Jesus completely cover the page in some openings, very nearly in many others. But that is to be expected. The best way to get to know Jesus is to listen to Him speak. We cannot have the privilege of being in His direct, literal presence in the same way as Matthew was. But the same effect is had when we listen to Him through the gospel. It’s the best headache you can ever have.

**What is your takeaway from the reading?**

---



---



---



