

Follow Me  
**Matthew-Part One**

**Matthew 1-13**

by  
Robert J. Koester

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# Lesson One-Matthew 1

## Follow Me-Who Is Calling Us to Follow Him?

### *Introduction*

The purpose of Matthew's gospel is to show how Jesus called his disciples and then formed them to be his witnesses.

However, Matthew has not written a "how to" book. Growing as a disciple first of all means knowing who Jesus is and what he has done for all people.

In this chapter watch how Matthew begins laying a foundation for discipleship.

### *1:1-17 The genealogy of Jesus*

**Verse 1** Why do you think Matthew began his book by pointing out that Jesus descended from Abraham and David?

**Verses 2-6** Read this list of names. What spiritual truths does the Messiah's descent from Abraham teach us?

**Verses 7-11** Read this list of names. What do all of them have in common? What spiritual truths does the Messiah's descent from David teach us?

**Verses 12-16** Read this list of names. Are any of them familiar to you? What spiritual truth about the Messiah does the reference to the Babylonian captivity teach us?

Discuss the four women mentioned in the genealogy.

- What was Tamar's story?
- What was Rahab's story?
- What was Ruth's story?
- Why was the term "Uriah's wife" a better designation for Bathsheba than calling her by name?

As a whole, what does this genealogy teach us about the one we follow?

**Verse 17** Multiple choice: Why did Matthew list three divisions of exactly 14 people?

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- a. Three times 14 equals 42, or six 7s. The seventh 7 was sacred to the Jews, which is the period into which Jesus was born.
- b. The three equal divisions stress God's steady march through history, guiding all toward the birth of the Messiah.
- c. The repetition of 14 would help Christians memorize the genealogy.
- d. We don't know.

***1:18-25 The first prophecy fulfilled: We follow the Son of God***

This section gives the first of seven prophecies leading up to the time when Jesus called his first disciples. It is no accident that Matthew lists seven prophecies. Seven is the number of completeness. Matthew is saying, "Jesus is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament."

This section gives us the basic answers to our question: Who is calling us to follow him?

a. (verse 23)

b. (verse 21)

Compare this account of Jesus' birth with the well-known account in Luke. Consider Matthew's audience. Why is his account appropriate for his gospel?

**Verses 18-23** Why does the story of Joseph's plan to divorce Mary help us understand the prophecy from Isaiah (7:14)?

Why is the teaching of the virgin birth of Jesus so important to our faith?

**Verse 24** Review the normal Jewish wedding customs. They will help us understand what is happening between Mary and Joseph.

(Note that the NIV translation of verse 20, "do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife" literally reads, "do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife, home." And the NIV translation of verse 24, "and took Mary home as his wife," literally reads, "and he took his wife home.") How does the literal reading better reflect Jewish wedding customs?

**Verse 25** How does this verse further underscore the two most important things about Jesus: who he is and why he came to this earth?

How does this verse help us understand our ministry?

**Summary**

The genealogy teaches us that the history of God's people is not the story of man's glory, but of God's

grace. That theme continues to be true in our own personal histories and in the history of God's church today.

Jesus is both true man (born of the virgin Mary) and true God ("God with us"). As such he is the perfect person to save us from our sins.

***For next time***

Review chapter one in The People's Bible commentary on Matthew. If you wish, look ahead to Matthew chapter 2.

## Lesson Two-Matthew 2

# Follow Me-We Follow a King Who Is Received Only by Faith

### *Introduction*

Matthew has carefully chosen the accounts he includes in his gospel.

In this chapter Matthew gives us insights into the nature of the kingdom of God. Faith, humility, persecution, God's powerful care-these are facts of life in God's kingdom on earth.

### ***2:1-12 The second prophecy fulfilled: In faith the Magi worship the King of the Jews***

Use the following words to discuss the details of this remarkable and mysterious story.

- Magi from the East
  
- King Herod
  
- star
  
- Bethlehem
  
- exact time
  
- house
  
- bowed down and worshiped him
  
- gold, incense, myrrh

How does this account build on our picture of Jesus, the one we worship?

### ***2:13-15 The third prophecy fulfilled: Our King is snatched from Satan's jaws***

Focus on the time elements in this section:

- ò when Mary and Joseph were warned by the angel

- ò how long Mary and Joseph stayed in Egypt
- ò when Herod died and the holy family returned to Palestine

The prophecy quoted here, Hosea 11:1, refers to God delivering Israel from Egypt. Why do you think Matthew says that the prophecy refers to Christ and is fulfilled in him?

***2:16-18 The fourth prophecy fulfilled: Our King came to bring not only peace but also a sword***

Why did Herod kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem?

Why did Herod designate that all boys up to two years old be killed?

This prophecy (from Jeremiah 31:15) refers to when Israel went into captivity in Babylon. Why did Matthew use this prophecy to refer to Christ?

Read Jeremiah 31:16,17. Why do you think Matthew did not quote these verses? What comfort would they give the women of Bethlehem who lost their children? What comfort do they give all who work in Christ's church?

***2:19-23 The fifth prophecy fulfilled: Our King will live in complete humility***

How did God use another dream to give Joseph further direction?

Note: There is no prophecy like this in the Old Testament. Either Matthew is quoting from some work we know nothing about (see Jude 14 for a clear example of this), or he is summarizing what the prophets in general say about Jesus' humility. Nazareth was not a place one would be proud to call his or her hometown.

How does this chapter help us understand Jesus' ministry? How does it help us understand the nature of the kingdom in which we are serving?

**Summary**

Jesus is the God-man-descended from David and born through the Holy Spirit. Yet his greatness is covered with humility. Only those who know him as their Savior and understand the nature of his rule

will truly worship him. This the Magi did. Yet many reject him. Wicked Herod tried to kill him and caused suffering in the process, just as wicked people today cause suffering among God's people. Yet God delivered his Christ, and God will deliver his church as well.

***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 3 several times.

## Lesson Three-Matthew 3

# Follow Me-The Kingdom of God Is at Hand

### *Introduction*

God did not allow his kingdom or his King to arrive unannounced. He called John the Baptist to announce his coming. And God himself put his stamp of approval on his Son's work. How encouraging this is to those who will bear witness to him in the future!

### *3:1-12 The sixth prophecy fulfilled: A voice in the wilderness*

**Verses 1,2** What is the kingdom of God? John did not need to explain what it was. Every Israelite, from the youngest to the oldest, knew. Read one or more of the following verses from the Old Testament. These verses were well-known to the Jewish people.

- Daniel chapter 2, especially verses 31-45
  
- Psalm 29
  
- Zephaniah 3:14-17

Was there ever a time when God did not rule over all things? If not, then what does it mean that God's kingdom, or rule, is near or at hand?

**Verse 3** Why must people repent in order to be part of the kingdom of God?

**Verse 4** Why did John live as he did?

**Verses 5,6** What success did John's preaching see?

**Verses 7-12** With success came resistance.

Read Amos 5:18-24. Why did Amos speak to the people of his day as he did?

How were the people of John's day like those of Amos' day?

How would this section have helped the disciples understand the nature of their ministry? How does this section help us understand our ministry?

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**3:13-17 Jesus' baptism**

**Verses 13-15** Did Jesus have to be baptized for the same reason we must be baptized? Explain.

What comfort is there for us in the fact that Jesus was baptized?

**Verses 16,17** Agree or disagree: For the first time, Jesus received the Spirit of God.

What comfort is there in the fact that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus?

What comfort is there for us in God's words to his Son? What encouragement is there in the work of serving others with God's Word?

**Summary**

God sent John the Baptist to prepare people for the coming of the kingdom of God. The ministry of John the Baptist-proclaiming the kingdom of God by preaching law and gospel, giving pardon to the penitent, and warning to the impenitent-describes our ministry. Jesus came to be baptized by John.

We see Jesus begin his work of saving us from our sins. God the Father put his stamp of approval on Jesus' work, and the Holy Spirit empowered him to begin his public ministry.

**For next time**

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 4 several times.

## Lesson Four-Matthew 4

# Follow Me-I Am Your Righteousness

### *Introduction*

At his baptism Jesus began his formal ministry. Now we see Jesus wrestle with Satan, preach the gospel, and call his disciples.

In this chapter Matthew completes his series of seven Old Testament prophecies Jesus fulfilled. Yes, Matthew tells us, Jesus is the promised Messiah.

Jesus now calls his disciples and begins their training. We too are called to watch him as he preaches and teaches the kingdom of God and learn from him how to be his disciples.

### *4:1-11 Our King's victory over Satan's temptations*

**Verses 1,2** Whose will was it that Jesus be tempted?

**Verses 3,4** The first temptation. What was the "surface" temptation? What was at the heart of this temptation?

Note: The phrase "man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" is not just an encouragement to read or hear God's Word. The point is, rather, that God's powerful Word sustains us in every need. When he speaks, we are sustained. If he remains silent, we die.

**Verses 5-7** The second temptation. What was the "surface" temptation? What was at the heart of this temptation?

**Verses 8-10** The third temptation. What was the "surface" temptation? What was at the heart of this temptation?

Jesus' temptation teaches us how to overcome Satan's temptations-with the Word of God. However, this account is not primarily about how we can overcome temptation but about the fact that Jesus completely and totally obeyed his Father's will in our place.

The kingdom of God is not about how we can come under God's rule but about how Jesus gave us his righteousness and enabled us to enter his kingdom. This account shows the depth of Jesus' obedient suffering for us.

### *4:12-17 The seventh prophecy fulfilled: Jesus preaches the good news in Galilee*

**Verses 12-16** Jesus went into battle for us. He also preached about the kingdom he was establishing. Where did Jesus carry out most of his ministry? Why do you think he worked here and not in Judea?

What was the light the people were seeing?

**Verse 17** Did John's work of preparing the people to receive Jesus end when he was put into prison?

Does it ever end? Does it end for a person when he or she becomes a Christian?

***4:18-22 Jesus calls his first disciples***

How did the first disciples respond to the voice of the King?

Employees today are used to job descriptions. What was the job description Jesus gave his first disciples?

In a sense verse 19 is a central point in the book. Everything we have heard so far introduces Jesus and the nature of his ministry. It was he who called the disciples into their ministry.

Everything we will hear from this point on relates to Jesus' molding and shaping his disciples to be fishers of men on behalf of their King.

***4:23-25 Evidences of the kingdom of God***

Why is the message of the kingdom good news?

What is the relation of Jesus' miracles to the message of the kingdom? Are miracles still a part of God's kingdom?

Why did Jesus enjoy such instant popularity?

Locate on a map the extent of Jesus' popularity.

**Summary**

God was justified in putting his stamp of approval on his Son's work. His Son, our King, did battle in our place and overcame all of Satan's temptations.

Our King bids all to repent of their sins and enter a kingdom in which there are forgiveness and blessing.

When Jesus called, the disciples did not hesitate. They followed him immediately. They were on the road to becoming fishers of men.

Our King rules over all things for our good. There is nothing he cannot do to bless his people.

***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 5 several times.

## Lesson Five-Matthew 5

### Follow Me-

# Live as What You Are: Members of My Kingdom

#### *Introduction*

The Sermon on the Mount is addressed to children of God's kingdom, and that means us.

Only as we reflect on this kingdom and compare it to the kingdom we came from, can we listen to this sermon, understand it, and take it to heart.

Reflect on how your membership in God's kingdom has changed your attitude from what it was. Consider the following areas:

- Our possessions
  
- Our desire for comfortable lives
  
- Pride in our own abilities
  
- Our ambitions and those who stood in our way
  
- The tragedies that came into our lives
  
- God's law

As you read chapter 5, bear in mind that you are children of the King.

#### ***5:1-12 You, my disciples, are blessed***

Examine each of the Beatitudes in light of the following:

- Which characteristic of members of Christ's kingdom is being described?
  
- Think of one member of God's kingdom from the previous four chapters. How was this characteristic true in his or her life?
  
- How will (or are) the members of Christ's kingdom be blessed?

**5:13-16** *Members of the kingdom preserve the earth, and their good deeds are seen by all*

Discuss: Jesus is not telling us to become the salt and light of the earth.

What warning does Jesus give us in the picture of the salt?

**5:17-20** *Christ has taken the law seriously, and now we can too*

What good news is there in verses 17 and 18?

How does Jesus' temptation in the wilderness underscore the truth of these words?

**Verse 20** Why does our righteousness (as members of God's kingdom) surpass that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law?

**5:21-48** *Disciples, don't reject the law as the Pharisees do. Keep it!*

In this section Jesus treats various facets of God's law. Look at each. Then answer the following questions about each.

1. How had the Pharisees twisted the law so they could convince themselves they had kept it?
2. How should we who are covered in Christ's righteousness approach this law?
3. What warning does Jesus give those who think this law is not important?
4. Why can a member of God's kingdom keep this law, while a member of the kingdom of the world cannot?

**Verses 21-26** The Fifth Commandment: Murder

**Verses 27-30** The Sixth Commandment: Adultery

**Verses 31,32** The Sixth Commandment: Divorce

**Verses 33-37** The Eighth Commandment: Oaths

**Verses 38-42** Revenge

**Verses 43,44** Whom we should love

**Verses 45-47** Why does loving our enemies make us sons of God?

**Verse 48** In this context what does it mean to be perfect, just as our heavenly Father is perfect?

### **Summary**

As members of God's kingdom, we are blessed. What is more, Christ has fulfilled the law, and now our righteousness can go beyond the world's righteousness.

### ***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 6 several times.

## Lesson Six-Matthew 6

# Follow Me-In My Piety and Trust

### *Introduction*

In chapter five Jesus contrasted how the Pharisees interpreted God's law with how he interpreted it. Knowing God's ongoing, gracious forgiveness enables us to look at the law in its fullness and strive to keep it.

In this chapter he contrasts how the Pharisees did their works of piety with how his disciples should do them.

### *6:1-15 Jesus shapes his disciples' attitude about piety*

**Verses 1-4** Why does making a show of good works betray a lack of love and trust in God?

What place do rewards have in our lives as God's people?

Compare verse 4 with Matthew 5:16. How can you let your light shine and, at the same time, do your good deeds in secret?

**Verses 5,6** Agree or disagree: In this section Jesus condemns public prayer in church. Defend your answer.

**Verses 7,8** Why does "babbling like pagans" betray a lack of trust in the Lord?

**Verses 9-13** Look at each petition of the Lord's Prayer. How does praying this prayer show a clear and sincere understanding of the kingdom of God?

How might our use of this prayer degenerate into the kind of prayer life Jesus was condemning?

**Verses 14,15** Why do people who do not forgive their brothers show that they have excluded themselves from the kingdom of God?

**Verses 16-18** Frank works very hard for his church. He has a habit of putting his zeal and labor on display for all to see. Why is he betraying a lack of faith in the kingdom?

### *6:19-24 Jesus shapes his disciples' view of possessions*

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**Verses 19-21** How do we store up treasures in heaven?

**Verses 22,23** Give examples of the eye taking "light" into the body that is really darkness. What gives light to the body?

What warning does Jesus give us against casting our eyes on evil things?

**Verse 24** What warning does Jesus give in this verse?

**Verse 25** How did Jesus show in his own life that something else is more important than food? (See John 4:31-34.)

**Verse 30** How does the phrase "O you of little faith" show that Jesus is continually forgiving us even as he teaches us to serve him?

**Verse 31** How did Jesus show obedience to this command when he was tempted in the desert?

**Verse 33** What does it mean to seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness?

Why does seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness seem like such a foolish thing to do in the face of all the pressing problems of our lives?

**Verse 34** How is this verse similar to the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer?

How does the last phrase in this verse put our desires, pursuits, and ambitions into perspective?

How does this chapter help us understand the nature of the kingdom in which we are serving?

### **Summary**

Unbelievers seek honor among people by doing acts of piety to impress them. They also yearn for the things of this earth. Christians, who are secure in their membership in the kingdom of God, seek only to

honor their Lord. And they trust in God to provide all they need, for their time and energy is spent on the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 7 several times.

## Lesson Seven-Matthew 7

# Follow Me- As You Serve the World with the Gospel

### *Introduction*

The sections in this chapter are a bit more difficult to link together with a common theme. The theme this course will use for this chapter is "Jesus Teaches His Disciples How to Serve Others with the Gospel of the Kingdom."

As we have seen, the other parts of the Sermon on the Mount were spoken against the backdrop of the pharisaic religion of the day. How the disciples should view the law was to be different from how the Pharisees viewed it. How Jesus' disciples did their works of piety was different from how the Pharisees did theirs.

In this section Jesus is teaching his disciples how to carry out their ministry. The Pharisees conducted a ministry of law, which they enforced on the people of the land. Political power, legalistic righteousness, and a religion that sought people's approval (and did not go much beyond that)-all were mixed together in the Pharisees' "ministry."

The ministry of the disciples was to be different. It was to be a ministry appropriate to members of God's kingdom.

### *7:1-5 A ministry of grace to sinners*

**Verse 1** Evaluate this statement: Christians judge the wrong deeds of others as worthy of God's judgment, yet they do not render judgment on others because of their own purity.

**Verses 2-5** Should Jesus' disciples remove the speck in their brother's eye?

What alone makes disciples able to work with their brothers to remove the specks in their eyes?

### *7:6 You cannot force anyone to accept the gospel*

Pharisees could use political and ecclesiastical power to force people to conform to the law. No one could trample their words under foot because they ruled the land. Why is the message of the kingdom one that can be trampled underfoot? How should that fact shape how the disciple carries out his ministry in the face of opposition?

### *7:7-12 The power Jesus' disciples possess*

**Verses 7,8** What power do Jesus' disciples possess? Why is this power greater than that possessed by the Pharisees?

**Verses 9-11** On whom can the disciples rely to give them every good gift they need to work in God's

kingdom? Do the Pharisees have this reliance?

**Verse 12** Why can members of God's kingdom do to others as they would like to be treated themselves?

What witness does this give to unbelievers?

**7:13,14 *The wide and narrow gates***

Why are the gate and the road of the Pharisees and their followers wide?

What makes the road on which we are called to travel narrow? (Hint: Recall the Beatitudes.)

**7:15-23 *Knowing who is in the kingdom and who is not***

**Verses 15-20** Evaluate the following statement by Martin Franzmann: "Jesus equips His disciples against false prophecy, not by making them subtle but by making them pure in heart" (Follow Me, page 62).

**Verses 21-23** Some members of the outward church are not true disciples. What will be their end? How can we avoid that end?

**7:24-27 *The conclusion of the sermon***

Throughout the sermon, Jesus instills in us both hope in the gospel of the kingdom and fear of God's judgment.

Hope in the gospel of the kingdom and fear of God's judgment are two things that must always be in the Christian's heart. Why is it necessary for the Christian to have a healthy fear of God's judgment? What is the motivating force for what Christians do and say?

What warning and encouragement are in these words?

**7:28,29 *The reaction of the crowd***

Jesus had sought to lead his disciples away from the life and ministry of the Pharisees, into a life and ministry befitting disciples of the kingdom. Even the crowd noticed a difference. What was their reaction?

**Summary**

Disciples of the kingdom preach the gospel to sinners. Their gospel can be rejected, yet they have the power of prayer and can rely on God's good gifts to make their ministry bear fruit.

The pure in heart follow the narrow path and go through the narrow gate. Because they are pure in heart,

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they can spot and avoid false prophets. May we put into practice Jesus' words and build our houses on them.

***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 8 several times.

## Lesson Eight-Matthew 8

# Follow Me-For I Have Authority and Compassion

### *Introduction*

In Scripture numbers often have meaning. The number three often symbolizes God. The number ten often symbolizes completeness. For example, the Ten Commandments are the complete revelation of God's will.

Matthew uses the number ten in chapters 8 and 9. Recall that at the end of chapter 4, God had called his disciples and promised to make them "fishers of men." Then in the next three chapters, he began to fulfill his promise by telling them how they should live in his kingdom and how they were blessed as members of it.

Looking ahead to chapter 10, we see that Jesus sends his 12 disciples out to practice working as fishers of men. But before he can do that, he must prepare them more. This he does in chapters 8 and 9.

The ten miracles Matthew records in these two chapters give Jesus' disciples and us a complete picture of his own ministry as the great King. He follows his mighty words in the Sermon on the Mount with mighty actions. The disciples will have all they need to begin serving their Lord in his harvest field.

### *8:1-4 Jesus heals a man with leprosy*

**Verse 2** Why do you think Matthew first records the healing of a leper?

**Verse 3** What theme of Jesus' ministry is introduced with the words "I am willing"?

What lesson is there in the word immediately?

**Verse 4** Why did Jesus tell the man to go and show himself to the priest?

Why did Jesus tell the man not to tell anyone about his healing?

### *8:5-13 Jesus heals a centurion's servant*

**Verse 5** Why do you think Matthew records this healing second? (See verses 10 to 12. Also see Ephesians 3:6.)

**Verse 9** What great confession of faith did the centurion make when he spoke about his authority over his own servants?

### *8:14-17 Jesus continues to heal the sick*

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**Verse 14** The next miracle Matthew records is an act of mercy performed on a woman. Following the pattern we have established in the first two miracles, can you guess why this miracle may have been recorded next?

***8:18-22 Jesus' words to two prospective disciples***

**Verse 20** Based on what Jesus said, what do you think this man was thinking when he pledged to follow Jesus?

**Verse 22** Doesn't Jesus sound a bit harsh in his answer to the second prospective disciple? What point was Jesus making in his answer?

***8:23-27 Jesus calms the storm***

**Verse 24** Why could Jesus sleep through a storm like that?

Why weren't the disciples sleeping through the storm?

**Verse 27** What comfort does this miracle give you?

***8:28-34 Jesus heals the two demon-possessed men***

**Verse 29** What does this verse tell us the demons know about Jesus? about their own future?

**Verse 31** The fact that there were pigs in the area should not surprise us. Pigs were unclean for Jews, but this area was east of the Sea of Galilee and outside Jewish territory.

The fact that the demons were content to go into the pigs, and then caused the pigs to run into the lake, tells us something about the mentality of demons. What is their will for those whom they influence?

**Verse 32** What power does Jesus display here? What comfort is there in this for us?

How does this chapter help us understand the kingdom of God and our ministry?

**Summary**

In the first five miracles, Jesus shows his authority as the King of Israel; he shows that his kingdom extends to all and that it is a kingdom of grace and compassion. We have been called to work in his kingdom.

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***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 9 several times.

## Lesson Nine-Matthew 9

# Follow Me-For I Give You Forgiveness

### *Introduction*

This chapter is the second of two in which Matthew describes Jesus' deeds. The ten miracles and an assortment of other accounts give us a wonderful picture of the kingdom of God.

As we work through this chapter, we should note three things that God wants the servant in his kingdom to bear in mind.

1. The kingdom of God is based on the authority of Jesus, our Savior from sin and our King.
2. The kingdom of God is one in which there is compassion-God's compassion for us and ours for others.
3. The kingdom of God is either accepted or rejected. People respond to it in one direction or the other.

**9:1-8** *Jesus' authority over all things on our behalf lies in his authority to forgive sinners*

**Verses 1,2** How does Jesus express his compassion for the paralyzed man?

**Verse 3** Why did the teachers of the law accuse Jesus of blasphemy? (See Luke 5:21.)

**Verses 4-6** These verses bring together the entire teaching of the kingdom of God. What is the relationship between Jesus' right to forgive and his right to control all things?

What happens to people's understanding of their membership in God's kingdom if the cross of Christ is made secondary?

Agree or disagree: Since Christ died for the sins of the world, we can expect to be delivered from all the effects of sin.

**Verses 7,8** Why is it a wonderful thing that God has given such authority to men (to use the words of the crowd who witnessed the miracle)?

### **9:9-12** *The calling of Matthew*

**Verse 9** Which was a greater miracle-the healing of the paralytic or the calling of Matthew to follow Jesus?

**Verses 10-13** How do Jesus' actions toward Matthew and his sinful friends explain the statement he quoted to the Pharisees: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice"?

***9:14-17 Questions about fasting***

**Verses 14,15** Why did the Pharisees fast? Why would it have been inappropriate for Jesus' disciples to fast?

Why is it appropriate for us to fast? Will there be fasting in heaven?

**Verses 16,17** What is the old wine? the new wine? What are the old wineskins? the new wineskins?

***9:18-26 Jesus heals a dead girl and a sick woman***

**Verse 22** Sometimes people interpret the phrase "your faith has healed you" as making faith the work that gives access to Jesus' healing. Interpret these words in the context of the kingdom of God.

**Verse 24** We are told that the girl was dead. Why did Jesus say she was sleeping?

***9:27-34 Jesus heals the blind and the mute***

**Verse 27** Analyze the prayer of these blind men. What truths are all packed into how they state their request? How does this help us understand the nature of saving faith?

**Verse 29** Evaluate this statement: Great faith is great only because it can see the greatness of the one it has faith in.

**Verses 33,34** What contrasting results did Jesus' words and actions produce?

***9:35,36 Jesus prepares to send out his disciples to work in the kingdom***

**Verse 35** How does this passage summarize kingdom work? What should the church first do when there is a shortage of pastors and teachers?

**Summary**

Jesus' kingdom is one of authority over the effects of sin and compassion to forgive and heal. Many don't want this kind of kingdom, and they reject and persecute Christ and his followers. But many accept it and follow him.

***For next time***

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Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 10 several times.

## Lesson Ten-Matthew 10

# Follow Me- And Bring Others into My Kingdom of Grace

### *Introduction*

In the last two chapters, we watched Jesus carry out the ministry his Father gave him. It was

- a ministry filled with compassion.
- a ministry in which Jesus demonstrated that he was King over all.
- a ministry that had two opposite results-either people repented and followed him or people hardened themselves against the message and the messenger.

Now Jesus empowers his disciples to go out and preach the kingdom of God. They will experience the joys and difficulties of serving as Jesus' witnesses firsthand.

### *10:1-4 Jesus gave his power and authority to the 12 apostles*

Note the number 12. The church would be built on the 12 apostles just as the Old Testament church was built on the 12 sons of Jacob.

### *10:5-16 Jesus instructs his apostles how they should travel*

**Verses 5,6** Why did Jesus want the disciples to go only to "the lost sheep of Israel"?

**Verses 7,8** What message were the disciples to proclaim?

Sometimes church leaders support evangelism work so the church can gain more members. What do Jesus' words at the end of verse 8 have to say about that sentiment?

**Verses 9,10** Why can Jesus demand this act of trust on the part of those he was sending out?

**Verses 11-15** What makes a home deserving of having a disciple stay in it? Does this sound like work-righteousness to you?

What makes missionaries such vulnerable people?

**Verse 16** Shrewdness and innocence don't often fit together in a person's personality. Why does membership in God's kingdom inspire and enable us to do both?

*10:17-39 Jesus prepares his disciples to be bold and courageous as they go out like sheep among wolves*

**Verses 17-23** What makes it clear that Jesus is not just speaking to the 12 apostles but to all who will spread his Word?

What hardships should the disciples expect?

Why will all people hate true Christians because of Christ?

Compare Jesus' encouragement in verse 23 with the promises attached to each of the seven letters in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

**Verses 24-31** Compare what Jesus says here with what the Jews said in chapter 9, verse 34.

Why is the truth that everything will be revealed a great comfort to Christians who undergo persecution?

Explain verse 28. In this context what does it mean to be afraid of God?

In the midst of persecution, why is it so important to know that God values us?

**Verses 32-39** What promise and warning are contained in verses 32 and 33?

In what sense has Jesus come to bring a sword?

How do Jesus' words in these verses compare with the claim that Jesus is peace-loving?

What does it mean to lose our lives for Jesus' sake?

Which of the three kingdom themes noted in the introduction to this lesson does Jesus emphasize in his instructions to his disciples? Why does Jesus do this?

***10:40-42 Jesus' final words of encouragement***

Being a disciple of Christ brings suffering, but it also brings blessings to those who come to faith. Why should this truth encourage us to carry out evangelism work?

**Summary**

The disciples were sent out into the mission field with nothing but trust in God's care. They relied on God for their authority and for whether anyone would be receptive to their message.

Christians are sent out as sheep among wolves; they should expect the same treatment Jesus received, and they should be aware of the sword Christ came to bring. But God promises great blessings to all who receive his disciples.

***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 11 several times.

## Lesson Eleven-Matthew 11

# Follow Me-For Who I Am

### *Introduction*

By nature we all want to fashion God into our own molds. We want God to act according to how we think God should act. We want a kingdom that suits our wants and needs.

The Jews of Jesus' day were no different. They had their own self-made ideas of what kind of kingdom the Son of David would set up for them.

In chapters 11 to 13, Matthew shows us the struggle between Jesus as he actually came into this world and the kind of Messiah many of the Jews anticipated.

### *11:1-6 John wonders if Jesus is the Messiah*

**Verse 2** Compare how John pictured Jesus in chapter 3, verses 11 and 12 with what Jesus was actually doing. In what sense can we justify John's question?

**Verses 4-6** In what sense is John's question a product of his sinful human weakness? How does Jesus respond to John's question?

### *11:7-19 A warning to the Jews: You did not accept John, and you are in danger of not accepting me*

**Verses 7-10** Jesus points out to the Jews that they did in fact recognize that John was a prophet sent from God. They did not go to see him because of his earthly grandeur, but because of his austerity and his message.

What unique role did John the Baptist play in God's plan of salvation?

**Verse 11** In regard to abilities, wisdom, and purpose, how do all other people compare with John?

Compared with John as a man, however, what can we say about the person who is least in the kingdom of God?

**Verse 12** What role did John play in causing the kingdom of God to forcefully advance? (See also verse 14, which is a reference to Malachi 4:5,6.)

The last phrase of this verse tells us that forceful men were laying hold on the kingdom. How does this fact help us understand why the present kingdom of God is not as glorious as we might think it should be?

**Verses 16-19** Interpret each line of the saying in verse 17.

- "We played the flute for you,"

- "and you did not dance;"
- "we sang a dirge,"
- "and you did not mourn."

What song do you think the people of Jesus' day would have liked to dance to?

What songs do the following groups want to dance to today: liberals, charismatics, many Evangelicals, Roman Catholics?

If people are truly wise, what song will they dance to?

***11:20-24 Jesus rebukes the Jews' unbelief***

See 1 Corinthians 1:22. Jews demand miraculous signs, but are they ever convinced by them?

Why will it be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for the cities in which Jesus performed miracles?

***11:25-30 Through the gospel message God's elect come to faith***

This section contains three thoughts that the servant in the kingdom of God must always bear in mind. Before you study this section, read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

**Verses 25,26** Why does God hide the truths of the kingdom from the wise and learned?

Who are the little children to whom he reveals these truths?

**Verse 27** Are any of us by nature the little children who are receptive to the gospel? Why does anyone come to faith?

**Verses 28-30** To whom does Jesus' gospel invitation go out?

Read Luke 11:46. How does Jesus' yoke differ from that of the teachers of the law?

### **Summary**

At one point even John was not sure about Jesus. The people of his day shared his doubt, but to a much greater degree. Jesus warned the Jews not to look for a different kingdom than the one God wants to give them. Nor should we.

God's message of grace is for all, but it's only by his grace that anyone comes to faith. Those who do receive rest for their souls.

### ***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 12 several times.

Lesson Twelve-Matthew 12

# Follow Me- And Let Nothing Harden You against My Message

## *Introduction*

This chapter is the second in which we see Jesus train his disciples to accept him for who he is and not for what they may think the Messiah should be like.

The Pharisees hated Jesus. Their religion was steeped in man-made laws, work-righteousness, and a cold demand for proof before they would believe anything.

The disciples needed to learn that they would receive the same treatment from many in the world. And they also needed to hear Jesus boldly and clearly rebuff the wicked accusations of the Pharisees and expose them for what they were.

## *12:1-13 Jesus rebuffs the Pharisees when they attempt to accuse him of breaking God's law*

The key to understanding this section is to note that the Sabbath laws the Pharisees were forcing on Jesus and his disciples were man-made.

**Verses 1,2** For what did the Pharisees fault Jesus and the disciples?

**Verses 3-7** How do Jesus' three arguments put the whole matter of the Sabbath laws into the right perspective?

- David and the showbread
  
- The priests serving in the temple
  
- Mercy, not sacrifice

**Verse 8** Note Jesus' final argument: If the priests are innocent when they work in the temple on the Sabbath, how much more Jesus' disciples are when they accompany the Son of Man on the Sabbath as he carries out his Father's work.

**Verses 9,10** To what depths did the Pharisees stoop in their petty adherence to man-made laws?

**Verses 11-14** How did Jesus put them to shame?

Instead of walking away in shame, with hardened hearts, they followed their only recourse-kill Jesus!

*12:15-21 Isaiah prophesies the how and the what of Jesus' ministry*

According to Isaiah, how would the Messiah carry out his work?

What was the ultimate goal of Jesus' ministry?

***12:22-29 Jesus is accused of being a devil***

**Verse 23** What impression did Jesus' miracle have on the crowds?

**Verse 24** What impression did Jesus' miracle have on the Pharisees?

**Verses 25-29** What basic point does Jesus make to refute the Pharisees' claim that he was in league with the devil?

***12:30-37 The danger of calling Jesus a devil***

**Verse 32** Why were the Pharisees actually sinning against the Holy Spirit when they spoke their blasphemy against the Son of Man? Compare them to Paul prior to his conversion (1 Timothy 1:13,14).

**Verses 33-35** Why could the Pharisees do nothing other than utter their blasphemies?

**Verse 36** In this context what does Jesus mean by "careless word"?

***12:38-45 Jesus gives the Pharisees a sign***

**Verse 38** The Pharisees had seen Jesus perform many miracles. What was behind their demand for a sign?

**Verses 39,40** Contrast the kind of sign the Pharisees were looking for and the sign Jesus gave them. How did Jesus' sign both give the Pharisees what they were looking for (but not what they expected), as well as help the disciples focus on the real meaning of the kingdom of God?

What does Jesus' answer have to say to many in modern America who want Jesus to prove himself?

**Verses 41,42** Why are the people of Nineveh and the queen of the South (Sheba) more righteous than these leaders of God's people?

**Verses 43-45** Evaluate the following statement in the light of Jesus' words: "Man is never so vulnerable, never so wide open to the powers of evil, as when he has been touched by the divine without submitting to it" (Franzmann, Matthew, p. 106).

***12:46-50 Jesus' true family***

After all the opposition Jesus faced, he still has his faithful following. They are more important to him than his earthly family. Who are his mother and brothers and sisters?

**Summary**

The Pharisees were looking for another kind of Messiah. Their hard hearts were only made harder the more they were in Jesus' company. They were close to sinning against the Holy Spirit. Yet many others followed him, accepted him for who he was, and served him.

***For next time***

Use The People's Bible commentary on Matthew to review this chapter. Read through Matthew chapter 13 several times.

## Lesson Thirteen-Matthew 13

# Follow Me- And Boldly Spread the Message of the Kingdom

### *Introduction*

Perhaps nowhere is Matthew's purpose for writing his gospel as clear as in chapter 13. Remember, Matthew is describing Jesus' ministry and focusing on how he taught his disciples to carry on theirs. This chapter contains a number of parables, in which Jesus teaches his disciples what it will be like for them to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

These truths will help them anticipate how their message would be received. They would keep the disciples from getting discouraged when they met with failure and disappointment. Jesus' words about the power of their message would spur them on.

### *13:1-9,18-23 The parable of the sower*

**Verses 1-9** Review the four kinds of soil and the how the seed fared in each.

**Verses 18-22** The Word in the first three kinds of soil failed to produce fruit. What warnings should the disciples give to people who hear their words?

Why does the foreknowledge that this will happen serve to keep the disciples from becoming discouraged?

**Verse 23** Jesus tells his disciples that the seed that fell in good soil will produce varying amounts of fruit. Of what practical importance is this truth for you as you live in fellowship with other Christians?

### *13:10-17 Parables: A judgment on hardened hearts*

By Jesus' day many of the Jewish people had hardened themselves to the point that God had withdrawn his grace from them. God no longer desired them to hear the Word and repent.

**Verse 11** What were the two reasons why the Lord spoke in parables?

**Verses 12-15** Focus on the last half of verse 12. How can a person not have anything, yet have something taken away from him?

**Verses 16,17** Why are we so blessed?

### *13:24-30,36-43 The parable of the weeds*

Study this parable and its meaning.

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What does this parable teach us about the makeup of the visible church on earth?

**Verses 28,29** Why shouldn't Christians attempt to root out of the Christian church those who are false Christians? (Relate this to Jesus' words about excommunication in Matthew 18:15-20.)

**Verse 36** Why is it significant that Jesus left the crowd and explained the parable only to his disciples? (Note that Matthew had just repeated the fact that Jesus spoke to the crowds only in parables.)

***13:31-35 The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast***

What great encouragement do all kingdom workers find in these two parables?

***13:44-46 The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl***

What is the main point being stressed in both of these short parables?

Why do these two parables give great encouragement to those who do the work of the ministry, particularly those involved in evangelism work?

***13:47-52 The parable of the net***

Relate this parable to the parable of the weeds. There are similar truths taught in both.

However, this parable stresses the outcome of the disciples' work in the world. Prior to the end, it will be impossible for all to determine whether God approves of the Christian or whether he approves of the world. But what will become clear at the end?

***13:53-58 Jesus was not honored by the people in his hometown***

The previous chapter contained many examples of how Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees. It contained only a few sections of encouragement for the disciples. This chapter, however, has contained many words of encouragement for the disciples. It ends on a negative note, though.

Why do you think the people in Jesus' hometown did not honor him as much as others honored him?

What lesson does this account teach workers in Christ's kingdom?

**Summary**

Jesus told parables to reveal truths about the kingdom to his disciples, as well as to conceal the truth from those whom God had hardened. The parables in this chapter have revealed many truths that would serve as practical guides for the disciples as they carried out their work.

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