NT SURVEY: GOSPELS/ACTS

WEEK 1: MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE SURVEY SERIES

- We need to know our Bibles from front to back.
    - What implications does this have for my life?
    - What are the major themes in each book of the Bible?
    - How does each book fit within the overall framework of the Bible?
    - When I read each section of Scripture, what are commonly misread passages?
- Each year we will highlight each part of Scripture, both its importance and profitability (2 Tim 3:16-17).
- Specifically, this series will focus on the Gospels and the Book of Acts. These books primarily show us Jesus and how His church was established. They are narrative and they are history but demonstrate important theological realities that are still true for the church today.
- Why are Matthew, Mark, and Luke so similar?
- Is everything that happens in Acts normative for today?
- If a friend asked you about what Mark teaches us about Jesus, could you help her?
- **Class Schedule:**
    - **November 1: Matthew**
    - November 8: Mark
    - November 15: Luke
    - November 22: John
    - November 29: Acts 1-7
    - December 6: Acts 8-12
    - December 13: Acts 13-28

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

- After 400 years of silence (no Prophets, no Scripture), John the Baptist speaks!
- All of the Bible proclaims the glory of God, the creator of heaven and earth. He reigns as King of His eternal kingdom and His plan is to redeem for Himself a people who are redeemed from their sin and will eternally praise, honor and serve Him.
- What is introduced in the Old Testament is clarified in the New Testament concerning the character of God, the judgement for sin, the salvation of the Lord, the blessing of obedience, and the glory of the coming kingdom.
- The New Testament does not eradicate the OT, but signifies the "covenant" God has made, first with his people Israel through the law and the prophets, then to his redeemed church through Jesus Christ.
- Luke 22:20 ~ And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.
- The New Covenant is superior to the old (Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:12), and the new covenant is complete and eternal.
- Our Bibles are divided this way, not to distinguish value, but God's order in revelation.
- Each of the Books of the New Testament are used by God to show his character and how he now deals with sinful men, on the basis of the new covenant.
- Generally, the New Testament is written in Greek as it was commonly used in that day, except for some quotations of Aramaic and Hebrew which were transcribed into Greek (The OT is primarily written in Hebrew with some sections written in Aramaic).
- The New Testament is typically divided into categories of historical epistolary, and prophetic groups.
- These are further classified as the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, Non-Pauline Epistles, and Revelation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS

- These books are historical in nature, but are not purely history books. They each serve a specific purpose to a local audience.
- Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts were written in the late 60's, likely all outside of Palestine to expatriate Jews and Gentiles, while John was written from Ephesus at the end of the first century.
- They weren't written first- likely all were written after Paul's last letter to Timothy and his death!
- What is a Gospel?

- Our modern English word "gospel" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *godspell*, from *god* (God) or *god* (good) and *spell* (a story). It may thus mean either "God-story" or "good story."[1]
- The Greek word *euanggelion* means "the good news", which is the message of salvation proclaimed to sinful men.
- Our bibles don't talk about these books as "gospels" but these 4 accounts of the truth of Jesus Christ declare that message in the incarnate Word of God!
- 2nd Century Apologist/Martyr, Justin Martyr wrote that these were "the memoirs composed by the Apostles, which are called Gospels.[2] These were later given the names "THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO _____" simply to distinguish each account from each other.

- The Gospels are at the beginning of the NT because they were foundational to the understanding of the message God gave to the church, and they account for half of the NT.
- Other "Gospels" part of the Apocrypha were dismissed as actually being authentically inspired Scripture.
- These accounts are not true biography, but demonstrate primarily the events of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection.

John 20:30-31 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may **have life** in His name.

- More than just treasured sayings from a guru or notable Jewish Rabbi, these accounts are written "to awaken and strengthen faith in the living Christ whom they had come to know personally through a transforming experience. They desired to set forth the reality concerning their Saviour in order that others too might come to know Him."[3]
- **Harmony of the Gospels:** Just a note of caution on various harmonizations…
  - Each Gospel was written with a specific purpose and each divinely intended to mean what they say.
  - Comparing common events may aid us to get a clearer picture of a situation and understand what one author may have intended *not* to say.
  - Be careful to study what each author says and doesn't say more than blend the entirety of all 4 gospels. Unifying them can ruin the individual features or assume to have a *better* meaning than each on their own!
  - Neither should we take the letters of Paul and combine them into a Super-Letter to all churches.

[1] D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospels and Acts*, vol. 1, An Introduction to the New Testament (Gabriel Publishing, 2003), 19.
[2] Hiebert, *The Gospels and Acts*, 20.
[3] Hiebert, *The Gospels and Acts*, 28.

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

- While all the Gospels focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, it is Mathhew's account that focuses on Jesus as the promised King.
- The central figure of OT Prophecy is the Messiah, the great and coming King who will rule in God's Kingdom. He would have righteousness, wisdom, power, authority, and the right to reign over Israel and the entire world.[4]
- It is Jesus who comes into the world, born of a virgin (Is 7:14), despised and afflicted (Is 53:3-7), and yet would rule over governments (Is 9:6-7).
- Jesus is Immanuel, which translated means, "God with us." (Is 7:14; Matthew 1:23).
- He would rule Israel as "the King of Israel, the Lord (Zephaniah 3:15), worthy to be worshiped (Zephaniah 14:17).
- Matthew emphasizes what the whole NT proclaims: Jesus is the promised King.
    - Around a third of the mentions of the kingdom of God in the NT are mentioned in Matthew.
    - Jesus is referred to as the king at least 35 times and right from the start, highlighting his place in the line of David the King.
- The means of Matthew's proof is OT quotations and references more than any other gospel.
- The message of Matthew is clear: Jesus is the sovereign.
    - Mark: Jesus as Servant
    - Luke: Jesus as the Son of Man
    - John: Jesus as the Son of God
- Just as when you read the book of John, you find on every page the deity of Christ, in Matthew's gospel, you find that the Missiah King has been revealed.
- His people have rejected their King (Matthew 27:31), He has all authority (28:18), and will come again with power and great glory and in judgement (24:30; 25:31-33).
- Jesus is majestic and glorious as the Sovereign over Heaven and Earth now and forevermore (28:18-20).

[4] John MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7,* ix.

Structure

- Matthew arranges his book into 5 central sections with a discourse and narrative each.
- This structure would place the parables of the kingdom at the center of Jesus's discourses. This would seem appropriate given Matthew's summary of Jesus's teaching as the "gospel of the kingdom" (4:23).[5]
- It follows a general chronological order: genealogy, birth, baptism, Galilean ministry, journey to and ministry in Jerusalem, trial, crucifixion, resurrection, and post resurrection appearances.[6]
- The key to reading the book is the phrase after each discourse: "and it happened that when Jesus finished…" (7:28; 11:1; 13:43; 19:1; 26:1) with narrative separating each section.

Outline[7]

I.	The King's Advent (Prologue 1-4)	**Chapter**:
	A. His Birth	1-2
	B. His Ministry Entrance	3-4
II.	**The King's Authority (5-9)**	
	A. Discourse 1: The Sermon on the Mount	5-7
	B. Narrative 1: The Authenticating Miracles	8-9
III.	**The King's Agenda (10-12)**	
	A. Discourse 2: The Commissioning of the Twelve	10
	B. Narrative 2: The Mission of the King	11-12
IV.	**The King's Adversaries (13-17)**	
	A. Discourse 3: The Kingdom Parables	13:1-52
	B. Narrative 3: The Kingdom Conflicts	13:53-17:27
V.	**The King's Administration (18-23)**	
	A. Discourse 4: The Childlikeness of the Believer	18
	B. Narrative 4: The Jerusalem Ministry	19-23
VI.	**The King's Atonement (24-28:15)**	
	A. Discourse 5: The Olivet Discourse	24-25
	B. Narrative 5: The Crucifixion and Resurrection	26-28:15
VII.	The King's Assignment (Epilogue 28:16-20)	28:16-20

[5] Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (B&H Academic, 2017), 8.
[6] Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, 7.
[7] John MacArthur, *MacArthur's Quick Reference Guide to the Bible*, 178.

Key People in Matthew

- Jesus – the promised Messiah King ("King of the Jews")
- Mary – the mother of Jesus the Messiah. Matthew 1:21 ~ "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
- Joseph – the adoptive father of Jesus and husband of Mary. Descendant of David (1:16-2:23)
- John the Baptist – prophet and forerunner who announced the coming of Christ and His kingdom (Mt 3)
- The twelve disciples – Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (writer of the book, also called Levi), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot (the one who betrayed Him). Introduced in 4:18-22; commissioned in 28:18-20.
- Religious Leaders – Pharisees and Sadducees, two religious groups who joined together in their hatred and plotting against Jesus. Called a brood of vipers by John the Baptist and Jesus (3:7; 23:14-15).
- Caiaphas – High priest, led the illegal trial resulting in Jesus' death (26:3-4, 57-68)
- Pilate – Roman governor who ordered the crucifixion of Jesus in place of Barabbas (27:1-65)
- Mary Magdalene – devoted disciple of Jesus, first to see Jesus after His resurrection (27:56-28:11)

Key Verses

Matthew 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."

Matthew 5:43-44 ~ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Matthew 6:9-13 ~ "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Matthew 16:26 ~ "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Matthew 22:37-40 ~ "Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two.'"

Matthew 27:31 ~ "After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him."

Matthew 28:5-6: "The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.'"

Matthew 28:19-20 ~ "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

CHARACTER OF GOD

- God is accessible (6:6; 27:51)
- God is good (5:45; 19:17)
- God is holy (13:41)
- God is long-suffering (23:37; 24:48-51)
- God is perfect (5:48)
- God is powerful (6:13; 10:28; 19:26; 22:29)
- God is provident (6:26, 33-34; 10:9,29-30)
- God is unequaled (19:17)
- God is unified (4:10; 19:17)
- God is wise (6:8, 18; 10:29-30; 24:36)
- God is wrathful (10:28; 25:41)

USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Matthew knew his "Bible".

- "Matthew goes out of his way to provide an Old Testament setting for significant events in Jesus' life, especially in its early stages:
    - his birth (1:23),
    - his birthplace (2:6),
    - the return from the Egyptian sojourn (2:15),
    - the killing of the babes of Bethlehem (2:18),
    - residence in Nazareth (2:23),
    - the work of the forerunner (3:3),
    - the location of his principal labors (4:15–16),
    - his healing ministry (8:17),
    - his demeanor as God's servant (12:18–21),
    - the parabolic cast of his teaching (13:35),
    - the offer of himself to Israel (21:5),
    - and his arrest (26:56).
- With the exception of the reference in 2:6, which is attributed to the scribes, each one of these is prefaced with a formula indicating the fulfillment of Scripture. [8]
- The historical events related to what Matthew describes shows the fulfillment of God's Divine Purposes.

BLESSED ARE THOSE (THE 8 BEAUTIFUL ATTITUDES)

- Blessed: those who have been shown favor by God; the kind of approval that comes only from God.
- These have received the gift of God, a fullness of life and life in Him, based on their characteristics and the reason they are blessed. "They expose the true condition of our hearts," calling us to "higher planes of holy living." (Todd Dykstra sermon 6/6/21, explaining R. Kent Hughes quote). It isn't emotion, but approval.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN[9]

- 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10; 10:7; 25:1. Christians are citizens of a Kingdom not yet realized.
- TO show respect and honor, the Jews avoided saying the name of God out loud. Instead, they often used the word *heaven* as an alternative way to refer to God.
- The word *heaven* also points to the kingdom of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed His kingdom as residing in the hearts of His people. This spiritual kingdom required internal repentance, not just external submission. It provided deliverance from sin rather than the political deliverance many Jews desired.

[8] Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 170.
[9] MacArthur, Quick Reference, 178.

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

- When we examine Matthew, Mark, and Luke very closely, it seems there are so many similarities and yet dissimilarities.
- Why do we have 3 different accounts? The "problem" appears to be that there must be another source that each writer borrowed from and yet there are enough dissimilarities that many have tried to seek clarification as to the relationship between these gospels and any source material, mostly among liberals and critics of the NT.
    - Scholars tend to quibble and overemphasize these similarities and dissimilarities.
    - Ordinary Christians tend to rejoice in the breadth and depth about our Lord and Savior!
- There are many similarities and dissimilarities (not contradictions).
    - They each record their vents in a similar way and use similar language (rarely using rare words).
    - But there are also dissimilarities such as which line to follow in the genealogy, Mark doesn't include a genealogy at all, and the temptation order is different (Matt 4; Mark 1; Luke 4)
- Many inadequate theories claim they had a similar source such as oral tradition, each other, a missing source, a purely human source, and combinations.
- One theory explains these differences. There is no problem. The authors of these gospels wrote by divine inspiration and wrote independently of each other. They possessed the Same Holy Spirit! (2 Peter 1:20).
- Guthrie rightly insists that "the operation of the Spirit in Gospel origins is a vital factor, indeed *the* vital factor, in the historical situation."[10]
- This is consistent with Jesus' promise to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the things which He had taught, and would teach them the interpretation of His revelation (Jn 14:26; 16:12–14).[11]
- This doesn't mean that each other didn't use sources. Luke claims as much and almost 20% of the OT is derived material. "The Holy Spirit who controlled the formation and development of the gospel tradition also controlled the selection of the material by the different authors." [12]
- We should expect common events and unique perspectives, each emphasizing their purpose.

Matthew 16:16 ~ Simon Peter answered,
"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

[10] Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (1970), 232.
[11] Hiebert, *The Gospels and Acts*, 189.
[12] Hiebert, *The Gospels and Acts*, 189.