

We have finally arrived at the story of Jesus, which will bring the entire biblical story to a climactic fulfillment. The arrival of Jesus will introduce a massive twist into the drama, but it's one that we've seen coming. In fact, to track with the good news about Jesus, you're going to need all the knowledge and skills you gained from reading the Old Testament so you can understand the first pages of the New. The first book of this New Testament is the Gospel according to Matthew. It's the first of four accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, each one offering a unique portrait of Israel's messianic savior.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection as a continuation and fulfillment of the whole Biblical story of God and Israel. Matthew begins with details of how Jesus descends from the line of David, making Him a king. It proceeds to share Jesus' teachings that prove He's an authoritative teacher like Moses.

Throughout the book, we see that Jesus is Emmanuel, or God with us, and welcomes everyone into the upside down kingdom where leaders serve. From the calling of the disciples to the parables to the Great Commission, this New Testament book shows readers how the promises and prophecies God made to His people in the Old Testament do come to pass through Jesus.

*For more introductory material on Matthew, visit <https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-matthew/>*

**Read Matthew 5**

### *Opening*

- What saying or bumper sticker do you keep on your desk or car?
- How did your parents settle disputes between you and your siblings?
- What's the best piece of advice you have been given?

### *Digging in — Discovering the Word*

- How do the eight Beatitudes relate to the promises that follow them? How would you describe the opposite of each quality?
- Is Jesus describing who his followers are? Or prescribing what they must do? Or the types of people he is looking for? Why do you think so?
- What kind of mourning do you feel Jesus is talking about in verse 4?
- Who do you admire as a good example of meekness? How do they model humility?
- Where are you a "peacemaker": In your home? At work? At church? In your neighborhood? In what ways do you try to make peace?
- How are these beatitudes related to being salt and light (vv.13-16)?
- In what ways are anger and murder connected? What new standard of right and wrong is Jesus creating?
- How does Jesus apply this new standard to the commandment about adultery? What is Jesus' point in using such exaggerated language (vv.29-30)?
- How is Moses' allowance for divorce (Dt 24:1-4) being misused? What inner quality is Jesus seeking instead?
- What is the heart of the matter regarding oaths? Why is keeping promises so important?
- What was the original intent of "eye for an eye" and "tooth for a tooth" (Exod 21:24; Lev 24:17-20)? How is this law being perverted? What qualities ought to replace those desires for revenge?
- What characteristic is to distinguish a Christian from a pagan? What actions demonstrate this characteristic?
- What is your initial reaction to verse 48? What challenge is Jesus presenting to you?
- Since turning your life over to God, what affect has this had on our ability to love others- even those who hurt you?

### *Connecting the Dots — Applying the Word*

- Of the eight beatitudes; which two do you most desire in your life right now? Which of these qualities are you most tempted to avoid?
- This past week, did you feel more blessed or stressed? What can you do to be more focused on God's blessings in your life?
- Based on the teaching of being the "light of the world", is the light of your life more like a flickering candle? A steady campfire? A blazing furnace? How can you add fuel to the fire?
- When it comes to making things right with others who comes to mind? What steps could you take this week to reconcile with that person?
- If these standards are like a doctor's thermometer to show us how sick we are, what is the medicine needed to heal us? How does that relate to the Beatitudes (vv.3-10)? What is the hope for us here?
- Although these standards are not a new law that we must attain before God will have mercy on us, what do they suggest about the direction in which God wants us to grow after we have received his mercy? Which of these qualities do you want to cultivate most right now? How would your life be different as God helps you to put this quality into action?

(adapted from the Serendipity Bible and The Bible Project)