

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 81
Matthew 17-28

Key Concepts: The key concept in this book is that Jesus the Christ has come to fulfill the promises of God made in the Old Testament.

Central Concepts: The next significant concept in Matthew (see previous article for others) concerns the titles/images used for Jesus. These include Jesus as the new Moses (note his sermon on the mount mirrors Moses receiving and giving the Law), the Son of God (one who calls God father), Son of David (laying claim to the Kingship not only of Israel but of the world), and Son of Man (the title he uses for himself). Each of these titles helps to expand our understanding of Matthews's multifaceted image of Jesus.

Brief Summary: Matthew 17 – We begin with the transfiguration which is a pivotal moment in the Gospel. In a sense it is a baptism for the second half of Jesus' ministry. From this point on he will begin preparing his disciples for their future without him physically present. This preparation is made clear in his second passion prediction.

Matthew 18-20 – This section is the fourth discourse and focuses on rules for community life. Jesus teaches on humility, protection of the vulnerable, going after those who lose their way, community discipline, forgiveness, marriage and divorce, and greed. We hear his third passion prediction and how Jesus' offering of himself is the example of suffering and service which ought to guide the community. We see this service lived out in a healing which ends the section.

Matthew 21-23 – Matthew now turns to Jesus entry into Jerusalem and his confrontation with the religious authorizes. We become witnesses to Jesus' overturning the money changers' tables as he attempts to refocus the meaning of the Temple. Jesus then offers three parables in which he condemns the religious leaders, conducts four debates about his authority, and then offers a series of pronouncements against Pharisees and teachers of the Law. This section concludes with his lament over Jerusalem (which will be destroyed in 72 CE).

Matthew 24-25 – This is the fifth and last discourse. It is given to his disciples on the Mount of Olives after he had left the Temple. The first portion of this teaching is Matthew's semi-apocalyptic vision of the end times and the return of the Son of Man. This will be a time of great tribulation and judgment. Jesus continues with teachings about the coming kingdom and why it is important to both watch for it and live a life worthy of it. We find here Jesus' famous words about when one feeds the hungry, gives water to the thirsty, etc., one is doing it for Jesus himself. According to Jesus only those who have served "the least of these" will become part of the kingdom.

Matthew 26-27 – Matthew now reaches the betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus. This portion of the story begins with Jesus predicting his betrayal and then continues with the religious leaders plotting to kill him, Judas' willingness to help them, the Last Supper, Jesus' prediction that all of the disciples would betray him, Jesus' great prayer, his arrest, trials, scourging, crucifixion and the religious leaders wanting to protect the body from theft.

Matthew 28- We now arrive at Matthews's account of the resurrection. The women are the first witnesses followed by the eleven disciples who meet him in Galilee (his ministry comes full circle). Jesus' parting words are his command to go and make disciples of all nations (The Great Commission).

1. What is your overall impression of Matthew's Gospel?
2. What similarities and differences do you find with Mark's Gospel?
3. What is the central idea you take away from this Gospel?