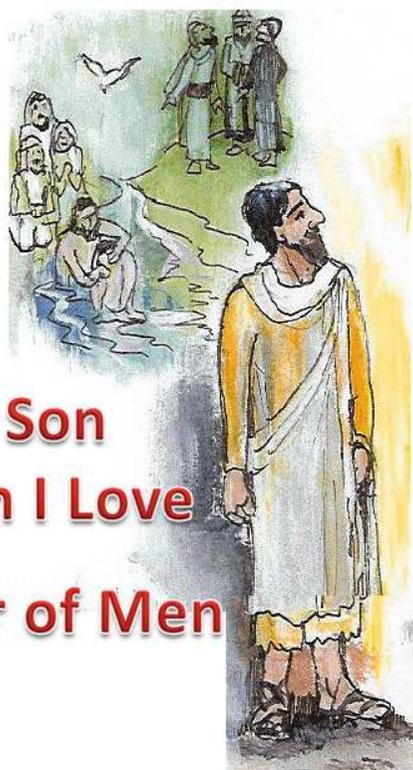


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The Lord
A Great Light



My Son
Whom I Love
Fisher of Men

King of the Jews

Personal Bible Studies January 2017

MATTHEW 2-4: SERMONS AND STUDIES.

In this New Year we continue our series of sermons and readings/devotions/studies in Matthew’s Gospel*.

In these stories we move from Jesus’ Birth through His childhood and adolescence to the beginnings of His adult ministry (a period of some 30 years).

<i>Date</i>	<i>Passage</i>	
Sun 1 Jan	Matthew 2:1-23	‘King of the Jews’
Sun 8 Jan	Matthew 3:1-12	‘The Lord’
Sun 15 Jan	Matthew 3:13 – 4:11	‘My Son Whom I Love’
Sun 22 Jan	Matthew 4:12-17	‘A Great Light’
Sun 29 Jan	Matthew 4:18-25	Fisher of Men

In these we see the beginnings of the preaching of the Gospel and the nature of the opposition Jesus will face. We are also introduced to the demands of the Gospel. We are forced to confront the rule of God for our lives (‘the kingdom of heaven’) and the right response (‘repent’).

As we work through these chapters consider these wise words:
In your reading let not your end be to seek and find out curiosities and subtleties, but to find and meet with Christ.

Thomas Taylor (1576-1633) English Puritan Theologian

*We will continue in Term 1 of 2017 with the Gospel of Matthew in a full series of Studies and Sermons on ‘The Sermon on the Mount’.

Matthew 2:1-23

1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country "by another route.

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

Study 1 'King of the Jews'

What does it Say?

1. What new information are we given about the details of Jesus' birth?
2. Who now comes to pay homage to Jesus? How many are there? Where do they come from? Why is their 'gentileness' significant?
3. Where do they go first? What is Herod's reaction at first and subsequently?
4. What are Joseph and Mary instructed to do and how does that work out?

What does it Mean?

1. Why Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?
2. What points of Old Testament fulfillment are mentioned in this passage? Why is this important to Matthew?
3. What do the 'kings of this world' have to fear from Jesus, The King of the Jews?

What should I Do?

1. What do we learn from the contrasting attitudes of the Magi and Herod?
2. Where does your 'safety' come from?

What others have said:

"Today many of us wear the name "Christian" with relative ease. But in our own way, the name indicates for us both honor and scorn or suffering. Discipleship to Jesus will come to mean in Matthew's Gospel that we become like him (10:24-25)."

Michael.J. Wilkins Matthew (NIVAC) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004)

Matthew 3:1-12

1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Study 2 'The Lord'

What does it Say?

1. Who is the main character in this story? What does he look like?
2. What are people's reactions to him?
3. What is John's message? What is he doing?
4. What does John say about his baptism?

What does it Mean?

1. Note the other stories of John the Baptist in the Gospels (Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22; John 1:6-8,15,19-36). Why do all the Gospels include John the Baptist?
2. What, therefore, is John's role?

What should I Do?

1. How do we 'flee from the wrath to come'?
2. How is John's message both 'a warning of judgment, ... also an invitation to life and an expectation of real change in the lives of those who respond'?

What others have said:

"Messiah's coming will separate grain from chaff. A winnowing fork tossed both into the air. The wind blew the chaff away, and the heavier grain fell to be gathered up from the ground. The scattered chaff was swept up and burned and the threshing floor cleared (cf. Ps 1:4; Isa 5:24; Da 2:35; Hos 13:3). The "unquenchable fire" signifies eschatological judgment (cf. Isa 34:10; 66:24; Jer 7:20) — hell (cf. 5:29). "Unquenchable fire" is not just metaphor. Fearful reality underlies Messiah's separation of grain from chaff. The "nearness" of the kingdom therefore calls for repentance (v. 2)."

Carson D.A. "Matthew" in EBC (Rev) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010)

Matthew 3:13-4:11

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

" 'He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Study 3 'My Son Whom I Love'

What does it Say?

1. What is the focus of v13-16?
2. What is the focus 4:1-11?
3. What, in broad terms, are the four temptations?
4. From where does Jesus draw his strength?

What does it Mean?

1. What are the contrasts and comparisons between the two events here? Why does Matthew record both?
2. What is Satan trying to do here? What would have happened had Jesus given in to just one of these temptations?

What should I Do?

1. In what areas do your strongest temptations come? How does Jesus' example help?

What others have said:

"The one who can make us most uncomfortable here is, of course, Jesus. How hard, really, was it for him to appear humbly at the waters of John's baptism? Did he really wrestle with such mundane things as self-image, and appearances, and his role? I think so. He was that human. All the things that we struggle with, he experienced (cf. Heb 4:14-16). That is why he is our example."

Michael.J. Wilkins Matthew (NIVAC) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004)

Matthew 4:12-17

12 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— 14 to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

15 “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the way to the sea, along the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—

16 the people living in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.”

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

Study 4 ‘A Great Light’

What does it Say?

1. Where does Jesus set up his home base? Why is that significant?
2. What does Isaiah (9:1-2) have to say about Jesus’ life and work?
3. What does Jesus preach?
4. What had happened to John the Baptist? (see Mark 6:14-29 for further information.)

What does it Mean?

1. What does the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ mean?
2. What does it mean to repent?

What should I Do?

1. Does ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,’ require you to do anything? What should repentance look like in your life?

What others have said:

“Light possesses powers essential to true life, so “to be in the light” comes to mean simply “to live.” This indicates life eternal, but also life temporal on earth. ... The darkness of our own world is real even when we, or those around us, don’t notice it. Darkness is most directly the absence of light, so to be away from Jesus is to be in darkness.”

Matthew 4:18-25

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Study 5 '*Fisher of Men*'

What does it Say?

1. Where does the action take place (v18-22)? What is Jesus message/demand to the fishermen?
2. What is the Fishermen's response?
3. What does Jesus proceed to do, in general and specifically?
4. What is the result?

What does it Mean?

1. What priorities do you note in Jesus' ministry?
2. Why fishermen?

What should I Do?

1. What has Jesus called you to do?

What others have said:

"The church throughout the centuries has struggled with the temptation to be "keepers of the aquarium instead of fishers of men."

As Jesus' disciples, we all have the incredible privilege, and obligation, to carry the message of the gospel of the kingdom to those who live in the darkness all around us."