

The
Coming of
God's
Kingdom

KAY ARTHUR
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THE COMING OF GOD'S KINGDOM

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HOW TO GET STARTED...



Reading directions is sometimes difficult and hardly ever enjoyable! Most often you just want to get started. Only if all else fails will you read the instructions. We understand, but please don't approach this study that way. These brief instructions are a vital part of getting started on the right foot! These few pages will help you immensely.

FIRST

As you study Matthew, you will need four things in addition to this book:

1. A Bible that you are willing to mark in. The marking is essential. An ideal Bible for this purpose is *The New Inductive Study Bible (NISB)*. The *NISB* is in a single-column text format with large, easy-to-read type, which is ideal for marking. The margins of the text are wide and blank for note taking.

The *NISB* also has instructions for studying each book of the Bible, but it does not contain any commentary on the text, nor is it compiled from any theological stance. Its purpose is to teach you how to discern truth for yourself through the inductive method of study. (The map and chart in the appendix of this study guide are taken from the *NISB*.)

Whichever Bible you use, just know you will need to mark in it, which brings us to the second item you will need...

2. A fine-point, four-color ballpoint pen or various colored fine-point pens that you can use to write in your Bible. Office supply stores should have those.

3. Colored pencils or an eight-color leaded Pentel pencil.

4. A composition book or a notebook for working on your assignments and recording your insights.

SECOND

1. As you study Matthew, you will be given specific instructions for each day's study. These should take you between 20 and 30 minutes a day, but if you spend more time than this, you will increase your intimacy with the Word of God and the God of the Word.


If you are doing this study in a class and you find the lessons too heavy, simply do what you can. To do a little is better than to do nothing. Don't be an all-or-nothing person when it comes to Bible study.

Remember, anytime you get into the Word of God, you enter into more intensive warfare with the devil (our enemy). Why? Every piece of the Christian's armor is related to the Word of God. And our one and only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The enemy wants you to have a dull sword. Don't cooperate! You don't have to!

2. As you read each chapter, train yourself to ask the "5 W's and an H": who, what, when, where, why, and how. Asking questions like these helps you see exactly what the Word of God is saying. When you interrogate the text with the 5 W's and an H, you ask questions like these:

- a. **What** is the chapter about?
- b. **Who** are the main characters?
- c. **When** does this event or teaching take place?
- d. **Where** does this happen?
- e. **Why** is this being done or said?
- f. **How** did it happen?


3. Locations are important in many books of the Bible, so marking references to these in a distinguishable way will be helpful to you. I simply underline every reference to a location in green (grass and trees are green!) using my four-color ballpoint pen. A map is included in the appendix of this study so you can look up the locations.



4. References to time are also very important and should be marked in an easily recognizable way in your Bible. I mark them by putting a clock like this  in the margin of my Bible beside the verse where the phrase occurs. You may want to underline or color the references to time in one specific color.

5. You will be given certain key words to mark throughout this study. This is the purpose of the colored pencils and the colored pens. If you will develop the habit of marking your Bible in this way, you will find it will make a significant difference in the effectiveness of your study and in how much you remember.

A **key word** is an important word that the author uses repeatedly in order to convey his message to his readers. Certain key words will show up throughout Matthew; others will be concentrated in a specific chapter. When you mark a key word, you should also mark its synonyms (words that mean the same thing in the context) and any pronouns (*he, his, she, her, it, we, they, us, our, you, their, them*) in the same

way you have marked the key word. Also, mark each word the same way in all of its forms (such as *judge*, *judgment*, and *judging*). We will give you a few suggestions for ways to mark key words in your daily assignments.

You can use colors or symbols or a combination of colors and symbols to mark words for easy identification. However, colors are easier to distinguish than symbols. When we use symbols, we keep them very simple. For example, you could draw a red heart around the word *love* and shade the inside of the heart like this: .

When I mark the members of the Godhead (which I do not always mark), I color each word yellow and mark the *Father* with a purple triangle like this: . I mark the *Son* this way: Jesus Christ and the *Holy Spirit* this way: .

When marking key words, mark them in a way that is easy for you to remember. Devising a color-coding system for marking key words throughout your Bible will help you instantly see where a key word is used. You might want to make yourself a bookmark listing the words you mark along with their colors and/or symbols.

6. A chart called MATTHEW AT A GLANCE is included in the appendix of this book. As you complete your study of a chapter, record the main theme of that chapter under the appropriate chapter number. The main theme of a chapter is what the chapter deals with the most. It may be a particular subject or teaching.

If you will fill out the MATTHEW AT A GLANCE chart as you progress through the study, you will have a synopsis of Matthew when you are finished. If you have a *New Inductive Study Bible*, you will find the same chart in your Bible (page 1613). If you record your themes there, you will have them for a ready reference.

7. Always begin your study with prayer. As you do your part to handle the Word of God accurately, you must

remember that the Bible is a divinely inspired book. The words that you are reading are truth, given to you by God so you can know Him and His ways more intimately. These truths are divinely revealed.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Therefore ask God to reveal His truth to you as He leads and guides you into all truth. He will if you will ask.

8. Each day when you finish your lesson, meditate on what you saw. Ask your heavenly Father how you should live in light of the truths you have just studied. At times, depending on how God has spoken to you through His Word, you might even want to write LFL (“Lessons for Life”) in the margin of your Bible and then, as briefly as possible, record the lesson for life that you want to remember.

THIRD

This study is set up so that you have an assignment for every day of the week—so that you are in the Word daily. If you work through your study in this way, you will find it more profitable than doing a week’s study in one sitting. Pacing yourself this way allows time for thinking through what you learn on a daily basis!

The seventh day of each week differs from the other six days. The seventh day is designed to aid group discussion; however, it’s also profitable if you are studying this book individually.

The “seventh” day is whatever day in the week you choose to finish your week’s study. On this day, you will find a verse or two for you to memorize and STORE IN YOUR HEART. Then there is a passage to READ AND DISCUSS. This will help you focus on a major truth or major truths covered in your study that week.

To assist those using the material in a Sunday school class or a group Bible study, there are QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Even if you are not doing this study with anyone else, answering these questions would be good for you.

If you are in a group, be sure every member of the class, including the teacher, supports his or her answers and insights from the Bible text itself. Then you will be handling the Word of God accurately. As you learn to see what the text says and compare Scripture with Scripture, the Bible explains itself.

Always examine your insights by carefully observing the text to see what it *says*. Then, before you decide what the passage of Scripture *means*, make sure that you interpret it in the light of its context. Scripture will never contradict Scripture. If it ever seems to contradict the rest of the Word of God, you can be certain that something is being taken out of context. If you come to a passage that is difficult to understand, reserve your interpretations for a time when you can study the passage in greater depth.

The purpose of the THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK is to share with you what we consider to be an important element in your week of study. We have included it for your evaluation and, we hope, for your edification. This section will help you see how to walk in light of what you learned.

Books in the New Inductive Study Series are survey courses. If you want to do a more in-depth study of a particular book of the Bible, we suggest you do a Precept Upon

Precept Bible study course on that book. You may obtain more information on these courses by contacting Precept Ministries International at 800-763-8280, visiting our website at www.precept.org, or filling out and mailing the response card in the back of this book.

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW



Among the earliest of the 27 books of the New Testament are the four Gospels. Our English word *gospel* is a translation of the Greek word *evangelion*, which means “good news.” The gospel in the New Testament is the good news about Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Matthew is Matthew’s account of this good news.

Three of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are called the Synoptic Gospels, meaning they present a common point of view. However, several characteristics distinguish them. For example, Luke tells us in the opening that his account is “in consecutive order.” The other Gospels don’t make that claim. Matthew has a unique perspective and purpose we’ll let you discover for yourself.

As we study the Gospels, we don’t need to cross-reference every teaching and activity to build a “harmony” of the Gospels—a number of authors have done this work for us. In fact, you’ll find a concise harmony of the Gospels in the *New Inductive Study Bible* on pages 2117–2122. Such charts show at a glance where a particular teaching or activity occurs in other Gospels or if it is unique to just one. You may find such a harmony helpful at times, but we want to discover Matthew’s unique perspective, so we’ll stick to studying his Gospel for now. Occasionally we’ll refer to the others for specific points that are too delicious to miss!

*M*ATTHEW

THE KING



The last of the books included in the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) was written about 400 years before the events of the New Testament. God sent messengers (prophets) to Israel, warning of His coming judgment on idolatry because of the nation's disobedience. Judgment came as promised. God's prophets also promised deliverance by a descendant of David, one anointed by God to restore His people to their proper relationship to Him. Since the Babylonian exile, David's throne sat empty. Foreign rulers installed men of their choosing to be kings over God's people. Sometimes they even chose high priests. For 400 years, Israel looked for a Messiah to conquer their oppressors and restore the throne of David. When would God fulfill this promise?



DAY ONE

As you read a book of the Bible, try to pick up on the author's emphases. Notice his repeated key words and phrases. To see these better, we'll mark them throughout Matthew. A good technique is to record key words and

phrases (and the way you plan to mark them) on a three-by-five index card to use as a bookmark. Doing this will help you mark consistently and save lots of time and frustration.

Read through Matthew 1 without stopping. What are the first 17 verses about? How about verses 18-25?

The first thing to figure out is what the point of the genealogy is and then mark only the key figures that give us that main idea. Reading *all* the names can be tedious, especially if they're hard to pronounce!

So, what's the central idea in verses 1-17? Whose genealogy is it, and what relationships are important? Read the text again and mark *Jesus* and how He is described. Also mark references to time.

Now read through Matthew 1:18-25 again, marking *Jesus*, the *Holy Spirit*, *angel*, *God*, and references to time. Mark the word *Son* when it refers to Jesus, and add these words to your bookmark. What event is the main topic of these verses?


As you study, you'll see key phrases that recur in Matthew but appear only once in a passage. We find two examples in these verses. What did the angel do? Read Matthew 1:18-25 again, this time marking the entire phrase *an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream*. Underline or highlight it. You'll see it again in chapter 2.

Another key phrase in Matthew is to *fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet*. The text it refers to is in small capital letters. This is the way the New American Standard Bible designates an Old Testament quote in the New Testament. Mark this phrase in Matthew 1:18-25. What happened that fulfilled the prophecy?

Usually cross-references in the Bible include Old Testament passages as well. If you've studied Isaiah, you may recall the context of this statement and what it was designed to do (see Isaiah 7:14; 8:10).

Now, what did you learn about Jesus in this first chapter? Whose Son is He? In what way is He that person's Son? What names is He given, and what do they mean?

Now determine a theme for this chapter and record it on MATTHEW AT A GLANCE in the appendix.



DAY TWO

Don't forget to begin your study time with prayer. Remember, you have access to the Author, and He truly wants you to know, understand, and live by every word that comes from His mouth.

You've observed the first chapter of this Gospel. Now let's dig a little deeper. What three things did we learn about Jesus in verse 1?

The Hebrew word translated "Messiah" and the Greek word translated "Christ" both mean "anointed one." The NASB translates the Hebrew word as "anointed" in all but two verses in the Old Testament (Daniel 9:25-26) and applies it to several kings. However, the concept of a final Messiah who delivers Israel is established by many passages.

The titles Matthew gives Jesus in the first verse are all important to Jews. Why? Read these verses to learn the importance of the title "Son of David":

2 Samuel 7:8-13,16

2 Chronicles 21:7

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Now read these verses to see the importance of the title "Son of Abraham":

Genesis 12:1-3

Genesis 15:1-6

Galatians 3:16

The history of Israel is often marked by key incidents that become turning points or milestones in the progression of its relationship to God. These milestones include God's call and promises to Abraham, the Exodus, the giving of the Law, the entrance to the promised land, the establishment of kings, the division of the kingdom, and the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Often major characters accompany these events, like Abraham, David, and Jesus. Matthew 1 refers to one of these major events: the deportation to Babylon.

In case you aren't familiar with Israel's history following David's monarchy, here's the short version. The 12 tribes of Israel split into two kingdoms after king Solomon, David's son, died. The northern kingdom, called Israel, established its own worship system and priesthood apart from Jerusalem. After several hundred years of prophets calling the children of Israel to repent of their idolatries, God sent them off to captivity. Assyria took the northern tribes captive and settled them in other lands, and they never returned.

The southern kingdom, called Judah, fell into idolatry in spite of its temple and Levitical priesthood in Jerusalem. Even seeing what God did to the northern kingdom didn't help. The Babylonians deported the people to Babylon after destroying Jerusalem and its temple, but a remnant later returned to rebuild both.

From the return of the remnant until Jesus' birth, no king ruled on David's throne, although the Jews kept track of genealogies to determine the lineage of their Messiah-King.

The long version of Israel's history involves studying Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the prophets. After you study these books, you'll be familiar with the names of

the kings in Matthew 1:7-11. They are kings of Judah, the southern kingdom, the line from David to the Messiah.

To summarize, why are these titles for Jesus—Messiah, son of David, and son of Abraham—so important?

DAY THREE

Now let's dig deeper into Matthew 1:18-25. The virgin birth is critical to understanding the atonement Jesus accomplished on the cross.

Who are Jesus' mother and father? What role does the Holy Spirit play?

Read Isaiah 7:14. How long was Mary a virgin? Why is her virginity an issue?

Read Romans 5:12 and 6:23. If Jesus were born of a human father, what would He inherit from Adam?

Read the following verses to see why Jesus had to be human without a human father:

Hebrews 10:4-5

Hebrews 2:9,14-17

John 1:29

Hebrews 10:10-18

Do you understand the critical nature of Jesus' virgin birth? Take a few moments to praise God for His love for us.

DAY FOUR

Read through Matthew 2 without stopping. Just notice the major characters and events.

Who are the major characters? Read the chapter again

and mark *king* (two kings are mentioned). Also mark *child* differently from the way you mark *Jesus*. *Child* is used only in chapter 2, so don't add it to your bookmark.

Mark Scriptures that specify dreams and the fulfillment of prophecy.

Double underline the geographical references you find in green and then check the map in the appendix to see where they are relative to each other.

DAY FIVE

Lots of people have misconceptions about the men visiting from the east. The NASB calls them “magi”; other translations say “wise men.” We don't mean to ruin the Christmas stories and carols, but from what you've observed in God's Word, how many were there? How many camels did they have? And were they kings? What color was their skin? How were they dressed? What gifts did they bring?

Now, seriously, what titles did they give to Jesus?

What title did Herod have? What problems did their question stir up?

Was Herod the only one who was troubled? Why would anyone else be troubled by these visitors from the east inquiring about the birth of the King of the Jews, the Messiah?

When Herod asked the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah would be born, what was their answer?

What were Herod's false motive and his true motive for secretly calling the magi to determine the exact time the star appeared?

How did the wise men react to Jesus' birth?

Why did the wise men go home a different way rather than tell Herod what they found?



 DAY SIX

Now let's look at Herod's reaction to Jesus' birth and what it caused. What did the angel warn Joseph about? Read Matthew 2:12,16 again very carefully.

Did Herod tell the truth to the wise men (Matthew 2:8)? List how his actions reveal what he believed about Jesus. Why did he include the "vicinity" of Bethlehem (verse 16)? Why male children less than two years of age?

Matthew 2:18 quotes Jeremiah 31:15. Rachel was Jacob's wife, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. Jeremiah refers to her figuratively, describing mourning for the exiles. Matthew uses these words to describe the mourning after the slaughter of the baby boys in Bethlehem. In both cases, the deep sorrow contrasted sharply with the joy to come.

Consult the chart *Herod's Family Tree* in the appendix. It will help you understand Herod's relationship with Archelaus (both mentioned in Matthew 2) and other family members mentioned in Matthew. You'll note on the chart that historians place the date of Herod's death at 4 BC. The text is clear that Herod was alive when Jesus was born, so our dating system of AD (*anno domini*—Latin for "in the year of our Lord") and BC (before Christ) is off by at least four years. It's a long story, but when the calendar calculations were done in the sixth century, a mistake was made that's never been changed.

As the last two exercises for this week, list what God revealed to Joseph in dreams. Start with Matthew 1. Also list all prophecies fulfilled.

Think on these things, and then record a theme for Matthew 2 on MATTHEW AT A GLANCE.



 DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: Matthew 1:23

Read and discuss: Matthew 1:1,17-25; 2.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- ∞ Discuss what you learned from Jesus' genealogy, especially with respect to the history of Israel. Would Jewish readers consider this important? Why or why not?
- ∞ What do you learn about Jesus from the titles Matthew gives Him in chapter 1?
- ∞ Discuss the fulfillment of prophecy in Matthew 1–2.
- ∞ Discuss the importance of fulfilled Scripture to a Jewish audience. Read Acts 17:1-3 with this in mind.
- ∞ Discuss God's revelations through dreams.
- ∞ Contrast the reactions of the wise and the unwise to the birth of Jesus. What parallel do you see today?

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Jesus was a Jew. I know this is painfully obvious, but sometimes I wonder if Christians forget it. Jesus was born to Jews. He was the Messiah of the Jews. Now, if you want to convince someone of this, what do you have to establish?

Well, first of all, that He's Jewish. So how do you do that? You point to His parents, grandparents, and so on. That is, you give His genealogy. But how do we know this Jesus is

the Messiah? What's your evidence? Anyone can claim to be the Messiah, but how can we authoritatively say Jesus is the real one?

First you have to know what had been said about the Messiah. Where do you start? The concept of the Messiah emerged in the Old Testament writings. So to show that Jesus is the Messiah, we need to see what the Old Testament predicted about Him. Then we can then show how Jesus fulfilled these predictions.

In Matthew 1–2 we see events in the birth and early life of Jesus that fulfilled Scripture. When the apostle Paul came to a city, he engaged Jews in synagogues on the Sabbath. His custom was to reason with them from the Scriptures. In Acts 17:1-3, Paul reasoned with Jews in a synagogue for three Sabbaths:

Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

Like Paul, Matthew uses the Scriptures to show the Jews who Jesus is. He shows how prophecy is fulfilled. In just the first two chapters of Matthew, we've seen the fulfillment of five prophecies.

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (Matthew 1:23). This verse alone has elements that are mind-boggling. First, a virgin shall be pregnant. Second, the child will be a

son. Third, they will name Him Immanuel. I'll grant that anyone can name a child Immanuel. But can *any* virgin become pregnant and produce a forecasted male?

Imagine telling your friends the Messiah was born. When they ask you how you know, you say, "Well, someone predicted that a virgin would become pregnant without sex and have a son, and it all happened!"

"Not enough proof for me!" they say. "What else you got?"

"Well, the Scriptures say the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, and He was!"

"Tut, tut," they say, "mere coincidence."

So you add that the Scripture said God would call His Son out of Egypt, and this little boy and His family fled to Egypt to avoid being killed by king Herod. Then when Herod ordered the death of all the little boys two years old and younger in Bethlehem and the vicinity, this fulfilled Scripture too. Finally, when Jesus and His family came home from Egypt, they settled in Nazareth, and that fulfilled another prophecy. "Five prophecies fulfilled! Isn't it awesome? That proves it, right?"

Well, it isn't enough. It wasn't for the Jews then, and it isn't today. If it were enough, the whole world would believe! We're going to see many more fulfilled prophecies in Matthew, and still the people rejected Jesus. Many craved signs—miracles to prove He was the one. Yet even when they saw those miracles, they decided He was doing them with Satan's power, not God's.

Miracles don't create belief. Evidence is not proof. We all know that. We doubt, every one of us. We don't believe just because some silvery-tongued orator presents a great PowerPoint presentation. We can't reason our way to faith; God has to open our eyes. Evidence doesn't get us there; God has to give us facts.

You'll see this when we get to Matthew 16, where Jesus praises Peter for believing truth that God, not man, revealed to him.

If truth were the product of a man-made process, man could patent the design, manufacture it, and distribute it, and the world would have it. But the truth is, spiritual things are spiritually appraised (1 Corinthians 2:14). All the evidence in the world won't convince. Instead, truth must be revealed. That's the beauty and mystery of revelation. God's Word has supernatural power to reveal its Author to us. You'll see this when you study Matthew. Isaiah prophesies an event, and it happens. Yet the people didn't understand. Nor did they understand when Jesus spoke to them or when He performed miracles right before their eyes.

Regardless of how many prophecies God fulfilled, most people still didn't believe.