



Given its rich supply of Old Testament allusions (the most of all the gospels) and the author's ability to reveal redemptive truths both Old and New (Mat 13:52 = Matthew was a Levite scribe; Mar 2:14), Matthew should be the lens and launching pad for anyone wanting to understand their Bibles – or more specifically, its gospel message (of Christ, Covenant and Church/Kingdom).

WHAT MATTHEW HAS TAUGHT US THUS FAR (THRU EIGHT CHAPTERS):

1. Jesus is the Christ – i.e. the special Son of David.

Matthew begins Jesus' genealogy with David to communicate that He is not just a descendant, but his special descendant (i.e. the Christ); the One thru whom God promised to establish His throne and kingdom on earth forever¹ (Mat 1:1; 2Sa 7:12-16^{2 3}; see also Psa 89:19-37; Isa 11; Eze 34:22-31, 37:15-28; Hos 3:5; Amo 9:11-15). Jesus' identity as the Christ/special Son of David is confirmed also by his birth in Bethlehem - the place of David's birth (1Sa 17:12, 20:6), and the prophesied birthplace of the Christ Mat 2:1-6; Mic 5:2-5). This then is what we should be thinking of when we speak of Jesus as the Christ/Messiah: (that) He is the special Son of David; the person thru whom God promised to (one day) establish His eternal kingdom and blessings.

2. Jesus' virgin birth circumvented the Davidic curse which prevented other descendants from being the Christ.

The curse place on king Jeconiah (David's descendant) made it impossible for there to be future Davidic kings possessing royal blood (Jer 22:24-30). Jesus' virgin birth however allowed him to by-pass the curse while at the same time having Joseph as His father (a descendant w/in this royal bloodline) (Mat 1:18-20).

3. Jesus' virgin birth also circumvented Original Sin which allowed Him to be His people's sin-bearer.

Like the animals who first bore the sins of God's people, Jesus needed to be "without blemish" (Exo 12:5). From a human perspective, this meant w/o the stain of His own sin – including the sin nature passed on from possessing a biological father (Exo 20:5; Psa 51:5; Rom 5:18). Hence the reason also for His virgin birth – or Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit (Mat 1:20-23).

4. Jesus indicates that the prophesied New Israel is also forthcoming

Thru the re-casting of several key events in Israel's history, Jesus' early life and ministry reveal that another OT promise is also being fulfilled, the coming of a new covenant – or formation of a New Israel⁴.

4.1. Re-casted events:

4.1.1. Exodus out of Egypt = (Mat 2:15)

4.1.2. Baptism (Mat 3:13 w/1Co 10:2)

4.1.3. Wilderness testing (Mat 4:1)

4.1.4. Moses on the mountain est'g the covenant through the giving of the Law (Mat 5:1, 17-20).

5. John the Baptist's ministry and message is further confirmation of the coming New (Covenant) Israel (and Jesus as the Christ).

John was more than simply the prophesied forerunner to the coming Christ. He (according to such prophecies) also indicated that the time of Israel's exiled punishment for apostasy/failure was over and that God's salvation and mercy were being ushered in thru a New Israel and Messiah (Mat 3:1-3 w/Isa 40:1-10).

6. To repent and be a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven (on earth) - or New Israel⁵, a person must commit to faithfully teach and practice all of God's righteous principles (and commands) - especially those in the Old Testament.

(Mat 4:17) = What is meant by Jesus' call to repent and be a disciple in the coming kingdom is explained in His Sermon on the Mount address (in chs 5 thru 7). Central to its meaning is a commitment to faithfully obey all of God's principles and commands - especially those in the OT – including those that may seem minor (Mat 5:17-18) = "Law or the Prophets" is a phrase used in Scripture to refer to the entire Old Testament.

That such obedience is indeed an important part of what it means to repent and be a disciple of the kingdom of heaven (on earth) - or New Israel is further supported by:

6.1. The fact that John the Baptist equally explains repentance as faithful obedience to God's OT principles and commands in Luke's parallel account (Luk 3:10-14).

¹ The Davidic throne and throne of God are viewed as one in Scripture (i.e. the throne of David represents the throne of God) (e.g. 1Ch 29:23).

² "When he commits iniquity" = Literally, when perversity is found in him. This was true for Jesus not b/c of his own actions, but by his taking of our sins. Hence, the reason what follows ("I will discipline him with the rod of men and the stripes of the sons of men") is often alluded to when speaking of His atoning death (e.g. Isa 53:5; 1Pe 2:24; Mic 5:1).

³ "Walter Brueggemann regards [2Sam 7] as 'the most crucial theological statement in the Old Testament.' Robert Gordon called this chapter the 'ideological summit . . . in the Old Testament as a whole.' John Levenson contended that God's covenant with David 'receives more attention in the Hebrew Bible than any covenant except the Sinaitic.' – Michael Grisanti ("The Davidic Covenant", Masters Seminary Journal)

⁴ "The OT prophets often described the future restoration of Israel in terms of a new exodus (Hos 2:14-15; Isa 10:24-26, 11:15-16; Jer 16:14-15; Eze 20:33-38; also Isa 63:10-17; Jer 31:7-9; Hos 1:10-11, 11:4-12)." – Keith Mathison

⁵ The Kingdom of Heaven (on earth) and the New Israel are phrases referring to the same entity. In this case, local covenant communities (or churches) established by Christ. To get to literal heaven, one must be (and remain) a part of this heavenly outpost.

6.2. Jesus' prediction regarding the "kingdom of heaven" and those who teach and practice OT principles/commands versus those who do not (Mat 5:19-20) = Those who teach/practice will be/remain in the kingdom of heaven; those who do not will not. Notice the importance (once more) placed on even the "least" (or minor) of God's OT principles/commands.

6.3. Jesus' identification of kingdom disciples in (Mat 5:13-16) "salt...light" = Metaphors for someone who teaches/practices all of God's principles/commands (re: salt = pure according to God's commands – Eze 43:22-24 w/Psa 19:8; re: light = enlightened according to God's commands – Psa 19:8, 119:105); "lost its taste" = Someone who stops practicing/teaching all of God's principles/commands (Luk 14:25-33 w/34-35); "let your light shine...so they may see your good works" = Your commitment to obeying all of God's principles/commands is to be evident to others – i.e. you are a stickler (or zealous) for truth/righteousness (light as representing truth/righteousness versus error/wickedness – e.g. Tit 2:14; 1Pe 3:13; Rev 3:19; Eph 5:8-9; 1Jo 1:5-9).

6.4. Jesus' correction of several OT principles/commands where the original teaching/meaning had been hijacked and misinterpreted (Mat 5:21-48; e.g. vv43-48) = "You have heard that it was said...but I say to you" was a common Rabbinic statement used to indicate that correction/refutation in re: to a popular understanding of God's principles/commands was about to take place. The correction: though Leviticus 19:15-18 commands that we love our neighbor (i.e. covenant brother) thru righteous treatment and the withholding of revenge, it is erroneous to conclude that this means we can "hate" (i.e. treat unjustly or take revenge against) non-covenant people – especially those who have wronged us (i.e. our "enemy"; e.g. wicked/oppressive govts – vv38-41). We are to -like our neighbors/brothers, treat our enemies righteously (though they are unrighteous in their treatment of us) and instead "pray" for God's vengeance (versus our revenge) against them (Rom 12:17-21). In this way we exemplify God the "Father" since He too is righteous in His treatment of all people (the "just" and "unjust").

7. The mechanics of the New (Covenant) gospel are the same as those of the Old (Covenant).

(Mat 4:17 w/Mat 3:2) = Matthew's use of the same language to speak of both Jesus' and John's message is deliberate. It is meant to reveal that the mechanics of Jesus' gospel was no different than that of the OT prophets – of whom John was the greatest (Mat 11:13). IOW: Just as the OT prophets preached the necessity of faithful obedience to all of God's OT principles/commands (since this is again what is meant by "repent"), so also Jesus preached a gospel which also required such obedience to be saved. Had Jesus come preaching anything other than faithful obedience to the Law, the Jews would have immediately rejected Him - as this was the sure sign of a false prophet (Deu 12:32-13:4). Matthew's immediate mention of Jesus' popularity - after proclaiming His gospel message, therefore testifies to the fact that what Jesus preached was identical in its mechanics to its Old Covenant predecessor (Mat 4:18-25). The mechanics of the gospel preached in the Bible (from Old to New) is "gain and maintain" not easy-believism or merit (Mat 5:13 = Our practice of faithful obedience does not make us more salty but keeps/maintains us from losing it).

8. The holy habits of giving to those in need, daily prayer, daily fasting, investing and judging must be practiced without hypocrisy.

Not only are there certain habits that Christians must practice (as part of their obedience), but do so in an un-hypocritical way.

What that means as it re: to the habit of:

8.1. Giving to those in need = Tell others only when necessary (Mat 6:3-4; Those necessary: [1] The elders so as to avoid abuse and ensure equity – Act 4:34-35, 6:1-3; 2Co 8:12-15, 16-23; [2] Those we are attempting to encourage in faithfulness – 2Co 8:24, 9:11-14).

8.2. Daily Prayer = According to the prescription of right motives (not for show – Mat 6:5-6), right person (in covenant – Mat 6:9 "Our Father"; also Pro 28:9) and right words (Mat 6:7-9).

8.3. Daily Fasting = Seeking self-control not pity (Mat 6:16-18; Self-control is a key piece of the gospel – Act 24:25).

8.4. Investing = The things of God is where you spend the majority of your treasure (i.e. time, money, talent) (Mat 6:19-24, 33).

8.5. Judging = W/equity or fairness, w/o trusting pagans or pagan courts, always seeking God's help and that justice be fully served (In re: to equity = Mat 7:1-5; In re: to not trusting pagans/pagan courts = Mat 7:6; 1Co 6:4-6; In re: to seeking God's help = Mat 7:7-11; In re: to seeking that justice be fully served = Mat 7:12; Lev 19:16-18).

9. (GTGR) requires realizing the path wb difficult and demanding, many will not make it and those that do have no problem w/authority.

The gospel picture painted by Jesus (in Matthew chapters 7 and 8) is far different than the one on display in most churches today. Calibrating our gospel perspective (and understanding) according to His teaching is vital to staying the course. And as stated, this requires realizing the following:

9.1. It wb a difficult (versus easy) path to follow (Mat 7:13-14 – "narrow" = restrictive, very limited as to what is allowable or lawful).

9.2. It demands that Christians produce holy or obedient lives (Mat 7:18-19 - "good fruit" vs. "bad fruit" = holiness/obedience vs. depravity/disobedience).

9.3. Many will (as a result of the gospel's difficulty and demands) not make it to heaven - i.e. they will instead fall away due to their disobedience or "lawlessness" (Mat 7:21-23; Luk 13:23-24).

9.4. Those maintaining the course (and making it to heaven) will have no problem w/authority - a key part of the gospel, as revealed by Jesus' encounter w/a Gentile centurion (Mat 8:5-11) = The difference between those who make it to heaven and those who fail will not be determined by their bloodline (Jew or Gentile), but their submission to authority – most especially the authority of God - something the Jews – like Evangelical Christians today, refused to believe was (or is) necessary for salvation (Luk 6:46).

CLOSING COMTEMPLATION/CHALLENGE = What truths are being revealed – or reinforced about Jesus and the Kingdom in Matthew 9?