

## Application

A. A few years ago a noted atheist, Christopher Hitchens, toured the country debating religious leaders, including some well-known evangelicals. In Portland he was interviewed by Unitarian minister Marilyn Sewell. The following exchange took place near the start of the interview:

Sewell: The religion you cite in your book is generally the fundamentalist faith of various kinds. I'm a liberal Christian, and I don't take the stories from the Scripture literally. I don't believe in the doctrine of atonement (that Jesus died for our sins, for example). Do you make any distinction between fundamentalist faith and liberal religion?

Hitchens: I would say that if you don't believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and Messiah, and that he rose again from the dead and by his sacrifice our sins are forgiven, you're really not in any meaningful sense a Christian.

Sewell wanted no part of that discussion so her next words were, "Let me go someplace else (with my questions)."

B. I find it an amazing irony that an outspoken atheist grasped the central tenet of Christianity better than someone who calls herself a Christian? What you believe about Jesus Christ really does make a difference, and Matthew challenges us to see Jesus as the King, the Master of our life. You can call yourself anything you like, but if you don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and then rose from the dead, you are not "in any meaningful sense" a Christian.

C. Has Jesus visited you lately? Is he King of your life? Are your home and your life an outpost of his kingdom? You see, where the King is, there is his kingdom.

"The King and His Kingdom"  
Matthew

7/11/10

RMBC  
Pastor Dennis

## Introduction (A modern parable)

A. Jesus called the other day to say he was passing through and could he spend a day or two with us? I said, "Sure. Love to see you. When will you hit town?" I mean, it's Jesus, you know, and it's not every day you get the chance to visit with him. It's not like it's your in-laws and you have to stop and decide whether the advantages outweigh your having to move to the sleeper sofa.

That's when Jesus told me he was actually at a convenience store out by the interstate. I must have gotten that Bambi-in-headlights look, because my wife hissed, "What is it? What's wrong? Who is that?" So I covered the receiver and told her Jesus was going to arrive in eight minutes, and she ran out of the room and started giving guidance to the kids—in that effective way that Marine drill instructors give guidance to recruits....

My mind was already racing with what needed to be done in the next eight—no seven—minutes so Jesus wouldn't think we were reprobate loser slobs. I turned off the TV in the den, which was blaring some weird scary movie I'd been half watching. But I could still hear screams from our bedroom, so I turned off the reality show it was tuned to. Plus, I turned off the kids' set out on the sun porch, because I didn't want to have to explain *Jon & Kate Plus Eight* to Jesus, either, six minutes from now.

My wife had already thinned out the magazines that had been accumulating on the coffee table. She put *Christianity Today* on top for a good first impression. Five minutes to go. I looked out the front window, but the yard actually looked great thanks to my long, hard work, so I let it go. What could I improve in four minutes anyway? I did notice the mail had come, so I ran out to grab it. Mostly it was Netflix envelopes and a bunch of catalogs tied into recent purchases, so I stuffed it back in the box. Jesus doesn't need to get the wrong idea—three minutes from now—about how much on-line shopping we do.

I plumped up sofa pillows, my wife tossed dishes into the sink, I scolded the kids, and she shooed the dog. With one minute left I realized something important: Getting ready for a visit from Jesus is not an eight-minute job. Then the doorbell rang. *Author, Doug Mendenhall*

B. Do you realize it took at least 3,000 years to get ready for Jesus' first visit – 3,000 years from Adam to Christ? Everything in between was preparation and Galatians 4:4 reads, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son."

We've have surveyed the 39 books of the O.T. And though he is never named, Jesus appears on every page in the form of symbol or prophecy, type or shadow, ritual or sacrifice.

C. Now we turn to the N.T. to discover Jesus in person, in the flesh, and in reality. If the O.T. was prophecy the N.T. is fulfillment with the story of Jesus' visit laid out in four gospels. Someone has called them four passion stories with long introductions.

Why couldn't we just have one thorough gospel instead of four? Because it would be a bit like standing out on the parking lot and looking at our church campus. One view would not be adequate to explain the whole. So God gives us four views from four angles:

Matthew shows us Jesus as the King

Mark shows us Jesus as the Servant

Luke shows us Jesus as the Man (human)

John shows us Jesus as the Son of God.

### Matthew Overview

A. Since Matthew set out to show his people Israel that Jesus was their king, it's not surprising that he begins with a genealogy that goes back to David the King of Israel and to Abraham the father of the nation. A king needs proof that he is of the royal blood line.

Matthew makes sure we get a sense of Jesus' authority – the authority of a king. Moses was the great authority up to that time, so Matthew shows us Jesus saying repeatedly, "Moses said this to you, but I say this to you." Jesus shows his authority to cast out evil spirits, heal the sick, and open the eyes of the blind. He has authority over the unseen world and the seen world – spiritual and natural.

B. So what would you expect the key phrase to be in Matthew? What is the statement that we read Jesus saying more than any other? "The kingdom of heaven." You will find that 32 times in Matthew. If Jesus is truly the king, then he must have a kingdom, and Matthew makes sure we understand that the kingdom Jesus came to establish was not of this world – it is the kingdom of heaven.

In keeping with that theme Matthew tells us that Jesus was born "King of the Jews," and crucified as "King of the Jews."

C. To make sure you remember this important theme, I suggest you highlight at least two key verses in Matthew: Matthew 4:17 and Matthew 6:33.

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'" Matthew 4:17

There we have the heart of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus called people to turn around (repent) because not only was the kingdom near, the King was among them.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33

D. If all of us who follow the King would live by those two verses, we would transform the world by our example alone. As I've mentioned before I write this phrase on the cover page of the N.T. in my Bibles, "I am reading about the greatest King that ever lived." (One of our students corrected me once by asking, "Shouldn't that be 'who ever lives?'") And of course she is correct – King Jesus lives on).

### Matthew Lesson

A. In Matthew we come upon foundational material for kingdom living. From the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes to the Kingdom Parables and the Olivet Discourse of chapters 24-25 we learn how to live as citizens of the kingdom.

But I want to show you a fascinating outline of Matthew from Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4. Jesus is challenged by the devil on three levels, physical, emotional, and spiritual, and the rest of Matthew shows Jesus offering himself to Israel (and to us) on those three levels. Let me show you what I mean:

B. Matthew 4:1-4: Jesus' first test was a **physical** one in which the basic instinct of self-preservation was tested to the limit. Would Jesus yield to this great temptation in the face of extreme hunger?

Interestingly, Matthew 4:17-16:20 focus primarily on the physical level. Jesus meets people's physical needs and uses parables that relate to physical aspects of life. So the focus in this section is physical while the principles are deeper.

C. Matthew 4:5-7: Jesus is tested at the **soul** level – the level where self-expression is the dominant desire. Our egos live in our soul and are fed by our emotions and a multitude of mental thoughts and images. Again Jesus passed the test.

From Matthew 16:21 to the end of chapter 25 Jesus focuses his ministry at this level of the human heart – attitudes, emotions, relationships, obedience, and commitment. In this section we find the amazing instructions of human relationships in chapters 18-19. Chapter 21 contains that series of "woe" statements against the religious establishment.

D. Matthew 4:8-11: Jesus' final test was at the **spiritual** level. The spirit is your deepest level. The dominant passion of the spirit is worship and each of us must answer the question, Whom do you worship?

Matthew 26-28 is the story of Jesus in an eternal struggle for the prize of the world – winning salvation by giving his life on the cross. The resurrection of Jesus is the central event of all history. Nothing before it matters more; nothing following it matters as much. The resurrection is the crowning event of history this side of heaven and in it Jesus won the victory for us.

### Introduction

How long would it take you to get ready for a visit from Jesus?  
(A modern parable) 8 minutes? 3,000 years?  
O.T. – Prophecy N.T. – Fulfillment

Four Gospels – Four Views

Matthew shows us Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_

Mark shows us Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_

Luke shows us Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_ (human)

John shows us Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

### Matthew Overview

Jesus the \_\_\_\_\_

A king has a \_\_\_\_\_

A king has \_\_\_\_\_

Key phrase in Matthew: The \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven

At his birth Jesus was King of the \_\_\_\_\_

At his crucifixion Jesus was King of the \_\_\_\_\_

Key Scriptures: Matthew 4:17; Matthew 6:33

The kingdom is \_\_\_\_\_ Seek \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom

### Matthew Lesson

The temptation of Jesus: A “mini-course” in Matthew

Matthew 4:1-4 – The \_\_\_\_\_ test

Matthew 4:16-20 The physical focus of Jesus’ ministry

Matthew 4:5-7 – The \_\_\_\_\_ test

Matthew 16:21-25:46—The soul focus of Jesus’ ministry

Matthew 4:8-11 – The \_\_\_\_\_ test

Matthew 26-28 – The spiritual focus of Jesus’ ministry

### Application

Are you ready for a visit from Jesus?

Is Jesus King of your life?

Are your home and your life an outpost of his kingdom?

Where the King is, there is his kingdom.