

As we have been focusing on putting your Bible together and learning your Bible, this year we have dedicated ourselves to really learning and getting an understanding of the Scriptures in all their different aspects. Last week, we had an introduction to the New Testament. We have come through book by book the Old Testament, and we have laid all that material out to the place where you ought to have now a very understandable knowledge of the Old Testament books one by one. Next time you read through your Bible, you can understand where we are and what you are dealing with.

We are now going to enter into the New Testament. I told you last week in the introduction of the New Testament how the New Testament basically builds on what God has already done in the Old Testament. We are going to start with the book of Matthew today. The book of Matthew is a book that portrays Christ, as we said last week, as the King of the Jews. Remember, the four Gospels give you four distinct pictures of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week, we saw the intro into the New Testament, and I went through basically the ground rules. I showed you the danger areas in the New Testament, the books you have to watch out for. We talked about how all the Bible is written for you, but not all the Bible is written to you. One of the things you have to ask yourself is, "Who is He writing this to? Does it have a direct relationship to me or an indirect relationship to me?" We are going to see some of that today because certainly in the book of Matthew, that is exactly what we have.

## I. The Fulfillment of Old Testament Promises

The book of Matthew, as we have already said, deals with the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see in Matthew the fulfillment of many of the Old Testament promises that were given to the nation of Israel when God met with Abraham all the way back in the Old Testament. There are some pivotal points in the Bible. When I say pivotal, I mean pivotal in the sense that God changes things so dramatically that it changes the whole course of history. There are about four or five pivotal places in the Word of God.

Certainly, Genesis 15, where God meets with Abraham, is a pivotal passage because something changes there. Up to this point, God had given the kingdom of heaven and the establishment of that literal, visible kingdom to Israel and the forefathers of Israel. Even though we are nowhere near yet where Moses is going to lead them out, God is establishing and formulating that kingdom. Up to this point with Abraham, everything was conditional. That is why you find that when the devil comes into those men's lives—Noah, Jacob, right on down the line—and you find that where they begin to, or not Jacob, but Noah and the early man, you begin to find that when the devil shows up, he nails them, and down they go, and they lose that concept of the kingdom through sin.

But when it comes to Abraham, something is different. God gives the promises to Abraham unconditionally. Here is what He said: "I am not going to take it away from anybody from this point on that falls into sin. I will judge the nation; I will judge their family; and I will judge them."

But the promises to Israel from this point on are going to be unconditional." From that point on in Genesis 15, we see just that. When you get into Matthew 1, 2, 3, right on through the book, you begin to see the fulfillment of those unconditional promises that God gave to Abraham at that great pivotal point in the Bible all the way back in Genesis 15.

## II. Consistency of Scripture

I showed you last week how you have four Gospels. Each Gospel gives you a different picture of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. I also told you that in the book of Revelation, the greatest one word about the Bible is the word "consistency." I showed you how the Bible is consistent. In the consistency of the Scriptures, you are going to find, just as God gave you four accounts of the first coming of Christ, God gives you four accounts of the second coming of Christ from Revelation 4 right on through to the end of the book of Revelation. Again, the word that you want to remember when it comes to the Word of God is the word "consistency." That is one of the greatest teachers of the Word of God.

Let me show you what I mean. The consistency between what Matthew teaches about the first coming of Christ and what the Bible teaches about the second coming of Christ can only be explained in the understanding of that preserving hand of God in the Word of God and its inspiration to us.

- 1.) When Christ comes in Matthew at the first coming, you will find that Israel is captive. You will also find that when Christ comes the second time in the book of Revelation, Israel is a captive nation.
- 2.) You will find in Matthew when Christ comes the first time, Rome is the world ruler. You will find when Christ comes the second time in the book of Revelation that again, Rome will be the world ruler.
- 3.) You will find in Matthew when Christ comes the first time that the Jews are in the homeland of Palestine. They were sent there, by the way, by a nation by the name of Persia. You will find that at the second coming of Christ in the book of Revelation, Israel is again in the nation back in the land of Palestine. They are put there by a nation that mirrors on the other side of Calvary what Persia does, and that is England. All the consistencies are too much to put to chance.
- 4.) You will find when Christ comes the first time in Matthew, the Jews are in deep apostasy. When Christ comes the second time, again, they are in deep apostasy.
- 5.) When Christ comes the first time, you will find that Moses and Elijah show up as the forerunners. From Revelation 11, we find that when Christ comes the second time, Moses and Elijah will show up as the forerunners.
- 6.) You will find that at the first coming of Christ, there is one universal language that all the world speaks. You will find that when Christ comes the second time, there is one universal language that all the world speaks.
- 7.) You will find when Christ comes the first time that they are under Roman military dictatorship, the iron heel of Rome. You will find when Christ comes the second time that Israel is under the military dictatorship of the Roman Empire.

- 8.) The first time, how did He come? The first coming of Christ, He came privately to His family, remember the story of the manger, and then later at the public ministry, He displayed Himself to the whole nation of Israel. At the second coming of Christ, He does the same thing. He reveals Himself first privately to His family, the body of Christ. It is called the rapture. Then at a period later, He reveals Himself again to the nation of Israel and to the whole world.

You cannot beat the consistency of the Word of God. That is the one thing that will teach you more about the Bible than anything else that I know. The book of Matthew is the first book in your New Testament. It lays out and sets the theme for the other three books of the four Gospel series. It lays out and gives you all the things that you need to know about the first coming of Christ and the theme of the Bible, and that is the establishment of the kingdom of heaven.

### III. Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of Heaven

You remember as we came through early on in our study, I laid out for you the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of heaven. To refresh your memory in a short little history lesson here, you remember how this thing works. The kingdom of heaven is the literal, visible reign that deals with the nation of Israel. That is the easiest way to remember it. The kingdom of God is the spiritual kingdom by which you and I are born into the moment we trust Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior.

You will find that when Adam shows up, the Bible says that Adam is the king over both kingdoms. He is made in the spiritual image of God; therefore, he is a part of the kingdom of God. Yet he is given the literal promises that are going to be fulfilled for Israel; therefore, he has the literal promises of the kingdom of heaven. You know that in the garden, the devil gets him to sin. The Bible says that when he sins, he loses the spiritual image of God. The image of God goes out, and along with it goes the spiritual kingdom of God. From Genesis 3 to the first coming of Christ, there is no kingdom of God on planet earth. Nobody is born again. Nobody is born in the image of God. Everybody is born in the image of Adam. Right on down we go to the first coming of Christ.

At the first coming of Christ, we find the Lord Jesus Christ, who is called the second Adam, showing up. When the second Adam shows up, He again brings with Him both kingdoms. He brings the literal, visible kingdom to the nation of Israel. That is why John the Baptist runs around and says, "Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But He also brings in with Him, because He is made in the image of God, the spiritual kingdom. That is why you will find there are places in the Gospel where one place says "kingdom of heaven," and the other place says "kingdom of God." The great Bible scholars of the world run together, and because they do not understand the consistency of the Bible, they say, "See there, they are the same." No, they are not the same.

"Well, how do you know that?" Well, first of all, they are not spelled the same. That would be your first clue. But second of all, through the Bible, you will find that those two kingdoms are either here together, one is gone, the other one is here, they are both back, and then it goes from

there. At the first coming of Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, who brings the literal kingdom to Israel and brings a spiritual kingdom because He is the Son of God, they show up again. What happened? This time, Israel rejects the literal kingdom. We are going to see it in a little bit, and out goes the kingdom of heaven. Then we enter into what we talked about last week, the transitional period that brings us from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the nation of Israel to the church, the transition from the kingdom of heaven to the spiritual kingdom of God.

Now, the time that we live right now, from that point right up to the rapture of the church, you and I are not going to anybody preaching about a coming literal kingdom other than through prophecy. What we are doing is we are winning men and women to Christ and bringing them into a spiritual kingdom.

*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

When you got saved last Thursday night, you know what we did? We did not bring you into a literal kingdom. You got born again into a spiritual kingdom. That is what happened to you. That is what happened to you, Amy. You got born into a spiritual kingdom. It lives within you. The literal kingdom is going to Israel. The spiritual kingdom is for you and for me, that once Adam lost that image, you and I got it back in Christ, and now that is why the Bible says we are the sons of God spiritually. That is you and me. So be it. That is you and me. So when you look at this thing and you understand it, that is how this kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven thing works out.

## IV. Outline of Matthew: The Pivotal Chapters

Let me give you an outline for Matthew, and this will really help you. I like books like this because they are so easy. Matthew is the first book that you find because it lays out all the material that you need to know to put the other books together. It shows you that the focal point of the first coming of Christ is the establishment with the nation of Israel, that kingdom. It is so vital for you and I to understand that it is a great book.

So here is the outline:

- Chapters 1-10
- Chapters 11-12 (Pivotal Chapters)
- Chapters 13-28

Everything from chapter 1 through chapter 10 brings you up to a point. Something changes in chapter 11 and chapter 12, and then 13, 14 to the end of the book take you away from the thing, and it changes completely. The whole book is laid out just like that. The pivotal chapters are going to be chapter 11 and 12, and I am going to go through them here in just a second and I am going to show you how they are. But when you think of Matthew, that is how you think. When you find a book that has a pivotal chapter in it, a chapter that changes things right on the spot,

when you see that chapter, you are going to be a preacher just like you, John. You might just get used to it.

The book of Matthew is a pivotal book. Within the middle of that book, two chapters pivot the thing, and it shows you a change. Books in the Bible that are pivotal books are easy to understand, but that is how you remember them. Do not ever forget whatever you get into in Matthew because Matthew can look complicated, but not when you look at it through the two pivotal chapters. Everything on one side of those chapters means one thing; everything on the other side of those chapters means something else. We are going to see what those things are in just a moment.

## V. Matthew Chapter by Chapter

- Matthew 1: The Genealogy of the King
- Matthew 2: The Birth of the King
- Matthew 3: The Heralding of the King
- Matthew 4: The Preparation of the King
- Matthew 5-7: The Constitution of the Kingdom
- Matthew 8-9: The Credentials of the King
- Matthew 10: Sending Out the Twelve
- Matthew 11-12: The Rejection of the King and Kingdom (Pivotal)
- Matthew 13-25: Parables of the Kingdom
- Matthew 26-27: The Crucifixion
- Matthew 28: The Resurrection

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, thank you for today.