



EXPLORE **THE BIBLE**®  
*Adults*

# *Matthew 1–13*

Daily Discipleship Guide

Winter 2025-26

---

## THE POWER OF ONE

The teacher writes the essay prompt on the board, and you stare at it blankly: “Name the person who has made the single greatest impact on your life and why.” You sense various levels of confusion assault you at the same time. One minute, you wonder if anyone has really made that big of a difference in your life. The next minute, you’ve got a list of candidates that seems impossible to whittle down.

And even if you could eliminate every name but one, surely the last person standing deserves more attention than you could ever offer in a few hundred words. Someone like that would make such an indelible impression that you wouldn’t know where to start, what to include, or what to leave out. Such a transformational figure requires the word count of a novel, not a few pages filled with the snatches of collected memories.

Naming the most influential person in your life? On the surface, it might seem like an impossible task for you and me. But, for a former tax collector named Matthew, the choice was easy: Jesus. See, it was Jesus who had found him at his tax booth, and it was Jesus who had called him in a new direction. It was Jesus who had seen past the social and spiritual stigma that hung on first-century tax collectors like barnacles on a boat. And it was Jesus who taught him what it really means to have a personal relationship with God.

Matthew, the cultural outcast, had met Jesus, and Jesus had made all the difference. That’s why Matthew wrote an entire book of the Bible dedicated to the words and actions of Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus is still in the business of transforming lives today. He still accepts outcasts and social pariahs. He still makes room for them in His kingdom.

And He still teaches us what it really means to have a personal relationship with God.

Honestly, Jesus has the single greatest impact on the lives of all who come to Him. If you’ve never met Him, now is the time. Like Matthew, all you have to do is hear His call and respond by following Him in faith. If you’re ready to take that step, here’s what you need to do . . .

- 
- ▶ **ADMIT** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
  - ▶ **BY FAITH RECEIVE** Jesus as God’s Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
  - ▶ **CONFESS** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: “Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen.”

---

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.



SUGGESTED FOR THE WEEK OF

DEC. 7

DEC. 14

DEC. 21

DEC. 28

JAN. 4

JAN. 11

JAN. 18

JAN. 25

FEB. 1

FEB. 8

FEB. 15

FEB. 22

## FEATURES


▶ Bible Reading Plan .....	6
▶ Memory Verses .....	7
▶ Biblical Background .....	8
▶ Using the Daily Discipleship Guide .....	10
▶ Leader Helps.....	116
▶ Visual Ideas.....	160
▶ Coming Next Quarter .....	162

## SESSIONS

Session 1:	<b>Affirmation</b> (Matt. 3:13–4:11) .....	12
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 124	
Article:	Titles of Christ in the Gospels .....	20
Session 2:	<b>Invitation</b> (Matt. 4:12-25) .....	22
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 127	
Session 3:	<b>Worship the King</b> (Matt. 2:1-12) .....	30
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 130	
Session 4:	<b>True Righteousness</b> (Matt. 5:13-20,43-48) .....	38
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 133	
Session 5:	<b>Treasure</b> (Matt. 6:19-34) .....	46
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 136	
Article:	The Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew .....	54
Session 6:	<b>Authority Acknowledged</b> (Matt. 7:15-29) .....	56
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 139	
Session 7:	<b>Every Life Valued</b> (Matt. 8:1-4,14-17; 9:1-8) .....	64
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 142	
Article:	The Sanctity of Human Life .....	72
Session 8:	<b>Mercy Extended</b> (Matt. 9:10-19,23-26) .....	74
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 145	
Session 9:	<b>Loyalty Tested</b> (Matt. 10:16-20,26-34) .....	82
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 148	
Session 10:	<b>Confronting Doubts</b> (Matt. 11:1-6,16-24) .....	90
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 151	
Session 11:	<b>Rejecting Legalism</b> (Matt. 12:1-14) .....	98
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 154	
Article:	The Parables of Jesus .....	106
Session 12:	<b>Judgment Coming*</b> (Matt. 13:24-30,36-43) .....	108
	LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 157	
Article:	To Have Disciples in the First Century .....	116

\*Evangelistic Emphasis

## MEET THE WRITERS



**Sam Crouch** is retired after 52 years in full-time ministry and lives in Tucson, Arizona.

**Kima Jude** is a member of The Oaks Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas, where her husband, Barry, serves as lead pastor.

**Bob Peltier** is a member of Noble Avenue Baptist Church in Guthrie, Oklahoma, where he leads adult Bible study and discipleship classes.

Explore the Bible: Daily Discipleship Guide (ISSN 2574-4402; Item 005794512) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2025 Lifeway Christian Resources.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the publisher.

For ordering or inquiries including Autoship, visit [Lifeway.com](http://Lifeway.com), call 1-800-458-2772, write Lifeway Resources Customer Service, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, or fax 615.251.5933. For address changes, email [subscribe@lifeway.com](mailto:subscribe@lifeway.com). For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, visit [Lifeway.com/Autoship](http://Lifeway.com/Autoship), email [orderentry@Lifeway.com](mailto:orderentry@Lifeway.com), or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review Lifeway's doctrinal guideline, please visit [lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline](http://lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline). The Key Doctrine statements in this study guide are adapted from these guidelines.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers®. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®) copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the Holy Bible, King James Version. Scripture quotations marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com). Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. The suggestions for pronouncing Bible names are from That's Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names by W. Murray Severance, © 1997 by Broadman & Holman Publishers. Used by permission.

Daily Discipleship Guide  
Winter 2025-26  
Volume 3, Number 2

Amber Vaden  
Team Leader

Mike Livingstone  
Content Editor

Gia Thornburg  
Production Editor

Darin Clark  
Design Team Leader

Chad Hunter  
Graphic Designer

Dwayne McCrary  
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

John Paul Basham  
Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments to the team by email  
[ETB.adults@Lifeway.com](mailto:ETB.adults@Lifeway.com)  
or by mail to:  
Explore The Bible: Daily Discipleship Guide  
200 Powell Place, Suite 100,  
Brentwood, TN 37027-7707

Printed in the United States of America



- ▶ "Delivery delayed. Now arriving November 9." How well do you wait? When a package you've been anxiously awaiting is delayed, for example, do you respond with patient anticipation or irritated frustration? Personally, one-day shipping,



DoorDash®, and streaming TV shows have spoiled me. When unexpected circumstances require me to wait, it's a needed exercise for me to practice patience.

Jesus's birth in Bethlehem was a long-awaited event. For centuries, God's people waited for the promised One. Old Testament prophets spoke of a Deliverer. This news of a coming Messiah was especially meaningful to those who persevered year after year with no deliverance in sight. "She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Matthew's gospel recounts the story of Jesus's life. This quarter, we will study Jesus's teachings, witness His miraculous power, and examine His earthly ministry.

May this study stir anew within you a deep appreciation for our Savior, the One who delivers us from our sins. We no longer have to wait; those days are over. Our King has come!

In Him,

**Amber Vaden**

amber.vaden@lifeway.com

# BIBLE READING PLAN



## DECEMBER

- ☐ 1. Matthew 1:1-6
- ☐ 2. Matthew 1:7-11
- ☐ 3. Matthew 1:12-17
- ☐ 4. Matthew 1:18-21
- ☐ 5. Matthew 1:22-25
- ☐ 6. Matthew 2:1-4
- ☐ 7. Matthew 2:5-8
- ☐ 8. Matthew 2:9-12
- ☐ 9. Matthew 2:13-15
- ☐ 10. Matthew 2:16-18
- ☐ 11. Matthew 2:19-23
- ☐ 12. Matthew 3:1-6
- ☐ 13. Matthew 3:7-10
- ☐ 14. Matthew 3:11-12
- ☐ 15. Matthew 3:13-17
- ☐ 16. Matthew 4:1-4
- ☐ 17. Matthew 4:5-7
- ☐ 18. Matthew 4:8-11
- ☐ 19. Matthew 4:12-17
- ☐ 20. Matthew 4:18-22
- ☐ 21. Matthew 4:23-25
- ☐ 22. Matthew 5:1-10
- ☐ 23. Matthew 5:11-12
- ☐ 24. Matthew 5:13-16
- ☐ 25. Matthew 5:17-20
- ☐ 26. Matthew 5:21-26
- ☐ 27. Matthew 5:27-30
- ☐ 28. Matthew 5:31-32
- ☐ 29. Matthew 5:33-37
- ☐ 30. Matthew 5:38-42
- ☐ 31. Matthew 5:43-48

## JANUARY

- ☐ 1. Matthew 6:1-4
- ☐ 2. Matthew 6:5-8
- ☐ 3. Matthew 6:9-15
- ☐ 4. Matthew 6:16-18
- ☐ 5. Matthew 6:19-24
- ☐ 6. Matthew 6:25-34
- ☐ 7. Matthew 7:1-6
- ☐ 8. Matthew 7:7-12
- ☐ 9. Matthew 7:13-14
- ☐ 10. Matthew 7:15-20
- ☐ 11. Matthew 7:21-23
- ☐ 12. Matthew 7:24-29
- ☐ 13. Matthew 8:1-4
- ☐ 14. Matthew 8:5-13
- ☐ 15. Matthew 8:14-17
- ☐ 16. Matthew 8:18-22
- ☐ 17. Matthew 8:23-27
- ☐ 18. Matthew 8:28-34
- ☐ 19. Matthew 9:1-8
- ☐ 20. Matthew 9:9-13
- ☐ 21. Matthew 9:14-17
- ☐ 22. Matthew 9:18-26
- ☐ 23. Matthew 9:27-31
- ☐ 24. Matthew 9:32-34
- ☐ 25. Matthew 9:35-38
- ☐ 26. Matthew 10:1-4
- ☐ 27. Matthew 10:5-15
- ☐ 28. Matthew 10:16-20
- ☐ 29. Matthew 10:21-25
- ☐ 30. Matthew 10:26-31
- ☐ 31. Matthew 10:32-39

## FEBRUARY

- ☐ 1. Matthew 10:40-42
- ☐ 2. Matthew 11:1-6
- ☐ 3. Matthew 11:7-10
- ☐ 4. Matthew 11:11-15
- ☐ 5. Matthew 11:16-19
- ☐ 6. Matthew 11:20-24
- ☐ 7. Matthew 11:25-30
- ☐ 8. Matthew 12:1-8
- ☐ 9. Matthew 12:9-14
- ☐ 10. Matthew 12:15-21
- ☐ 11. Matthew 12:22-29
- ☐ 12. Matthew 12:30-32
- ☐ 13. Matthew 12:33-37
- ☐ 14. Matthew 12:38-42
- ☐ 15. Matthew 12:43-45
- ☐ 16. Matthew 12:46-50
- ☐ 17. Matthew 13:1-9
- ☐ 18. Matthew 13:10-15
- ☐ 19. Matthew 13:16-17
- ☐ 20. Matthew 13:18-23
- ☐ 21. Matthew 13:24-30
- ☐ 22. Matthew 13:31-33
- ☐ 23. Matthew 13:34-35
- ☐ 24. Matthew 13:36-43
- ☐ 25. Matthew 13:44-46
- ☐ 26. Matthew 13:47-50
- ☐ 27. Matthew 13:51-52
- ☐ 28. Matthew 13:53-58

# MEMORY VERSES



## SESSION 1:

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."

- Matthew 3:17

## SESSION 2:

"Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. - Matthew 4:19-20

## SESSION 3:

Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. - Matthew 2:11

## SESSION 4:

For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. - Matthew 5:20

## SESSION 5:

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. - Matthew 6:33

## SESSION 6:

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." - Matthew 7:24

## SESSION 7:

Reaching out his hand, Jesus touched him, saying, "I am willing; be made clean." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. - Matthew 8:3

## SESSION 8:

Now when he heard this, he said, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick." - Matthew 9:12

## SESSION 9:

Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. - Matthew 10:28

## SESSION 10:

"The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me." - Matthew 11:5-6

## SESSION 11:

"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." - Matthew 12:8

## SESSION 12:

Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. - Matthew 13:40



“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29). Sprinkled throughout the Gospel of Matthew are nine references to the authority of Jesus. Matthew’s emphasis on Jesus’s authority, or power, served his purpose of proving that Jesus was God’s long-awaited Messiah.

To back up that claim, the Gospel is filled with numerous prophecies showing how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah. In addition, Matthew interspersed the teachings of Jesus with numerous miracles attesting to Jesus’s divine nature. His intent was to show through the narration of teachings and miracles that Jesus was indeed God’s Messiah and that response to Him brought either blessing or judgment.

While there is no direct reference to the writer of this Gospel as the disciple named Matthew, early church tradition and references from several church leaders in the early second century point to Matthew the apostle as the writer.

At first appearance, the Gospel might be thought of as a chronological summary of the life and ministry of Jesus. It is more than that. The book is a carefully constructed collection of the key teachings of Jesus. While it begins with

the genealogy and birth of Jesus, and closes with His death by crucifixion and resurrection, the central part of the book contains five sections of the collected teachings of Jesus. These five sections are found in chapters 5–7; 10; 13; 18; and 23–25. Each section closes with a formulaic statement, “when Jesus had finished” these teachings (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Between each of these sections of teachings, Matthew narrated the actions of Jesus in healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, and feeding thousands with only a small amount of food.

A second organizing principle in the Gospel was the separate ministries of Jesus in Galilee (Matt. 4:12–14:12) and in Judea (17:22–28:20). In the interval between these two sections was a brief journey into the region of Tyre and Sidon. The climatic section of the book is the final week of Jesus in Jerusalem, culminating in His arrest, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

In the pages of this Gospel, Matthew the tax-collector-turned-disciple, presents to us a snapshot of the life and teachings of Jesus. This certainly is not a complete biography nor an exhaustive collection of Jesus’s teachings. Instead, it is a reliable glimpse into the period of time when God came to earth in flesh and bone to bring about salvation for all who place their trust in Him.





## Matthew

- I. Birth and Infancy of Jesus** (1:1–2:23)
- II. Beginning of Jesus’s Ministry in Galilee** (3:1–4:25)
- III. Discourse One: The Sermon on the Mount** (5:1–7:29)
- IV. Jesus’s First Miracles** (8:1–9:38)
- V. Discourse Two: Ministry of Jesus’s Disciples** (10:1–42)
- VI. Responses to Jesus’s Ministry** (11:1–12:50)
- VII. Discourse Three: Parables about the Kingdom** (13:1–58)
- VIII. Close of Jesus’s Ministry in Galilee** (14:1–17:27)
- IX. Discourse Four: Character of Jesus’s Disciples** (18:1–35)
- X. Jesus’s Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem** (19:1–20:34)
- XI. Jesus’s Ministry in Jerusalem** (21:1–23:39)
- XII. Discourse Five: Olivet Discourse** (24:1–25:46)
- XIII. Betrayal, Crucifixion, and Burial** (26:1–27:66)
- XIV. Resurrection and Commission** (28:1–20)



## USING THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

A person's spiritual growth hinges on daily Bible engagement. *Daily* implies a discipline much like exercising, brushing teeth, or eating a certain number of calories EVERY day. Our spiritual training should be no different since we need spiritual nourishment every day. The focus is the *Bible*, God's Word. There is nothing wrong with knowing the thoughts of great philosophers, leaders, or theologians, as long as God's Word is the final word on the matter. Engagement carries the idea of participation and involvement. *Engagement* is active, requiring us to read, study, and reflect.

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you engage with God's Word. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

- Use this resource when studying with a group. The first four pages of each session help the group examine a Bible passage and move us toward acting on the truths discovered as a group and an individual.
- Use the **Talk It Out** page to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group of same-sex individuals (an accountability group). Share with the smaller group what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal daily Bible study while working to memorize a Bible verse.
- Use the **Daily Exploration** pages to go deeper into God's Word, building on your group's study experience. Engage in daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.
- Use the resource every week even when you are unable to attend the group's Bible study. Missing a group Bible study does not excuse you from being engaged daily with God through His Word.

Want this resource on your phone or tablet for when you are on the go? Purchase an eBook at [goExploreTheBible.com](http://goExploreTheBible.com) or at [Lifeway.com/digitalstudies](http://Lifeway.com/digitalstudies).





## Getting the most from Talk It Out

**Talk It Out** supports groups of three or four people who come together weekly to encourage, share, and sharpen each other. While other issues may be addressed, the Talk It Out section focuses on the weekly memory verse. The questions and comments provide a means for encouraging each other to memorize Scripture while reflecting on the main point of that week's lesson.

---

### *These groups are made up of three to four people...*

- Participants should be of the same gender.
- These groups should be smaller on purpose.
- These groups can meet at almost any location.
- These groups can easily accommodate each other's schedules.

Some married couples may choose to use the Talk It Out section for a weekly family devotional activity.

---

### *...Who meet weekly...*

- We were created to relate, so meeting weekly is important.
  - In some cases, your smaller group may need to meet virtually. You may find it best to meet face-to-face every other week or once a month and use virtual tools the other weeks.
- 

### *...To hold each other accountable and encourage each other in their spiritual growth.*

- Review the questions and comments in Talk It Out.
- Look for ways the memory verse relates to the main point of the lesson.
- Include time to pray for each other.

SESSION 1

# *Affirmation*

MATTHEW 3:13-4:11

JESUS CAME TO FULFILL THE FATHER'S PLAN OF SALVATION.



Think back to the last time you started a new job. Perhaps you felt excitement as well as apprehension. If you went through a new employee orientation, those feelings of apprehension may have been dispelled—or they may have heightened. They might have lingered until the first words of affirmation came out of the mouth of your boss. Words of encouragement are important in any new endeavor.

---

WHY DO YOU THINK WORDS OF AFFIRMATION ARE SO IMPORTANT  
WHEN YOU EMBARK ON A NEW ENDEAVOR?

---

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Gospel of Matthew is one of the three Synoptic Gospels, along with Mark and Luke. The word *synoptic* means “with the same eye” or from the same viewpoint. These three Gospel accounts follow a similar order of events and contain many of the same teachings of Jesus. The fourth Gospel, John, approaches the ministry and teaching of Jesus from a different viewpoint. All four Gospels, though, are the account of God’s intervention in history to provide His redemption to sinful humanity through His Son.

Matthew began his Gospel with the announcement and birth of Jesus. The account of Jesus’s ministry begins in chapter 3, some thirty years later. In rapid succession, Matthew tells of three key events that launched Jesus’s ministry—the appearance of John the Baptist, Jesus’s baptism, and His temptation in the wilderness.

John the Baptist is introduced in chapter 3. While John the Baptist’s central purpose was to direct attention to the coming Messiah, we must not lose sight of the fact that

John was a mighty prophet. In fact, he was the first prophet in over four hundred years among the Jewish people. As a result, the Jewish people turned out in great numbers to see and hear John.

John played two roles in God’s plan of redemption. First, he was a direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming Messiah. Prophecy concerning John is found in Malachi 3:1, “See, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me.” Second, John was a herald of the good news that God’s Messiah had arrived. His preaching called for people to prepare for the Messiah through repentance and a baptism that illustrated repentance. Continually, John called attention to the fact that “one . . . more powerful” than him was coming.



**3:13** Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be **baptized** **A** by him. **14** But John tried to stop him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?” **15** Jesus answered him, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us **to fulfill all righteousness.**” **B** Then John allowed him to be baptized. **16** When Jesus was baptized, he **went up** **C** immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. **17** And a **voice** **D** from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.”

**4:1** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by **the devil.** **E** **2** After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** Then the tempter approached him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” **4** He answered, “**It is written:**” **F** Man must 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, had him stand on the **pinnacle of the temple,** **G** **6** and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: He will give his angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” **7** Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not **test** **H** the Lord your God.” **8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me.” **10** Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” **11** Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him.

**A.** John baptized those who repented from sin. Jesus had no need for that, but His baptism signifies full obedience to God’s purposes.

**B.** Jesus did not contradict John’s assessment. Rather, He affirmed that His own baptism was necessary for full obedience.

**C.** Matthew’s wording suggests complete immersion. The repetition of the Greek word *bap-tizo* supports this view of baptism.

**D.** Each member of the Trinity appears in this setting. The coming of the Spirit and the Father’s verbal approval of His “beloved Son” affirmed Jesus’s messianic mission.

**E.** Greek, *diabolos*. Satan roams the earth as God’s enemy, accusing believers and attacking their faith (Job 1:6-7; Zech. 3:1-2; Luke 22:31).

**F.** Satan struck at a point of physical weakness, but Jesus responded with the power of God’s Word—not once, but three times.

**G.** “Highest point” (NIV). Likely, the southeast corner of the temple complex overlooking the Kidron Valley hundreds of feet below.

**H.** “Tempt” (KJV). The Greek wording suggests deliberately provoking or challenging someone. Here, the idea is “forcing” God to prove Himself.

# EXPLORE THE TEXT

## 1. Obeying God

(Matt. 3:13-17)

Believers are called to demonstrate obedience through baptism by immersion.

- **Why did Jesus come to John for baptism?**
- **What is the purpose of baptism in a believer's life?**

## 2. Hearing God

(Matt. 4:1-4)

We can rely on Scripture to find strength and resist temptation.

- **How have you found strength and encouragement in God's Word?**

## 3. Trusting God

(Matt. 4:5-7)

We can trust God's faithfulness without demanding miracles.

- **What are some ways people might try to put God to the test in our culture?**

## 4. Worshiping God

(Matt. 4:8-11)

We must acknowledge God alone as worthy of our worship.

- **What challenges our worship of God alone? How can we overcome those challenges?**

## Apply the Text

- **There is strength in numbers. How can your group members support and encourage one another as they face life's temptations? How can you build accountability in your group?**

### KEY DOCTRINE:

#### Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. (See Acts 2:41-42; Romans 6:3-5.)

### BIBLE SKILL:

**Create a compare/contrast chart to study a passage.**

Make a chart with two columns. Title one column "Temptations" and the second column "Responses." In the first column, describe aspects of each of Satan's temptations. Do the same with Jesus's responses in the second column. List ways Satan tempts believers today. Find Scripture you can use to meet each of the listed temptations.



### Explore the Bible Prayer Guide

Scan here for a weekly prayer guide based on this quarter's Bible passages.



## TALK IT OUT

**Focus on Matthew 3:17. What did God the Father affirm about Jesus?**

Verse 17 reveals the relationship of the Father and the Son. It's also the first of three times in the Gospels that God spoke from heaven. The other times are at Jesus's transfiguration (Matt. 17:5) and after Jesus's prayer that God's name be glorified (John 12:28). The Father's words in verse 17 reveal His evaluation of Jesus. The Greek word translated "well-pleased" means to take pleasure or find satisfaction in.

### Why do you think God affirmed Jesus in an audible voice?

Jesus's submission to baptism (Matt. 3:13-16) and the Father's affirmation set the stage for the beginning of His public ministry. The next event, Jesus's temptations by the devil (4:1-11), would test His commitment to the Father's plan. When our lives are connected to Jesus, we can know that we are a part of God's plan to save people from their sin—we join Jesus in His mission.

## How does your life express your commitment to God's plan for you?

As you work on memorizing Matthew 3:17 this week, remember to express to Jesus your pleasure in Him.

## Prayer Requests / Notes



## DAILY EXPLORATION



### Day 1: Matthew 3:13-15

***Consider the reasons Jesus was baptized.***

Matthew introduced the Messiah with a simple statement: “Then Jesus came from Galilee.” He came purposefully to the Jordan River from Nazareth (Mark 1:9) to be baptized by John. This baptism was the climax of John’s ministry and the beginning of Jesus’s ministry. From this point forward, John would decrease, and Jesus would increase (John 3:30).

John’s message was repentance demonstrated through baptism (Matt. 3:2). Thus he was surprised when Jesus came to be baptized by him. Most likely, John knew of Jesus’s divine identity. No doubt, John’s parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, had shared with him the events surrounding the birth of Jesus (see Luke 1:39-45). At first, John resisted the request from Jesus. “No, I need to be baptized by you” was an admission by John of his own sinfulness. But Jesus stated that His own baptism by John was necessary as “the way . . . to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus, fully God and fully man, was baptized to identify with the sinfulness of humanity. Jesus also was identifying Himself with the ministry of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, linking their ministries together. Finally, Jesus’s baptism demonstrated His commitment to fulfill the mission for which He came into the world. It was an act of obedience to the Father and gives us an example of obedience.

**What step of obedience to God do you need to take?**



### Day 2: Matthew 3:16-17

***Note the biblical mode of baptism.***

Based on the language in verse 16, Jesus’s baptism was by immersion. The Greek word baptized means to “dip or submerge under water.” It is a word that was used in ancient Greek literature of a boat that was sunk in battle. The mode of immersion paints the picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Immersion is the biblical form of baptism. For example, when Philip baptized the Ethiopian official, “both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him,” then “they came up out of the water” (Acts 8:38-39).

Immediately following Jesus’s baptism, the heavens opened and two signs of God’s affirmation of His Son appeared. First, there was a symbol like a dove descending on Jesus. Note the word *like*. This was not a dove but something like a dove; it was a symbol of the Spirit of God on Jesus. Second, God the Father spoke words of affirmation describing Jesus as His beloved Son in whom He was well-pleased. At the baptism of Jesus is clearly pictured God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The three Persons of the Trinity are distinct but without division of nature or essence.

**How would you explain to someone the meaning of baptism?**



### Day 3: Matthew 4:1-4

#### ***Compare Matthew 4:4 to Deuteronomy 8:3.***

At the outset of His ministry, Jesus faced the issue of what kind of Messiah He would be. Popular opinion believed the Messiah would free the Jews from Rome. But God's plan was different. The Messiah would come to save us from our sins. Jesus was determined to carry out the Father's plan. This resolve, however, would be tested.

After fasting for "forty days and forty nights," Jesus "was hungry." The fact that Jesus was hungry shows that He was human as well as divine. It was at this moment, when Jesus perhaps was most vulnerable, that the devil sought to sidetrack God's plan of redemption.

Notice that the devil didn't doubt that Jesus is God. Instead, he implied: "Use your powers for your own benefit. After all, you're God." This was a temptation to use His powers to meet His own needs rather than trust in God's provision.

Jesus responded to Satan's attack by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. He affirmed that our physical needs are not our most crucial needs. The Word of God and the will of God as revealed in His Word are the most important things in all of life. This was Jesus's declaration of commitment to God's plan. Further, His example of using Scripture, the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17), serves to remind us that we can face temptation with the Word of God.

**How have you found strength and encouragement in God's Word?**



### Day 4: Matthew 4:5-7

#### ***Compare Matthew 4:7 to Deuteronomy 6:16.***

Jesus defeated Satan in round one by quoting the Word of God. Satan now tried to turn the tables on Jesus by using the Word of God himself. His implication was: "Jesus, if you believe so strongly in Scripture, then use it to prove that You are the Son of God." Quoting from Psalm 91:11-12, Satan challenged Jesus to throw Himself off the top of the temple. "After all, God's Word says He will protect you and you won't be injured. That will prove that you are God's Son!" Jumping from the height of 450 feet would be such a spectacular occurrence in the eyes of the temple worshipers that they would immediately realize Jesus was the Messiah.

What is notable is that Satan misused Scripture. The psalm speaks of a life lived in God's will. When our lives are lived in His will, God can be counted on to protect and provide for us.

Quoting this time from Deuteronomy 6:16, Jesus spoke of the danger of presuming on God to watch over us when we venture outside of His plan for our lives. The lesson is simple: don't attempt to put God in a position where He has to come through for you. Don't box Him in a corner and expect Him to act as you desire.

**What are some ways people might try to put God to the test in our culture? What biblical truths about God can you always count on?**



## Day 5: Matthew 4:8-11

### *Compare Matthew 4:10 to Deuteronomy 6:13.*

The devil took Jesus to a tall mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. These kingdoms represented the governments and world systems that God allows Satan to rule. Their splendor would represent that which was glitzy and appealing about all the worldly things these kingdoms possessed. These would be Satan's to give since he was the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31).

Satan tempts Christians today using the same tactics. He attempts to seduce us with promises of success, prosperity, and health. The price, however, involves selling out to him.

Jesus did not need what the devil was offering. The kingdoms of this world were rightfully His already. The kingdoms and the glory would be His because of His death and resurrection (Rev. 11:15). What Satan was offering Jesus was a shortcut that avoided the cross. Satan was offering a way for Jesus to be "King of kings" without suffering the pain and humiliation of the cross.

Again, quoting from Deuteronomy 6:13, Jesus told Satan to "Get lost. God alone is worthy of worship and service." Satan only has power by God's permission. Therefore, at Jesus's command to go away, Satan had no choice but to leave.

After Satan's departure, God sent angels to meet the physical needs of Jesus that He had refused to do for Himself in verse 4.

**What challenges your worship of God alone?  
How can you overcome those challenges?**

## APPLY THE TEXT

The psalmist said this: "I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you" (Ps. 119:11). How can you apply this verse in your life? Develop a plan and strategy for memorizing Scripture that will help you stand against temptation. Start by memorizing Matthew 3:17.

## JOURNAL



# TITLES OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPELS

- The Gospels contain two classes of titles: those that go back to Jesus Himself and those that are applied to Him by others. There is considerable scholarly discussion about the exact nature of the first group, but the evidence of Scripture must be allowed to speak for itself. Jesus used certain titles for Himself and allowed His followers to refer to Him in certain ways. From these, we gain insight into how He understood Himself and His mission.

## Son of Man

This is Jesus's favorite self-designation. It originated in the Old Testament (Dan. 7:13-14), was used during the intertestamental period, and was chosen by Jesus to define his messianic mission. It was serviceable because it had messianic overtones.

It also was sufficiently fluid to allow Jesus to inject His own meaning to it. He needed to do this because the idea of messiahship in His day was that of a military hero who would come to conquer the Romans and reestablish the throne of David in Israel. Instead, Jesus came to be the Savior of the world.

Jesus used the title "Son of Man" in four different ways. First, He frequently used it as a synonym for "I." Jesus was simply referring to Himself by that title (see Matt. 26:24). Second, the Son of Man is one who exercises divine authority (see Matt. 9:6). Third, the Son of Man fulfills His earthly mission

through His death and resurrection (see Matt. 12:40; 17:9,12,23). Fourth, the Son of Man will return in great glory one day to establish His glorious kingdom (see Matt. 16:27-28; 19:28). In this way, Jesus cut through the conventional wisdom of first-century Jewish culture and accurately defined who He, the messianic Son of Man, actually is.

## Son, Son of God, Only Son

"Son of God," or "Son" for short, was also a messianic title derived from the Old Testament (2 Sam. 7:11-16). It assumes more an exalted status, however, when it is used by or about Jesus. In fact, it means that Jesus possesses the qualities of the divine nature. It affirms that He is God.

This was quite evident when the heavenly voice cried out to Jesus at His baptism, stating that He was beloved and well pleasing (Matt. 3:16-17). It also was an affirmation reiterated at Jesus's transfiguration (Mark 9:7). While Jesus became completely human from the moment of the incarnation, He never surrendered His deity. He was, is, and ever will be the Son of God.

Jesus's own understanding of His unique relationship to God as Son is reflected in Matthew 11:25-27 and Luke 10:21-22. Jesus expressed the same idea when confounding the Pharisees (Matt. 22:41-46). In the Gospel of John, Jesus is referred to as God's "one and only Son" (John 3:16), a term that means "one of a kind" or "unique."

## **Lord**

This was a title of human honor used of Jesus, the equivalent of "Master" or "Sir." However, we can see lurking in it something of greater significance (Matt. 8:5-13; Mark 2:23-28). In Judaism, "Lord" had become the word pronounced when the personal name Yahweh appeared in Scripture. Thus, "Lord" meant "God." Later, the church used it to mean that Jesus was nothing less than God by virtue of His death and resurrection.

## **Christ (Messiah)**

Jesus was reluctant to acknowledge this title publicly because, as noted, popular misconceptions about the Messiah abounded in first century Jewish life, centering on a king to rule on David's throne. Under the proper circumstances, however, He was willing to confess that He was indeed God's Anointed One (Matt. 16:13-20; 26:62-64; John 4:25-26).

This title was used so commonly later on in the church that it virtually became another name for Jesus. "Jesus the Christ" simply became "Jesus Christ." (As an example of the shifting use of names and titles, see 2 Cor. 12.)

## **The Word**

In the Gospels, this title is found in John (1:1-14). The expression "word of God" is common in both the Old and New Testaments as defining how God expressed Himself and what the content of that communication was.

When referring to Jesus, it makes the self-revelation of God personal. Jesus as the Word of God supremely reveals who God is. If we would know God, we simply need to look at Jesus, the very expression (Word) of God. As Jesus explained to His disciples, "the one who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

## **Savior**

It is self-evident in the Old Testament that just as there is only one God, so there is only one Savior (Isa. 43:3,11; 45:21). This is also true in the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10). It is all the more significant, then, that Jesus is announced as the Savior of Israel (Luke 2:11) and the world (John 4:42) in the Gospels. Jesus was understood to be divine redemption incarnate and was proclaimed as such by the early church (Acts 5:31; 13:23; 1 John 4:14).

## **Holy One of God**

This is a term used of Jesus specifically by demons and emphasizes Him as the One who is pure and holy (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69). As such, He sealed their doom in that He is wholly righteous, while they are wholly evil. It identified Jesus with the Holy God (see Isa. 6).

## **Son of David**

Son of David is a messianic title frequently used to refer to Jesus in the Gospels (Matt. 1:1; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9,15). The title expresses hope. The Son of David, who was greater than David (22:41-45), would bring deliverance for those living hopelessly in bondage.

This article was adapted from *The Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), pp. 416-417. Used with permission.