STUDY

Matthew Bible Study Questions and Answers (Free PDF)

Leader's Edition — with Answers

A 12-session walk through Matthew, from the Magi at the manger to the Great Commission, with an answer key and open questions for your own answers. Free to print, no sign-up.

A 12-session study of Matthew for groups or solo reading.

> *The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us").*
>
> **Matthew 1:23 (NIV)**

> *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
>
> **Matthew 5:3 (NIV)**

> *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*
>
> **Matthew 6:33 (NIV)**

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The study guide

SESSION 1 · MATTHEW 1:1-2:23

The King Is Born

Matthew opens with the family line of Jesus, the angel's word to Joseph, and the birth in Bethlehem. Magi from the east come to worship him while King Herod plots against him, and the child is carried to Egypt and brought home again.

1. What does the angel tell Joseph about Mary's child in Matthew 1:20-21, and who do the Magi say they are looking for in Matthew 2:2?

   The angel tells Joseph that Mary's child is conceived by the Holy Spirit, that he is to be named Jesus, and that he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:20-21). The Magi ask, where is the one who has been born king of the Jews, and say they have come to worship him (Matthew 2:2). Herod is troubled by the news and soon seeks to kill the child (Matthew 2:3, 16).

2. Matthew 1:23 gives the name Immanuel. Why does it matter that the Gospel begins by telling us who Jesus is and not only what he did?

   Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us") (Matthew 1:23). Readers have long seen the whole Gospel held in that name. God has come near in a person, and the closing words of Matthew 28:20 return to the same promise.

3. Where do you need the reminder that God is with you right now, in a season that feels uncertain?

   Leader's note: This question is about presence, not answers. Joseph was given a word in a dream and had to trust it before he understood it. Invite the group to name a place where they need God near. Let it stay simple, and let people speak or pass.

SESSION 2 · MATTHEW 3:1-4:25

Baptism, Wilderness, and the Call

John prepares the way, Jesus is baptized and the Father speaks over him, and the Spirit leads him into the wilderness to be tempted. He then begins to preach and calls his first disciples from their nets.

1. What happens at Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3:16-17, and how does Jesus answer each of the three temptations in Matthew 4:1-11?

   The heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven declares Jesus to be his beloved Son, with whom he is well pleased (Matthew 3:16-17). In the wilderness Jesus meets each temptation with Scripture. He answers from Deuteronomy about bread and the word of God (Matthew 4:4), about testing God (Matthew 4:7), and about worshiping God alone (Matthew 4:10).

2. Why might Matthew place the testing of Jesus right after the Father's word of love over him?

   Many readers see Jesus as the true Son of Israel, facing in forty days the testing that Israel failed over forty years in the wilderness. The Father names him Son first, and then the tempter says, if you are the Son of God (Matthew 4:3, 6). His identity does not come from passing the test. It is given before it begins.

3. What would it look like for you to answer a temptation this week with a word from Scripture, as Jesus did?

   Leader's note: This question invites a small, real step, not a large resolution. Jesus answered with words he knew. Ask the group what verse they could hold close, and consider giving each person a card to write it on.

SESSION 3 · MATTHEW 5:1-48

The Sermon on the Mount: Blessed

Jesus goes up on the mountainside and begins to teach his disciples. He opens with the Beatitudes, calls his followers salt and light, and shows that the law he came to fulfill reaches down to the heart.

1. Who does Jesus call blessed in Matthew 5:3-10, and what does he say about the law in Matthew 5:17?

   Jesus begins, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). He goes on to bless those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted (Matthew 5:4-10). He says he has not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17).

2. Why does Jesus keep saying, you have heard it said, but I tell you (for example Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28)?

   Jesus takes commands about murder and adultery and traces them back to anger and lust in the heart (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). Readers take this to mean that God has always cared about the heart and not only the act. It shows our need for a righteousness we cannot produce ourselves. For more on the Beatitudes, see the guide to [explaining the Beatitudes](/pillar/explaining-the-beatitudes).

3. Where do you see the pull to keep the outside of your life tidy while the inside stays untouched?

   Leader's note: This is a gentle question and needs a gentle room. Most of us know a gap between the face we show and the heart we carry. Jesus speaks to it here as a doctor, not a judge. Give the group a quiet moment before anyone answers.

SESSION 4 · MATTHEW 6:1-7:29

The Sermon on the Mount: Trust and Build

Jesus teaches about giving, prayer, and fasting done before the Father and not before people, gives the Lord's Prayer, and calls his followers away from worry. He ends with a warning and the picture of two houses.

1. What does Jesus tell his disciples about praying in Matthew 6:5-13, and what does he tell them to seek first in Matthew 6:33?

Jesus says not to pray to be seen, but to go into a room, close the door, and pray to the Father in secret (Matthew 6:5-6). He gives the Lord's Prayer as a pattern (Matthew 6:9-13). He says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

2. Why does Jesus point to the birds and the wildflowers when he speaks about worry in Matthew 6:25-34?

The birds are fed and the flowers are clothed by the heavenly Father (Matthew 6:26, 28-30). Jesus argues from the smaller to the greater. If God cares for these, he will care for those who are his. The point is not a life without work or planning. It is a life without the grip of fear, held by a Father who already knows.

3. What is one thing you are carrying that you could hand over in prayer today, as one who trusts a Father who knows what you need?

Leader's note: This question invites honest naming of worries and a moment of prayer. Jesus ends the sermon with a house built on rock, the person who hears his words and does them (Matthew 7:24-25). Ask the group what one small act of trust could look like this week.

SESSION 5 · MATTHEW 8:1-9:38

Authority Over Sickness, Storm, and Sin

Jesus heals a leper, a centurion's servant, and many others, calms a storm, and forgives and heals a paralyzed man. He calls Matthew from the tax booth and looks with compassion on the crowds.

1. What do the centurion and the disciples in the boat each say to Jesus in Matthew 8:5-13 and Matthew 8:23-27, and how does Jesus respond?

The centurion says he is not worthy to have Jesus come under his roof, and that Jesus need only say the word and his servant will be healed (Matthew 8:8). Jesus marvels at his faith (Matthew 8:10). In the boat the disciples cry out in fear. Jesus rebukes the wind and waves, and there is a great calm (Matthew 8:25-26).

2. Why does Jesus say to the paralyzed man that his sins are forgiven before he heals him (Matthew 9:2-6)?

The paralyzed man's friends bring him for healing, and Jesus first speaks of forgiveness (Matthew 9:2). He then heals him so that people may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). Readers see Jesus showing that his deepest work is with sin, and that his authority reaches to the body, to creation, and to the soul.

3. Where do you find it easier to ask Jesus for help with your circumstances than with your heart?

Leader's note: Both kinds of asking are welcome here. The paralyzed man was carried by friends who believed for him. Ask the group where they need someone to carry them, and whom they could carry.

SESSION 6 · MATTHEW 10:1-12:50

Sent, Weary, and Opposed

Jesus sends out the Twelve and warns them of what lies ahead. He answers John's doubts, invites the weary to rest in him, and meets growing opposition from the religious leaders.

1. What does Jesus tell the Twelve to expect in Matthew 10:16-22, and what does he offer in Matthew 11:28-30?

   Jesus sends his disciples out like sheep among wolves and says they will be handed over, flogged, and hated on account of his name (Matthew 10:16-22). He also says the one who stands firm to the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22). Later he says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

2. How can Jesus warn his followers about hatred and also promise them rest, and what does the yoke in Matthew 11:29-30 suggest?

   A yoke was a wooden frame worn to carry a load. Jesus says his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matthew 11:30). Readers see a contrast with heavy religious demands. Following him is costly, yet he goes with us and gives rest to the soul (Matthew 11:29).

3. What weight are you carrying that you have not yet brought to Jesus?

   Leader's note: This question is for the tired. Do not hurry to fix anything. Invite people to name the weight and, if they wish, to pray the words of Matthew 11:28 back to Jesus. It is his invitation and no one has to earn it.

SESSION 7 · MATTHEW 13:1-58

The Parables of the Kingdom

Jesus tells the parables of the sower, the weeds, the mustard seed, the yeast, the hidden treasure, the pearl, and the net. He explains the sower to his disciples and speaks of how people hear the word.

1. What are the four kinds of soil in Matthew 13:3-8, and how does Jesus explain each in Matthew 13:18-23?

   The seed falls along the path, on rocky ground, among thorns, and on good soil (Matthew 13:3-8). Jesus explains that the path is the one who does not understand, the rocky ground is the one who falls away under trouble, the thorns are worries and the deceit of wealth, and the good soil is the one who hears and understands the word and bears fruit (Matthew 13:19-23). See also the [parable of the sower](/parable/sower).

2. Why do you think Jesus taught the crowds in parables (Matthew 13:10-17), and what do the mustard seed and the yeast say about how the kingdom grows?

   Jesus says the secrets of the kingdom have been given to his disciples (Matthew 13:11). Parables reveal to those who have ears to hear and can leave others with only a story. The mustard seed and the yeast both begin small and grow until they fill the field or the dough (Matthew 13:31-33). The kingdom often grows quietly. For more, see the [list of parables](/pillar/list-of-parables).

3. Which soil best describes your heart right now, and what might help it receive the word more deeply?

   Leader's note: Let each person answer for themselves and do not say which soil someone else is. Soil can change with the season. Ask what would help the word take root, such as rest, confession, or a friend to walk with.

SESSION 8 · MATTHEW 14:1-17:27

Confession and the Cross Foretold

Jesus feeds the five thousand, walks on the sea, and asks his disciples who they say he is. Peter confesses him as the Messiah, Jesus speaks of his coming death, and three disciples see him transfigured on the mountain.

1. What does Peter say in Matthew 16:16, and what does Jesus begin to tell his disciples in Matthew 16:21?

   Jesus asks, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answers, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15-16). From then on Jesus begins to explain that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and on the third day be raised to life (Matthew 16:21).

2. Why does Peter's great confession lead so quickly to Jesus' rebuke in Matthew 16:22-23, and what does taking up a cross mean in Matthew 16:24?

   Peter has named the Messiah right, but he cannot yet accept a suffering one, and Jesus rebukes him (Matthew 16:22-23). Then Jesus says anyone who would follow him must deny themselves and take up their cross (Matthew 16:24). The cross was an instrument of death, so the call is to give up one's own way. Christians differ on how to read the rock in Matthew 16:18, but all agree that the confession itself is the foundation.

3. If Jesus asked you today, who do you say I am, how would you answer?

   Leader's note: This question asks for a personal answer, not a correct one. Peter also stumbled, and Jesus kept him. Give the group time to answer in their own words. Some may be uncertain, and that is a fair place to begin.

SESSION 9 · MATTHEW 18:1-20:34

Greatness, Forgiveness, and Grace

Jesus teaches about humility, the lost sheep, and forgiveness, and tells of the servant who would not forgive. He speaks of the workers in the vineyard, and of greatness through service.

1. What does Peter ask about forgiveness in Matthew 18:21, and how does Jesus answer him in Matthew 18:22?

   Peter asks how many times he should forgive someone who sins against him, up to seven times. Jesus answers not seven times, but seventy-seven times, or seventy times seven in some translations (Matthew 18:21-22). The number is meant to say that forgiveness has no ledger.

2. What does the story of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:23-35 teach about how we forgive?

A servant is forgiven a huge debt by his master, then refuses to forgive a small debt owed to him, and he is handed over to be punished (Matthew 18:23-34). Jesus says the Father will do the same to us unless we forgive from the heart (Matthew 18:35). Readers take this to mean that those who have received great mercy are expected to give it.

3. Whom do you need to forgive, or from whom do you need to ask forgiveness?

Leader's note: This is a tender question, and forgiveness can be slow and hard, especially where there has been deep hurt. Forgiving does not mean saying the wrong was small. Invite honest sharing without pressure, and consider pausing to pray.

SESSION 10 · MATTHEW 21:1-25:46

The King in Jerusalem

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, clears the temple, and answers the leaders' challenges. He warns of the coming judgment, speaks of the end, and teaches by parable about being ready and caring for the least of these.

1. What does Jesus name as the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:34-40?

Jesus says the greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39). He adds that all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two (Matthew 22:40).

2. In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks about the temple and the end of the age. Where do he and his readers agree, and where do readers differ about the timing?

Jesus says that no one knows the day or hour, not even the angels or the Son, but only the Father (Matthew 24:36). He calls his followers to keep watch and be ready (Matthew 24:42-44). Readers differ on how much of Matthew 24 was fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and how much looks ahead to his return. All agree that the passage warns against setting dates and calls for faithful watchfulness.

3. In Matthew 25:31-46, what does Jesus say we do for him when we serve others, and where could you serve this week?

Leader's note: In the parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus says whatever we did for the least of his brothers and sisters, we did for him (Matthew 25:40). Ask the group where they have seen this lived out, and let each person name one small act of service to take up this week.

SESSION 11 · MATTHEW 26:1-27:66

Betrayal, Cross, and Burial

Jesus shares the last supper, prays in Gethsemane, and is betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter. He is condemned, crucified, and buried, and the curtain of the temple is torn in two.

1. What does Jesus say over the bread and cup in Matthew 26:26-28, and how does he pray in Gethsemane in Matthew 26:39?

   Jesus gives the bread and says it is his body, and the cup and says it is his blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:26-28). In Gethsemane he prays that the cup might pass from him, yet not as he wills, but as the Father wills (Matthew 26:39).

2. What is the meaning of the temple curtain torn from top to bottom in Matthew 27:51, and of the centurion's words in Matthew 27:54?

   At his death the curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). Readers see this as God himself opening the way into his presence through the death of Jesus. The centurion and those with him are terrified and say that surely he was the Son of God (Matthew 27:54).

3. Where have you failed the Lord as Peter did in Matthew 26:69-75, and what does it mean to you that the account does not stop there?

   Leader's note: Peter denied Jesus three times and wept bitterly (Matthew 26:75). Matthew 28 will not leave him there. Invite the group to name failures gently, without shame, and to remember that the cross was for people like Peter.

SESSION 12 · MATTHEW 28:1-20

He Is Risen, and He Sends

The women find the tomb empty and meet the risen Jesus. The guards are paid to spread a lie, and on a mountain in Galilee Jesus gives his disciples the Great Commission and promises to be with them always.

1. What do the angel and Jesus tell the women in Matthew 28:5-10, and what does Jesus say to the eleven in Matthew 28:18-20?

   The angel tells the women not to be afraid, that Jesus has risen, and to go and tell the disciples (Matthew 28:5-7). Jesus meets them and repeats it (Matthew 28:9-10). To the eleven he says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

2. Matthew 28:17 says some doubted. Why do you think Matthew includes this, and what does Jesus do next?

   Some worshiped him, but some doubted (Matthew 28:17). Even at the resurrection, faith was not free of doubt. Jesus does not rebuke them or dismiss them. He comes to them and gives them their task (Matthew 28:18). Readers take comfort that he entrusts his mission to real, wavering people.

3. Where is Jesus calling you to go, to make disciples, or to teach in your own home, work, or church?

   Leader's note: This question is about your place, not a mission far away. Ask each person to name one person or group they can point toward Jesus this month. Close with the promise that he is with us always (Matthew 28:20).