

6.1

Content Summary: Expanded Overview of the Gospel of Matthew

A genealogy of Jesus is presented in three sets of “fourteen generations,” emphasizing that Jesus is descended from Abraham and David. (1:1–17)

The story of Jesus’s birth is told from the perspective of Joseph: an angel tells him that Mary (to whom he is betrothed) is pregnant from the Holy Spirit and that he is to name the child “Jesus” because the child will “save his people from their sins.” (1:18–25)

Magi are guided by a star to Bethlehem, where they worship Jesus and offer him gifts; Herod murders babies in Bethlehem in an unsuccessful attempt to kill the newborn Messiah. (2:1–23)

John the Baptist preaches in the wilderness and testifies to the one who is to come after him. Initially reluctant to baptize Jesus, John consents to “fulfill all righteousness.” The Spirit comes upon Jesus, and a voice from heaven identifies him as God’s Son. (3:1–17)

Satan presents Jesus with three temptations in the wilderness. (4:1–11)

In fulfillment of Scripture, Jesus begins a ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing, marked by the message “Repent, for the

kingdom of heaven has come near.” He calls four fishermen to be his disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. (4:12–25)

Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29), which includes (among other material):

- the Beatitudes
- sayings about “salt of the earth” and “light of the world”
- declaration that Jesus has come to fulfill the law and the prophets
- importance of keeping even the least of the commandments (every letter, every stroke)
- seven “antitheses”: “you have heard it said . . . but I say to you”
- warnings against practicing piety to be seen by others
- the Lord’s Prayer
- no one can serve two masters (God and mammon)
- do not be anxious: God cares for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field
- seek first the kingdom of God
- do not judge, lest you be judged; first take the log out of your own eye
- do not throw pearls before swine

- ask, and it will be given; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened
- the Golden Rule: do to others as you would have them do to you
- contrast between the narrow gate to life and the wide road to destruction
- beware of wolves in sheep's clothing
- not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven
- parable of the house built on rock and the house built on sand

Jesus cleanses a leper who comes to him in faith and worship. (8:1–4)

Jesus heals the servant of a centurion in Capernaum. He praises the faith of this gentile who knows that Jesus has the authority to speak a word and heal his servant from a distance. (8:5–13)

Jesus cures Simon's mother-in-law of a fever and also heals many others, fulfilling prophecies of Scripture. (8:14–17)

Jesus encounters two would-be disciples: a presumptuous scribe to whom he says, "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head," and a procrastinating disciple to whom he says, "Let the dead bury the dead." (8:18–22)

Jesus stills a storm at sea and rebukes his fearful disciples for being people of little faith. (8:23–27)

Jesus meets two demoniacs in a cemetery and casts the demons out of them and into pigs, which run into the water and drown. (8:28–34)

Jesus heals a paralytic after first telling the man that his sins are forgiven; some scribes regard the declaration of forgiveness as blasphemy. (9:1–8)

Jesus calls Matthew the tax collector to follow him. To the chagrin of religious leaders, he eats with Matthew and other tax collectors. He quotes the Scripture “I desire mercy not sacrifice” and says, “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.” (9:9–13)

Jesus explains to disciples of John the Baptist why his disciples don’t fast: they are like wedding guests, who cannot mourn as long as “the bridegroom” is still with them. (9:14–17)

Jesus goes to heal the daughter of a prominent man. Along the way, a woman with hemorrhages touches the hem of his garment and is healed. The man’s daughter dies, but Jesus raises her from the dead. (9:18–26)

Jesus heals two blind men, telling them to keep it secret, but they spread the news. (9:27–31)

Jesus heals a mute demoniac, but the Pharisees say that he does this by the ruler of demons. (9:32–34)

Jesus continues to heal many people and then appoints twelve apostles and sends them out to preach the kingdom, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. His instructions to them describe persecutions that are to come, the need for radical faithfulness, and the promise of rewards for those who welcome them. (9:35–10:42)

Jesus responds to a question from John the Baptist regarding whether Jesus is the one who was to come and then speaks to the crowd about John: “a prophet and more than a prophet.” (11:1–15)

Jesus upbraids those who have rejected both his ministry and that of John. He thanks God for hiding the truth from the “wise and intelligent” and offers an invitation to all who are weary to come to him and find rest: “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (11:16–30)

Jesus confronts Pharisees who criticize his disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath. The Pharisees are condemning the guiltless, for “the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.” (12:1–8)

In a synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus heals a man who has a withered hand, provoking the Pharisees to plot to destroy Jesus. (12:9–14)

Jesus’s continued healings fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy about the servant of the Lord. (12:15–21)

Jesus heals a blind and mute demoniac, and the Pharisees claim that Jesus casts out demons by the power of Beelzebul. Jesus indicates that their claim is ridiculous because a house divided against itself cannot stand, and he says that these leaders are blaspheming the Holy Spirit (an unforgivable sin). (12:22–37)

Scribes and Pharisees want to see a sign from Jesus, but he says that no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah. They are like a man possessed by a demon that goes out and then returns with seven others. (12:38–45)

Jesus's mother and brothers come to see him, but he says that his disciples and whoever does the will of God are his true "brother and sister and mother." (12:46–50)

Jesus tells seven parables about the kingdom of heaven, including those of the sower and of the wheat and weeds, both of which have allegorical explanations. The kingdom is also like a mustard seed, yeast, a treasure in a field, a pearl of great price, and a dragnet. (13:1–53)

Jesus teaches in the synagogue in Nazareth. The people take offense at him, prompting him to say, "Prophets are not without honor except in their hometown." (13:54–58)

Jesus's ministry attracts the attention of Herod, who has beheaded John the Baptist. The daughter of his wife, Herodias, had danced for Herod; he offered to give her anything she wanted, and

Herodias told her to ask for “the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” (14:1–12)

Jesus feeds over five thousand people with five pieces of bread and two fish. (14:13–21)

Jesus walks on water and invites Peter to walk on water as well. (14:22–33)

Jesus heals many people, including all those who touch the fringe of his garment. (14:34–36)

Jesus’s disciples are criticized for eating with unwashed hands. He responds by attacking the critics for their own hypocrisy and then by explaining that true defilement lies within the heart. (15:1–20)

Jesus refuses to heal the daughter of a Canaanite woman, claiming that he has been sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. When she says, “Even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table,” he relents in response to her great faith. (15:21–28)

Jesus feeds a crowd of four thousand people with seven loaves and a few fish. (15:29–39)

Pharisees and Sadducees ask to see a sign from Jesus, but he refuses. (16:1–4)

Jesus’s disciples misunderstand a reference that he makes to leaven and become worried that they don’t have enough bread. He reminds them of the miraculous feedings and explains “leaven” is

a metaphor for the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

(16:5–12)

At Caesarea Philippi, Peter identifies Jesus as “the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus says that Peter is the rock on which he will build his church, and that he will give Peter the keys to the kingdom to bind and loose on earth what will be bound and loosed in heaven. (16:13–20)

Jesus tells the disciples that he will be crucified, and Peter objects.

Jesus rebukes him, saying, “Get behind me Satan!” and then says that those who want to be his followers must deny themselves and bear the cross. (16:21–26)

Jesus says the Son of Man will come with angels in glory and that some of those standing with him will not taste death before they see the Son of Man come in his kingdom. (16:27–28)

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up on a mountain with him and is transfigured before them, appearing with Elijah and Moses in dazzling glory. A voice from heaven says, “This is my Son, the Beloved . . . listen to him!” (17:1–8)

Jesus explains to the disciples that a prophecy regarding the return of Elijah has been fulfilled by the coming of John the Baptist. (17:9–13)

After his disciples are unable to do so, Jesus casts a demon out of a boy who has seizures. He tells his disciples that they fail because

of their little faith, but with faith as small as a mustard seed they can move mountains. (17:14–21)

Jesus's disciples are distressed when he predicts his passion a second time. (17:22–23)

Jesus pays the temple tax by having Peter catch a fish that has a coin in its mouth. (17:24–27)

Jesus addresses a discourse on community matters (18:1–35) to his competitive disciples:

- welcome children as the greatest in the kingdom
- take extreme measures to keep yourself from sin (cut off your hand, pluck out your eye)
- parable of the lost sheep: shepherd leaves the flock to find the lost one
- how to confront a sinner: alone, then with others, then before the whole church
- how many times to forgive? not seven, but seventy-seven
- parable of the unmerciful servant: terrible judgment awaits those who accept God's forgiveness and then withhold forgiveness from others

As he travels, Jesus is followed by large crowds, and he heals them. (19:1–2)

Pharisees test Jesus with a question about divorce. He says that remarriage after divorce for any reason other than unchastity constitutes adultery. This teaching, like celibacy, can be accepted only by those to whom it is given. (19:3–12)

Jesus's disciples try to prevent people from bringing children to him, but Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me . . . to such as these belongs the kingdom of God." (19:13–15)

A rich man goes away sad after Jesus tells him to give up all his possessions. Jesus says that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. (19:16–26)

Jesus assures his disciples, who left everything to follow him, that they will receive abundant rewards and that they will sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel. (19:27–30)

Jesus tells the parable of workers in the vineyard: hired at different hours, all receive the same wage. (20:1–16)

After Jesus predicts his passion a third time, the mother of James and John asks that her sons be seated at his left and right in glory. The other disciples become indignant at this, and Jesus says that greatness is achieved through service. He says, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." (20:17–28)

Jesus heals two blind men on the road outside Jericho. (20:29–34)

Jesus enters Jerusalem riding a donkey and a colt, as a crowd of people shout “Hosanna” and strew clothing and palm branches in his path. (21:1–11)

Jesus overturns the tables of money changers and calls the Jerusalem temple “a den of robbers.” Then he heals people in the temple while children sing his praises. (21:12–17)

Jesus curses a fig tree, and it withers at once. He tells his disciples that this exemplifies the power of prayer: “Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.” (21:18–22)

Religious leaders ask Jesus by what authority he is acting, but he refuses to answer them because they will not respond to his own question regarding the baptism of John. (21:23–27)

Jesus tells the parable of two sons: one says that he will work in the vineyard but doesn’t; the other says that he won’t but does. (21:28–32)

Jesus tells the parable of the wicked tenants: the owner of a vineyard sends two groups of servants, and then finally his son, to collect fruit from tenants, who beat the servants and kill the son. (21:33–46)

Jesus tells the parable of the wedding banquet: people kill the servants who bring them invitations, so the king destroys them and fills the hall with others, good and bad; one man doesn’t have

a wedding garment, and so he is thrown into the outer darkness.

(22:1–14)

Pharisees test Jesus, asking him whether it is lawful to pay taxes to

Caesar. He says, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (22:15–22)

Sadducees test Jesus with a question: If a woman was married to

seven men in this life, whose wife will she be in the resurrection?

He replies that there is no marriage in heaven, for people are like angels. (22:23–33)

A lawyer tests Jesus by asking which commandment is first of all.

Jesus replies that the first is to love God, and that the second is to love one’s neighbor as oneself. (22:34–40)

Jesus stumps the religious leaders by asking them how the Messiah

can be the son of David when David calls him “Lord.” (22:41–46)

Jesus warns his disciples about the scribes and Pharisees, who sit

on Moses’s seat but do not practice what they preach. His

followers are to shun honorific titles and ostentation. (23:1–12)

Jesus speaks seven “woes” against the scribes and Pharisees, who

are hypocrites and blind fools. They will not escape being

sentenced to hell. (23:13–36)

Jesus laments the fate of Jerusalem, which he wanted to protect as

a mother hen protects her brood. (23:37–39)

Jesus tells his disciples that the Jerusalem temple will be destroyed.

Then, on the Mount of Olives, he launches into a long discourse on the end times, emphasizing the terrible persecutions to come and urging people to be ready at all times. (24:1–44)

Jesus tells three eschatological parables: the faithful and wise servant, the wise and foolish bridesmaids, and the slaves given talents. In each case, wise and decisive action is contrasted with lax ineptitude, which brings terrible judgment. (24:45–25:30)

Jesus says that at the final judgment, the Son of Man will separate the nations like sheep from goats and will admit the former to everlasting life and condemn the latter to everlasting punishment. The verdict will be based on how they treated “the least of those who are members of my family.” (25:31–46)

Jesus predicts his passion again. Meanwhile, the chief priests and the elders plot to have him killed (26:1–5).

At the home of Simon the leper in Bethany, an unnamed woman anoints Jesus for burial. His disciples consider it a waste of ointment, but he says that what she has done must be told throughout the whole world in remembrance of her. (26:6–13)

Judas agrees to betray Jesus, just before the disciples and Jesus eat the Passover meal together. Jesus identifies the bread and wine as his body and blood given “for the forgiveness of sins.” He predicts his betrayal, and they go out to Gethsemane, where he

prays that, if possible, God remove the cup from him. He is arrested, and his disciples desert him. (26:14–56)

Taken to Caiaphas, Jesus is put on trial before a group of priests who decide that he deserves death and turn him over to Pilate. Meanwhile, Peter denies three times that he is a disciple of Jesus. (26:57–27:2)

Judas regrets having betrayed Jesus and returns the thirty pieces of silver that had been paid to him. Then he goes out and hangs himself. (27:3–10)

A crowd calls for Jesus to be crucified after Pilate gives them the choice of releasing Jesus or a notorious prisoner, Barabbas. Pilate washes his hands of Jesus's blood, and the people cry out, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (27:11–26)

Jesus is mocked by soldiers who crown him with thorns and compel Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus's cross to Golgotha, where Jesus is crucified. Mocked on the cross, he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" before he dies. (27:27–50)

At Jesus's death, the curtain in the temple tears and an earthquake splits the ground, opening many tombs. Many dead saints leave the tombs, go into Jerusalem, and appear to people in the days following Jesus's resurrection. (27:51–53)

The centurion at the cross declares, "Truly, this man was God's son!" (27:54)

Many women are said to have been observing the crucifixion from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, another Mary, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. Although they are mentioned for the first time here, we are told that they have been following Jesus since his early ministry in Galilee. (27:55–56)

A rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, provides a tomb for Jesus's burial, which the women witness. Meanwhile, the religious leaders place a guard at the tomb. (27:57–66)

After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb. There is a great earthquake, and an angel rolls away the stone to show them the tomb is already empty and Jesus is risen. Then they see Jesus himself and worship him. (28:1–10)

The chief priests bribe the soldiers at the tomb to tell people that Jesus's disciples came at night and stole his body. (27:11–15)

Jesus gives the Great Commission to his eleven disciples: they are to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them, and Jesus promises to be with them always. (28:16–20)