

Understanding Scripture

with Matthew as our guide

January 2018

Week 1: Understanding the Narratives

Week 2: Recognizing the Literary Devices

Week 3: Understanding the Teachings

Week 4: Appreciating the Prophecies

Recommended Reads:

- Sproul, R.C. *Knowing Scripture, Revised Edition*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2009.
- Schreiner, Thomas. *New Testament Theology, Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Schreiner, Thomas. *Magnifying God in Christ, A Summary of New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010

Week 3: Understanding the Teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven

Matt 13:52 – Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old. (ESV)

1. What is the “kingdom of heaven”?
 - a. Jesus refers to the kingdom of heaven/God 40+ times in Matthew.
 - b. Old Testament Definition as per Daniel (and other prophets)
 - i. Daniel 2:44: God sets it up to destroy all other kingdoms and it lasts forever (but done so in the days of other kings).
 - ii. Daniel 7:18: The saints will receive it and possess it forever (but others will war against them until the judgment 7:21-11)
 - iii. **God's Kingdom = His reign on Earth in close association with his people.**

- c. New Testament Fulfillment (as per Jesus in Matthew)
 - i. Kingdom Expectations of John the Baptist (and everyone else)
 - 1. In Matt 3:2 he's preaching its imminent arrival in Jesus
 - 2. But by 11:3 he's doubting that Jesus is the one.
 - 3. Where was the prophesied judgment (3:10, 12)?
 - ii. Jesus' Response-The Kingdom has come **now, but not yet!**
 - 1. 11:5-It has come in powerful mercy and grace now.
 - 2. 11:22, 24-But the judgment of the wicked is not yet.
 - 3. 12:28-His power over Satan demonstrates it has now come.
 - 4. 12:18-21-But his delaying of judgment demonstrates that it has not yet fully come. (Compare 12:18-21 with Is 42:1-4).
2. What do the parables teach about the “now but not yet” of the kingdom of heaven?
- a. Parable of the Sower? (13:19-23)
 - i. Word of the Kingdom goes out to all (grace).
 - ii. But not everyone responds favorably (delayed judgment).
 - b. Parable of the Weeds in the Wheat Field? (13:24-30, 36-43)
 - c. Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)
 - d. Parable of the Leaven (13:33)
 - e. Parable of the Hidden Treasure (13:44)
 - f. Parable of the Pearl of Great Value (13:45)
 - g. Parable of the Fishing Net (13:47-50)

3. What characterizes the people who are entering the kingdom of heaven?
 - a. From the Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5-7)
 - i. 5:2- Poor in Spirit
 - ii. 5:10- Persecuted for righteousness sake.
 - iii. 5:19-21-Doers and teachers of the commandments
 - iv. 6:10- Consistently pray for the kingdom to come
 - v. 7:21- Doer's of the Father's will
 - b. From chapters 18-19
 - i. 18:3-4, 19:14- Humble like children
 - ii. 18:23-35- Quick to forgive
 - iii. 19:23-29- **Followers of Jesus above all else**
 - c. In relation to Christ return (Chapter 25):
 - i. 25:1-13-Diligently watchful for his return
 - ii. 25:31-30-Surprised at their reward.
 - d. How does one enter?
 - i. 4:17- Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
 - ii. 11:12-Forcefully take hold of it (and don't let go).
 - iii. 19:25-26- Who then can be saved? With man this is impossible,
but with God all things are possible.