

## PROLOGUE JESUS' INFANCY NARRATIVE

**Day 1 of 40 – Matthew 1:1-17**  
The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah.

**Day 2 of 40 – Matthew 1:18-2:12**  
The Birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi.

**Day 3 of 40 – Matthew 2:13-23**  
The escape to Egypt. The Massacre of the infants. The return to Nazareth.

## SECTION 1 - NARRATIVE

**Day 4 of 40 – Matthew 3:1-17**  
The proclamation of John the Baptist. The baptism of Jesus.

**Day 5 of 40 - Matthew 4:1-25**  
Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. The arrest of John the Baptist and Jesus moves to Capernaum.

## TEACHING DISCOURSE ON DISCIPLESHIP

**Day 6 of 40 - Matthew 5:1-20**  
The Sermon on the Mount begins with the beatitudes and the teaching about salt and light.

**Day 7 of 40 - Matthew 5:21-48**  
The sermon on the mount continues with Jesus' new interpretations of the law.

**Day 8 of 40 – Matthew 6:1-34**  
The sermon on the mount continues with teachings on piety, prayer (including the Lord's prayer), fasting, treasure, wealth and worry.

**Day 9 of 40 - Matthew 7:1-29**  
The sermon on the mount concludes with these instructions on conduct and prayer; and warnings about false prophets.

## SECTION 2 – NARRATIVE

**Day 10 of 40 - Matthew 8:1-22**  
Jesus cleanses a leper, heals the centurion's servant and heals many at Peter's house. The cost of following.

**Day 11 of 40 – Matthew 8:23-9:8**  
Jesus stills the storm and heals the two Gadarene Demoniacs. Jesus returns to Capernaum and heals a paralytic.

**Day 12 of 40 - Matthew 9:9-34**  
Jesus calls Matthew. Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners. A question about fasting. A girl restored to life and a woman healed. The healing of a blind man and one who was mute.

## TEACHING DISCOURSE ON MISSION

**Day 13 of 40 – Matthew 9:35-10:15**  
The harvest is great but the labourers are few. The twelve apostles. The mission of the twelve.

**Day 14 of 40 – Matthew 10:16-11:1**  
Coming persecutions and the exhortation to have no fear. The cost of discipleship. The reward for hospitality.

## SECTION 3 – NARRATIVE

**Day 15 of 40 - Matthew 11:2-30**  
John the Baptist hears about Jesus and asks a question. Jesus speaks about John and people's response to his ministry. Jesus offers an easy yoke and a light burden.

**Day 16 of 40 – Matthew 12:1-21**  
Jesus and the disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath. Jesus heals a man in a synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus as God's chosen servant.

**Day 17 of 40 – Matthew 12:22-50**  
Lessons about a divided house; the tree and its fruit; the sign of Jonah; the return of the unclean spirit. The true kindred of Jesus.

## TEACHING DISCOURSE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

**Day 18 of 40 – Matthew 13:1-23**  
The parable of the sower. The purpose of parables. The parable of the sower explained.

**Day 19 of 40 – Matthew 13:24-53**  
The parable of the weeds and the wheat. The parable of the mustard seed. The parable of the yeast. The use of parables. The explanation of the parable of the weeds. Three kingdom parables. Treasures old and new.

## SECTION 4 - NARRATIVE

**Day 20 of 40 – Matthew 13:54-14:21**  
Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth. The death of John the Baptist. The feeding of the five thousand

**Day 21 of 40 – Matthew 14:22-36**  
Jesus walks on water and heals the sick in Gennesaret.

**Day 22 of 40 – Matthew 15:1-31**  
The tradition of the elders. The things that defile. The Canaanite woman's faith. Jesus cures many people.

**Day 23 of 40 – Matthew 15:32-16:28**  
The feeding of the four thousand. People demand a sign. The yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Peter's declaration about Jesus. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection. The cross and self-denial.

**Day 24 of 40 – Matthew 17:1-27**  
The transfiguration. Jesus cures a boy with a demon. Jesus again foretells his death and resurrection. Jesus and the temple tax

## TEACHING DISCOURSE CHURCH LIFE AND ORDER

**Day 25 of 40 – Matthew 18:1-19:2**  
Teaching about true greatness. Temptations to sin. The parable of the lost sheep. Discipling members of the church. Teaching on forgiveness. Parable of the unforgiving servant.

## SECTION 5 - NARRATIVE

**Day 26 of 40 - Matthew 19:3-30**  
Teaching about divorce. Jesus blesses the little children. The rich young man turns away from following Jesus.

**Day 27 of 40 – Matthew 20:1-34**  
The labourers in the vineyard. The third time Jesus foretells his death and resurrection. The mother of James and John makes a special request. Jesus heals two blind men.

**Day 28 of 40 – Matthew 21:1-27**  
Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus cleanses the temple. Jesus curses the fig tree. His authority is questioned.

**Day 29 of 40 – Matthew 21:28-46**  
Parable of the two sons and the parable of the wicked tenants.

**Day 30 of 40 – Matthew 22:1-40**  
Parable of the wedding banquet. The question about paying taxes. The question about the resurrection. The greatest commandment

**Day 31 of 40 – Matthew 22:41-23:39**  
The question about David's son. Jesus denounces the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus laments over Jerusalem

## TEACHING DISCOURSE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

**Day 32 of 40 – Matthew 24:1-44**  
Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple. The signs of the end of the age. Persecutions foretold. The desolating

sacrilege. The coming of the Son of Man. The lesson of the Fig Tree. The necessity for watchfulness.

**Day 33 of 40 – Matthew 24:45-25:30**  
Three parables: the faithful or unfaithful slave; the ten bridesmaids; the talents.

**Day 34 of 40 - Matthew 25:31-46**  
The judgement of the nations (the parable of the sheep and the goats)

## EPILOGUE JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

**Day 35 of 40 – Matthew 26:1-35**  
The plot to kill Jesus. The anointing at Bethany. Judas agrees to betray Jesus. The Passover with the disciples. The Lord's supper. Peter's denial foretold.

**Day 36 of 40 - Matthew 26:36-56**  
Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane. The betrayal and arrest of Jesus.

**Day 37 of 40 – Matthew 26:57-75**  
Jesus before the High Priest. Peter's denial of Jesus.

**Day 38 of 40 – Matthew 27:1-31**  
Jesus is brought before Pilate. The suicide of Judas. Pilate questions Jesus. Barabbas of Jesus? Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified. The soldiers mock Jesus

**Day 39 of 40 – Matthew 27:32-66**  
The crucifixion of Jesus. The death of Jesus. The death and burial of Jesus. The guard at the temple.

**Day 40 of 40 – Matthew 28:1-20**  
The resurrection of Jesus. The report of the guard. The commissioning of the disciples.

## How to use this reading guide

For centuries Christians have used the forty days before Easter as a period of spiritual preparation.

The three traditional Lenten disciplines are – **Praying, Fasting and Giving**. Christians commit themselves to pray more; to abstain from specific food or things (giving up something for Lent); and to give to charity. These disciplines continue to be used and the “Praying” component often involves spiritual reading, being part of a bible study or other organised activity for Lent.

In this year of St Matthew we are encouraging everyone to follow this reading plan of the Gospel. We are encouraged to know we are not on our own as we do it. Others are journeying with us. This plan is a guide only. You may not manage it every day.

Or you may prefer to read more verses on fewer days. That’s OK! Do what you can joyfully! Let God’s Word speak to you through Matthew’s Gospel.

## A Suggested Plan

**1. Read day’s passage** (usually 20-40 verses)

**2. Reflect on what you have read.** Ask yourself: What leaps out at me? What intrigues me? What encourages me? What challenges me?

**3. Pray about what you have reflected upon**  
Thank God for any insights gleaned, pray about ways these affect your life and ask for God’s blessing. Or use prayers on the front of this guide. You may like to keep a journal or find opportunities to discuss the readings with others. **Contact Rev Andrew if you would like to receive a short daily reflection and prayer via email.**

## A Little about Matthew’s Gospel

St Matthew was the most popular Gospel of the early church and so it was placed first in the New Testament. Whilst we now know Mark was the first Gospel written, and Matthew and Luke based their writings on Mark and on another sayings source known as Q (Quelle), the prime placement of Matthew is still significant. Commentator Patrick Hartin writes: *“The Gospel of Matthew acts like a hinge holding together the Old and New Testaments. Fundamental to Matthew’s spiritual vision is Jesus’ relationship to Israel’s Heritage.”*

The structure of this Gospel reflects the Old Testament in a number of ways. It is structured on five teaching discourses all of which finish with a similar formula *“when Jesus had finished saying these things”*. These five discourses mirror the five books of the Torah (the Pentateuch or first five books of the Old Testament). In this way Jesus is presented as the new Moses offering a new Torah (law). Throughout the Gospel there are fourteen almost identical formula quotations emphasizing how Jesus fulfils the law and the prophets. You will note how this reading guide is divided into these five sections each with a narrative and sermon part.

Jesus is presented in the Gospel as son of David, son of Abraham (1:1), Messiah (1:16), Lord (8:2,6,8) and Teacher/Rabbi (19:16). Most importantly he is Emmanuel which means ‘God is with us’ (1:22-23).

Thus as Hartin affirms: *“Matthew’s spirituality embraces a life led in response to the person of Jesus as ‘God with us’”*. The Gospel encourages the reader through our experience of Jesus (as God with us) to embrace a life transformed by interior prayer and faith expressed in action.

## The Gospel of Saint Matthew

### A Lenten Reading Guide



**God of Wisdom,  
grant that the words I have read today  
may be grafted in my heart,  
so that they may bring forth in me  
the fruit of your Spirit  
to the honour and praise of your name;  
through Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.**

**Almighty God, thank you for your Holy Word.  
May it be a lantern to my feet,  
a light to my path,  
and a strength to my life,  
in the name of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**