

## READ The BIBLE Together



### MATTHEW 1-17

30<sup>th</sup> July – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE**  
**(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)**

The *reading* of Scriptures is an important discipline for our Christian Life, and it is our aim to inculcate this godly culture in Shalom Church through our **READ-The-Bible-Together** program.

Since this is **READ-The-Bible-Together** and not **STUDY-The-Bible-Together**, the questions and notes in the following pages are kept relatively simple, serving as our reading aid.

If you desire to study **MATTHEW** in greater depth, you may wish to consult any of the following:

- Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew by *William Hendriksen*
- Expository Thoughts on Matthew by *J. C. Ryle*
- Matthew Henry's Commentary on Matthew

May the Holy Spirit make our reading of Scripture an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners in our midst, as well as building believers up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation!

For this week [[30<sup>th</sup> July - 5<sup>th</sup> August 2017](#)] you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 1**.

You may use Questions 1-7 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 1**, or you can go straight to Question 8 after reading the text.

### A Brief Introduction

The book of **MATTHEW** is a gospel. "*Gospel*" literally means "*good news*", and hence *Matthew's* purpose is to write an account of the good news of *Jesus Christ* – how *Jesus* came, what *Jesus* did, what *Jesus* said, and what *Jesus* accomplished in His death and resurrection. These truths are means to change our lives and that of the world!

Note that **MATTHEW** is not a comprehensive biography of *Jesus*. *Matthew* did not try to include every minute detail of *Jesus's* life. Instead, under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit, *Matthew* chose and included various events from the life of *Jesus* as well as some of His teachings in order to accomplish his purpose in writing this gospel.

A quick survey of **MATTHEW** will show that *Matthew* actually organized his gospel around five distinct teaching sections, and at the end of each teaching section, we encounter these words:

**7:28** ~ *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings . . .*

**11:1** ~ *Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples . . .*

**13:53** ~ *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables . . .*

**19:1** ~ *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings . . .*

**26:1** ~ *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings . . .*

It is generally accepted that *Matthew* was writing to the Jews, and his aim was to show them that *Jesus* was indeed the promised Sovereign King!

### 1:1-17

1. *Matthew* begins his gospel with a genealogy of *Jesus Christ*, the son of *David*, the son of *Abraham*.

(a) The name "*Jesus*" is the Greek form of the name "*Joshua*" or "*Yeshua*" that means "*YAHWEH saved*" or "*The Lord is salvation*". Just as *Joshua* was the God-appointed leader to take His people into the promised land, so now *Jesus* shall be the God-appointed Person to take sinners into the kingdom of God!

(b) “*Christ*” is the Greek form for “*Messiah*” (Hebrew), and “*Messiah*” means “*Anointed One*”. Throughout the Old Testament, there were promises of the coming Anointed One who will powerfully deliver God’s people. By calling *Jesus* “*Christ*”, *Matthew* is declaring to his readers that *Jesus* is the One they have waited for all these years!

(c) *Jesus* the Christ is also called “*the son of David*”. What is the significance of this?

(d) Besides “*the son of David*”, *Jesus* is also called “*the son of Abraham*”. What is the significance of this?

2. In **verse 17**, *Matthew* informed us that he deliberately arranged the genealogy into 3 groups of 14 generations:

The first group -- from *Abraham* to *David* (**verses 2-6**)

The second group -- from *David* to the exile (**verses 7-11**)

The third group -- from the exile to *Jesus* (**verses 12-16**)

In simple words, not every descendant in the family tree is included in this list!

(a) *Ahaz* (**verse 9**) was listed in the genealogy. What is the significance of this?

(b) Four women: *Tamar* (**verse 3**), *Rahab* (**verse 5**), *Ruth* (**verse 5**) and *the wife of Uriah* (**verse 6**) were listed in the genealogy.

What is the significance of including these four persons here?

3. Why do you think *Matthew* began his gospel with a genealogy?

**1:18-25**

4. Is *Jesus* the son of *Joseph*?
  
5. How did *Jesus* fulfill **ISAIAH 7:14**?
  
6. How can you use these 8 verses to explain to an unbeliever that *Jesus* is both God and man?
  
7. How should **MATTHEW 1:21** shape the way you read the rest of this gospel?
  
8. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 1** during your 10 minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> August 2017](#)] you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 2**.

You may use Questions 1-5 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 2**, or you can go straight to Question 6 after reading the text.

1. We are told in **verse 1** that wise men came to Jerusalem to look for *Jesus*.
  - (a) How many wise men were there?
  
  - (b) Where did they come from?
  
  - (c) Why did they come?

- (d) What gifts did they bring? Do you think there is any significance in the gifts they brought? Elaborate.
- (e) How did they finally manage to locate *Jesus*, and where did they find Him?
- (f) What were their reactions upon finding *Jesus*?
- (g) Why did they depart for their own country by another way?
- (h) What is *Matthew's* purpose in including this wise-men episode in his gospel?
2. We read in **verse 3** that *Herod* and all Jerusalem were troubled. The word "*troubled*" actually means "*deeply disturbed and terrified*". What is/are the reason(s) for them to be so troubled?
3. The chief priests and the scribes were able to refer to **MICAH 5:2** and told *Herod* and the wise men that the King of the Jews will be born in Bethlehem.
- (a) What is the significance that *Jesus* will be born in Bethlehem?
- (b) Although the chief priests and scribes could refer to **MICAH 5:2** and provide the answer regarding the birthplace of *Jesus*, yet they did not go with the wise men to look for the King of the Jews. What does their inaction tell us about them?

4. From **verses 13-23**, *Matthew* tells us that three specific events in the life of *Jesus* fulfilled Old Testament prophecies.

(a) The flight into Egypt (**verses 13-15**) fulfilled the prophecy of **HOSEA 11:1**. How?

(b) The massacre of the male toddlers in Bethlehem fulfilled the prophecy of **JEREMIAH 31:15**. How?

(c) *Jesus* living in Nazareth was said to fulfill the prophecy that “*He shall be called a Nazarene*”.

Where is this prophecy found in the Old Testament?

In **ISAIAH 11:1**, the prophet *Isaiah* said, “*There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*” This is a prophecy concerning the coming Messiah *Jesus*, and in this verse, He is called a Branch (*netser*). The message is to convey the very humble and nearly extinguished origins from which He comes.

In **ISAIAH 53:3**, the prophet *Isaiah* said concerning the coming Messiah *Jesus*, “*He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*” One of the reasons for Him being despised was the fact that He came from Nazareth --- a very small and insignificant village, so insignificant that we have on record the sneer of Nathanael, “*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*”

So the fact that *Jesus* is called a Nazarene conveys the fact that people in general despised Him, and it could also be a play on the word “*netser*” and Nazareth.

(d) What was *Matthew's* purpose in pointing out how the life of *Jesus* fulfills Old Testament prophecies?

5. Various characters mentioned in **MATTHEW 2** (*wise men, Herod, chief priests and scribes*) had different responses to *Jesus*.

Whose response mirrors yours? Why?

6. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 2** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 3**.

You may use Questions 1-4 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 3**, or you can go straight to Questions 5 & 6 after reading the text.

When we turn the page from **MATTHEW 2** to **MATTHEW 3**, note that almost 30 years have passed --- in **MATTHEW 2** *Jesus* was a child, and now in **MATTHEW 3** He is an adult!

**MATTHEW 3** can easily be seen to have two parts. In **verses 1-12**, the focus is on *John the Baptist* while the spotlight shifts to *Jesus* in **verses 13-17**.

### **3:1-12**

1. The following 3 things can be said about *John the Baptist*:
  - (a) He is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (**verse 3**)
  - (b) **Verse 4:**
  - (c) **Verse 11b:**

2. The ministry of *John the Baptist* consists of preaching and baptizing.

### Preaching

His message can be summed up with these words – “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” (**Verse 2**)

- (a) According to **verse 6b**, what does it mean to repent?
  
- (b) According to **verses 8-11**, how do we know if the repentance is genuine?
  
- (c) What is the relation between “*repent*” and “*the kingdom of heaven is at hand*”? (**Verses 7, 12**)
  
- (d) According to **verse 6**, the Jews who repented were baptized. What is baptism and what is its relation to repentance?
  
- (e) What does it mean that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (**verse 11**)?

### 3:13-17

3. According to **verse 11**, *John's* baptism was a baptism of water unto repentance. Here in **verse 13**, we read of *Jesus* coming to be baptized.

If *Jesus* is sinless, then why must He undergo this baptism? *Jesus'* own explanation can be found in **verse 15**.

What do these words mean?



4. At the baptism of *Jesus*, we see the Trinity. How?

Note: **Verse 17** underlined the fact that *Jesus* is God's beloved Son. This is a clear allusion to **PSALM 2:7** and **ISAIAH 42:1**.

Personal Application

5. (a) **MATTHEW 3** talks about repentance. Have I repented, and how can I know if my repentance is genuine?

(b) **MATTHEW 3** talks about baptism. Have I been baptized? What does it mean if I have not?

(c) **MATTHEW 3** presents the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity can be stated as follows:

There is one God.

This one God exists as Three Persons: Father, Son and Spirit.

The Father is God.

The Son is God.

The Spirit is God.

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father.

Not three Gods, but One.

Do I believe in the doctrine of the Trinity? Elaborate.

6. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 3** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 4.**

You may use Questions 1-4 and 6-9 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 4**, or you can go straight to Questions 5 & 10 after reading the text.

### **4:1-11**

These 11 verses narrate the temptations of *Jesus* our Lord. Before we move into a more detailed consideration of this passage, let us first note the place it occupies in redemptive history:

- There was *Adam* in the Garden of Eden, tempted by the devil to eat the forbidden fruit. He gave in to the temptation and fell into sin. Here is *Jesus* the Last Adam (**I CORINTHIANS 15:45**) in the wilderness, and his first temptation concerned food as well. He resisted the devil and triumphed!
- There was *Israel* (called the son of God in **EXODUS 4:22**) after leaving Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, and in the wilderness. They doubted God's goodness and provision when they faced what they believed was a food crisis. As a result, they murmured and rebelled against their God. Here is *Jesus* the True Israel and the obedient Son of God. After His baptism, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Hungry after 40 days of fasting, the devil asked Him to turn the stones into bread and fill His stomach. Quoting the Word of God, He resisted the devil and triumphed!

These 11 verses thus show us how *Jesus* our Lord began to undo the curse of sin by triumphing over the devil in His temptations. He completed His triumph over the devil by finally giving Himself at the cross and redeeming sinners from their bondage. The victory of *Jesus* here in **MATTHEW 4:1-11** is both the basis and example for our victory in temptation.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Temptation (Verses 1-4)**

Where? *In the wilderness*  
When? *After He had fasted forty days and night*  
Who? *The devil came to tempt Jesus*  
What? *"If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

*Jesus* was hungry. This shows that He is human. Being hungry and desiring food is not sin. So when the devil asked *Jesus* to produce bread to satisfy His needs, it is not sin. So where is the problem?

Look more closely at the words of temptation uttered by the devil. The first part ("*If You are the Son of God*") seeks to sow doubt in the mind of *Jesus* and create an estrangement between the Father and the Son: *If You are indeed His Son, then why are You here suffering hunger in this wilderness? Why is He not providing for You? Does He care?*

In short, the devil is telling *Jesus* not to wait for God anymore, but use His own power to meet His own (legitimate) needs now.

1. In reply, *Jesus* quoted from **DEUTERONOMY 8:3**, saying that “*man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”

How is this reply of *Jesus* an answer to the devil’s temptation?

[*You may want to read DEUTERONOMY 8:2-3 to help you with your answer*]

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Temptation (Verses 5-7)

Where?

When? *After the first temptation*

Who? *The devil took Jesus there*

What? *“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: . . . (quoting PSALM 91:11-12)”*

2. (a) What is the message of **PSALM 91:11-12**?
  
- (b) What is the significance of the devil quoting **PSALM 91:11-12** in this temptation?
  
3. (a) In reply to the devil’s temptation, *Jesus* quoted from **DEUTERONOMY 6:16**. How is this verse an answer to the devilish seduction of Satan?
  
- (b) So what is the second temptation about?

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Temptation (Verses 8-10)

Where?  
When?  
Who?  
What?

4. A Bible commentator summarized this third temptation and Christ's rejection of it in this way:

*Jesus refused to exchange the end-time exaltation by the Father for a right-now exaltation of a snake*

Do you agree? Elaborate.

5. What have you learnt from **MATTHEW 4:1-11**?

### 4:12-25

6. The ministry of *Jesus* in Galilee is said by *Matthew* to be a fulfillment of the prophecy of *Isaiah* (**verses 12-16**). What is the significance of this?
7. What message did *Jesus* preach (**verse 17**)?
8. *Jesus* called *Simon, Andrew, James* and *John* to follow Him (**verses 18-22**).
- (a) What does it mean to follow *Jesus*?

(b) When these men follow *Jesus*, He will make them “*fishers of men*”. What does this mean?

(c) What was the response of these men to the call of *Jesus*?

(d) Is *Jesus* issuing the same call to you today? If yes, what is your response? If no, why do you think so?

9. The ministry of *Jesus* in Galilee consists of teaching/preaching and healing. We are told that His fame spread throughout all Syria (**verse 24**) and great multitudes followed Him (**verse 25**). Locate the places mentioned in **verse 25** in the map below:



**Verse 25** indicates the growing popularity of *Jesus*. Will it last? We shall soon find out!

10. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 4** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For the next three weeks [[27<sup>th</sup> August - 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in [MATTHEW 5-7](#).

For this week [[27<sup>th</sup> August - 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017](#)], we shall focus on **MATTHEW 5**. It is recommended that you attempt to answer Questions 1-4.

**MATTHEW 5-7** records what we normally call "*the sermon on the Mount*" by our Lord *Jesus*. A Bible teacher referred to it as "*the nearest thing to a manifesto that [Jesus] ever uttered, for it is his own description of what he wanted his followers to be and do.*"

There is a danger in reading this "*sermon on the Mount*" and mistakenly think that this is what God wants us to be and do, before He will accept us. Instead, we should remember the context of the sermon – it is flanked by the pronouncement that *Jesus* will save His people from their sins (**MATTHEW 1**) and the narration that *Jesus* died on the cross for His people (**MATTHEW 26-28**). Hence, this "*sermon on the Mount*" is not teaching us about how we can gain acceptance with God, but rather what it means to be a citizen in God's kingdom!

In **EXODUS**, after delivering Israel from the house of bondage in Egypt, *Moses* brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai, went up to the mountain and received God's law for Israel. There, Israel was constituted as a kingdom with God as their king. In **MATTHEW 5:1**, we read that *Jesus* went up to the mountain! The words were deliberately put in this way to mirror *Moses'* ascent to Mount Sinai. Here is the new Lawgiver and He is going to tell God's New Covenant people how they should live as members of His kingdom.

1. **MATTHEW 5:3-12** is a description of what a Christian looks like.
  - (a) Using these 10 verses but putting it in your own words, what does a Christian look like?

(b) Do you think you fit the description found here, and would your RTBT group members agree with your answer?

2. **MATTHEW 5:13-16** list two identities of the Christian.

(a) What are they, and what do they mean?

(b) Assuming you are a Christian, what two concrete steps can you take to live out these two identities?

3. **MATTHEW 5:17-20** are said to be the interpretive key to the entire sermon. What is the message of these 4 verses?

4. In **MATTHEW 5:21-48**, *Jesus* debunks popular but wrong views of the Old Testament Laws given by God and then underlines their true meaning. By doing so, He is affirming that the Old Testament Laws remain applicable to Christians today.

In these 28 verses, 6 topics were covered: *murder, adultery, marriage, oaths, retribution* and *loving your enemies*.

Pick one area and share with your RTBT group members your understanding of it, and the challenges you face in seeking to obey Christ's teachings about it.

*[It would be good to ensure that others in your RTBT group will pick and share about a different area]*

For these three weeks [[27<sup>th</sup> August – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], you are reading GOD'S WORD in [MATTHEW 5-7](#).

For this week [[3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], we shall focus on **MATTHEW 6**.

It is recommended that you attempt to answer Questions 1-2,  
and strongly encouraged to carry out Question 3

during your RTBT group discussion time on [10<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)

1. In **MATTHEW 6:1-18**, *Jesus* turns our attention to how Christians should approach religious duties.

What is His message, and what challenges do you face in seeking to obey His teaching?

2. In **MATTHEW 6:19-34**, *Jesus* addresses the issue of covetousness.

What is His message, and what challenges do you face in seeking to obey His teaching?

3. After sharing about the challenges you face in seeking to obey the Lord's teaching in **MATTHEW 6**, and hearing what your fellow RTBT group members have shared, take time to pray for one another.



For these three weeks [[27<sup>th</sup> August – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], you are reading GOD'S  
WORD in [MATTHEW 5-7](#).

For this week [[10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], we shall focus on **MATTHEW 7**.  
It is recommended that you attempt to answer Questions 1-4.

1. What is the message of **MATTHEW 7:1-12** and how should your life change in response to this message?

Note: The “*therefore*” in **verse 12** appears to be a summary statement of this section

2. **MATTHEW 7:13-14** is a warning.

(a) What is it?

(b) How is this warning relevant to you? Elaborate.

3. **MATTHEW 7:15-23** is another warning.

(a) What is it?

(b) How should your life change in light of this warning?

4. In **MATTHEW 7:24-27**, *Jesus* gives His summary of this sermon. What is His point and how should you adjust your life to heed His point?

[To study **MATTHEW 5-7** in greater depth,  
read *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* by Martyn Lloyd-Jones]

For these two weeks [[17<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD  
in [MATTHEW 8:1 & 9:34](#).

For this week [[17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017](#)], we shall focus on **MATTHEW 8:1-22**.  
It is recommended that you attempt to answer Questions 1-6.

**MATTHEW 8:1-9:34** stand together as one unit, demonstrating *the authority of Jesus*. A simple outline of these two chapters is as follows:

Three Miracle Stories (**8:1-17**)

Two Descriptions of Discipleship (**8:18-22**)

Three Miracle Stories (**8:23-9:8**)

Two Descriptions of Discipleship (**9:9-17**)

Three Miracle Stories (**9:18-34**)

Three Miracle Stories (**8:1-17**)

1. **8:1-4** narrate the healing of a leper.

(a) While the leper does not doubt the ability of *Jesus* to heal him, he is unsure if *Jesus* would be willing to do so. Why?

(b) How should we understand the instructions of *Jesus* in **verse 4**?

(c) How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*?

2. **8:5-13** narrate the healing of the centurion's servant.
  - (a) What impressed *Jesus* concerning this centurion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*?
  
3. **8:14-15** narrate the healing of *Peter's* mother-in-law. How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In **8:16-17**, *Matthew* states that all these healings are a fulfillment of **ISAIAH 53:4**. Is *Matthew* teaching that Christians won't have to endure sickness in this world anymore, since *Jesus* has borne our infirmities and sicknesses on the cross? Elaborate.

[*Make sure you read ISAIAH 53:1-6 to help you formulate your answer*]

5. How does *the authority of Jesus* (demonstrated through the three miracles above) help you trust God and His promise in *Jesus* this week?

#### Two Descriptions of Discipleship (8:18-22)

6. (a) The first person who wanted to follow *Jesus* had to learn that *Jesus is worthy of unconditional trust*. How can we see this from **verses 18-20**?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- (b) How can you demonstrate this lesson in your life this week?

7. (a) The second would-be disciple of *Jesus* had to learn that *Jesus is worthy of undivided attention*. How can we see this from **verses 21-22**?
- (b) Describe one concrete step you can take to demonstrate this lesson in your life this week:

For these two weeks [[17<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in [MATTHEW 8:1 & 9:34](#).

For this week [[24<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017](#)], we shall focus on **MATTHEW 8:23-9:34**. It is recommended that you attempt to answer Questions 1-9.

Review the simple outline of **MATTHEW 8:1-9:34** on page 18. Recall that the entire passage seeks to demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*.

#### Three Miracle Stories (8:23-9:8)

1. **8:23-27** narrate the calming of the storm. How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*, and how should that change the way you live?
2. **8:28-34** narrate the healing of two demon-possessed men. How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*, and what relevance does this have to your life?
3. **9:1-8** narrate the healing of a paralytic. How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*, and how should that change the way you live?

### Two Descriptions of Discipleship (9:9-17)

4. **9:9-13** narrate how *Matthew* was called to be a disciple of Jesus.

(a) What does this account teach us concerning *Jesus*?

(b) What must *Matthew* do in order to be His disciple? Recall how *Simon, Andrew, James* and *John* became the disciples of *Jesus* – what are the similarities and differences?

(c) How should **verses 12-13** shape our church life?

5. *Fasting* is the issue in view in **9:14-17**. What is *fasting* and according to these 4 verses, will/should Christian disciples *fast*?

### Three Miracle Stories (9:18-34)

6. In **9:18-26** we read of two healings performed by *Jesus*. What are they, and how do these miracles demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*?

7. **9:27-31** narrate the healing of two blind men. How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*?

8. **9:32-34** narrate the healing of a mute man. How does this miracle story demonstrate *the authority of Jesus*?

9. How does *the authority of Jesus* (narrated in **9:18-34**) help you trust God and His promise in Jesus this week?

For this week [[1st – 7th October 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD’S WORD in  
**MATTHEW 9:35 – 10:42.**

You may use Questions 1-6 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 9:35 – 10:42**, or you can go straight to Questions 7 & 8 after reading the text.

1. Why was *Jesus* moved with compassion? (**9:36**)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. *Jesus* said in **9:37** that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.
  - (a) Since this is so, what did *Jesus* want His disciples to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) Have we been obeying *Jesus* in this matter, and if not, what change must we make?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **MATTHEW 10:1-5** can be seen as His answer to the prayer of His disciples! His disciples are to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. In response, He now calls these twelve men to be His apostles, gave them His authority (**10:1**) and sent them out (**10:6**)!
  - (a) What should these sent men be doing? (**Verses 5b-8d**), and how should they carry out their work? (**Verses 8e-10**)

(b) What can they expect as they carry out this work?

- **Verses 11-15**
  
- **Verses 16-18**
  
- **Verses 19-20**
  
- **Verses 21-23**
  
- **Verses 24-25**

(c) *Jesus* zeroed in on one particular temptation that these sent men will have to face, as they carry out this work – **fear (verses 26-32)**

What did *Jesus* want them to do in the face of **fear**, and what assurance did He give them?

4. What is the message of **10:34-39**, and how is it related to the matter of *Jesus* sending these men into the harvest field?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is the message of **10:40-42**, and how is it related to the matter of *Jesus* sending these men into the harvest field?

6. In its immediate context, *Jesus* was commissioning the twelve men mentioned in **10:2-4** as His apostles, and sending them out as His authorized representatives. These twelve men occupied a very special position in the Christian Church as Apostles of Christ. None of us belong to this special category of Christ's servants today.

Since this is so, is **MATTHEW 10** relevant to us today? Most definitely! Although we are not His Apostles, we are His disciples, and He does send us – *the church* -- out to preach His gospel (see **MATTHEW 28:18-20**).

What principles from **MATTHEW 10** (Q3-5 above) are relevant to the church today, and why do you think so? Elaborate.

7. How does **MATTHEW 9:35-10:42** call you to change the way you live?
8. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 9:35-10:42** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 11**.

You may use Questions 1-9 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 11** or you can go straight to Question 10 after reading the text.

1. (a) Is doubt the same as unbelief? If not, what's the difference between the two?
- (b) In **MATTHEW 11:1-9**, we find *John the Baptist* having doubts about *Jesus*. Why do you think the man who baptized Jesus and said that he is not worthy to untie the sandals of *Jesus* is now having doubts about Him?



- (c) Do you also find yourself doubting *Jesus* sometimes? Are your reasons the same as *John's*? Elaborate.
2. A significant thing *John* did concerning his doubts was to seek answers from the One he doubted! How did Jesus address his doubts?
- **Verses 4-5**
  
  
  - **Verse 6**
3. After *John's* disciples have departed, *Jesus* made an astounding statement about *John*. What was it and how should we understand it?
4. After His astounding statement about *John*, *Jesus* made an even more astounding statement about us! What was it and why is it astounding?
5. What is the message conveyed by **verses 16-19**, and how is it relevant to you?
6. Why did *Jesus* compare the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida with Tyre and Sidon, and rebuke them, and what is the significance of this to you?

7. (a) Why did *Jesus* single out Capernaum, compare it to Sodom and Gomorrah, and then rebuke it?
- (b) How is this message applicable to you?
8. In what way(s) do **verses 25-27** challenge (or confirm) your understanding of *Jesus*?
9. Read the following extract from J. C. Ryle's Expository Thoughts on Matthew (**verses 28-30**):

**Mark who they are that Jesus invites.** He does not address those who feel themselves righteous and worthy. He addresses "all you who labor and are heavily burdened." It is a wide description. It comprises multitudes in this weary world. All who feel a load on their heart, of which they would sincerely get free, a load of sin or a load of sorrow, a load of anxiety or a load of remorse--all, whoever they may be, and whatever their past lives--all such are invited to come to Christ.

**Mark what a gracious offer Jesus makes.** "I will give you rest. You will find rest for your souls." How cheering and comfortable are these words! Unrest is one great characteristic of the world. Hurry, vexation, failure, disappointment, stare us in the face on every side. But here is hope. There is an ark of refuge for the weary, as truly as there was for Noah's dove. There is rest in Christ, rest of conscience, and rest of heart, rest built on pardon of all sin, rest flowing from peace with God.

**Mark what a simple request Jesus makes to the laboring and heavy-laden ones.** "Come to me--Take my yoke upon you, learn from me." He interposes no hard conditions. He speaks nothing of works to be done first, and deservingness of His gifts to be established. He only asks us to come to Him just as we are, with all our sins, and to submit ourselves like little children to His teaching. "Go not," He seems to say, "to man for relief. Wait not for help to arise from any other quarter. Just as you are, this very day, come to me."

**Mark what an encouraging account Jesus gives of Himself.** He says, "I am gentle and lowly of heart." How true that is, the experience of all the saints of God has often proved. Mary and Martha at Bethany, Peter after his fall, the disciples after the resurrection, Thomas after his cold unbelief, all tasted the "meekness and gentleness of Christ." It is the only place in Scripture where the "heart" of Christ is actually named. It is a saying never to be forgotten.

**Mark, lastly, the encouraging account that Jesus gives of His service.** He says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." No doubt there is a cross to be carried, if we follow Christ. No doubt there are trials to be endured, and battles to be fought. But the comforts of the Gospel far outweigh the cross. Compared to the service of the world and sin, compared to the yoke of Jewish ceremonies, and the bondage of human superstition, Christ's service is in the highest sense easy and light. His yoke is no more a burden than the feathers are to a bird. His commandments are not grievous. His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. (1 John 5:3. Prov. 3:17.)

And now comes the solemn inquiry--Have we accepted this invitation for ourselves? Have we no sins to be forgiven, no griefs to be removed, no wounds of conscience to be healed? If we have, let us hear Christ's voice. He speaks to us as well as to the Jews. He says, "Come to me." Here is the key to true happiness. Here is the secret of having a happy heart. All turns and hinges on an acceptance of this offer of Christ.

May we never be satisfied until we know and feel that we have come to Christ by faith for rest, and do still come to Him for fresh supplies of grace every day! If we have come to Him already, let us learn to cleave to Him more closely. If we have never come to Him yet, let us begin to come today. His word shall never be broken--"Him that comes unto me, I will in nowise cast out." (John 6:37.)

J.C. Ryle asked if we have accepted this invitation for ourselves. What is your reply? Elaborate.

10. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 11** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 12**.

You may use Questions 1-5 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 12** or you can go straight to Question 6 after reading the text.

1. In **verse 14**, the Pharisees plotted how they might destroy *Jesus*. Why would they embark on such a drastic course of action?
  
2. In **verse 24**, the Pharisees accused *Jesus* of using demonic powers to heal the demon-possessed, blind and mute man.
  - (a) What was the reply of *Jesus* to this accusation (**verses 25-30**) and what can you learn from His reply?
  
  - (b) What specific warning did *Jesus* give the Pharisees? (**Verses 31-32**)
  
  - (c) What is the message of **verses 33-37**, how is it connected to the entire episode (**verses 22-37**), and how is it relevant to you?
  
3. Some scribes and Pharisees demanded a sign from *Jesus* (**verse 38**), and *Jesus* pointed them to the sign of *Jonah*. What is it?
  
4. What is the message of **verses 43-45**, and how should you take heed of it?

5. *Jesus* said that whoever does the will of His Father in heaven is His brother and sister and mother (**verses 49**). What does this mean?
  
6. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 12** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017](#)],  
you will be reading GOD'S WORD in [MATTHEW 13:1-52](#).

**MATTHEW 13** is the third major teaching section of this Gospel, and here we notice a shift in the public ministry of *Jesus*. He started to speak in parables!

What is a parable? One simple explanation is that a parable is a practical story, often framed as a simile (a comparison using “like” or “as”) that illustrates spiritual truth.

In **MATTHEW 13:1-52**, *Jesus* spoke a total of 8 parables, and we note that these parables are meant to convey truths about “*the kingdom of heaven*”. What is the kingdom of heaven? It is the redemptive rule of God in Christ. This kingdom is already a present reality, for the King has come! At the same time, it has a future realization, for the King will leave and come back one day, to bring His kingdom to a final point of consummation!

1. According to **verses 10-17**, why did *Jesus* speak in parables?
  
2. What can we learn concerning the kingdom of heaven from . . .
  - (a) The parable of the sower
  
  - (b) The parable of the weeds

(c) The parable of the net

(d) The parable of the mustard seed

(e) The parable of the yeast

(f) The parable of the treasure

(g) The parable of the pearl

(h) The parable of the scribe

3. What is the most important lesson you have learnt about the kingdom of heaven from **MATTHEW 13:1-52**, and how has it changed your life? Share it during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion.

For this week [[29<sup>th</sup> October – 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD  
in [MATTHEW 13:53-14:36](#).

You may use Questions 1-3 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 13:53-14:36** or you can go straight to Question 4 after reading the text.

1. In **MATTHEW 13:57** we read: "*So they were offended at Him.*"
  - (a) Who were these people who were offended at *Jesus*, and why were they offended?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) Recall the Parable of the sower (**verses 3-8**). Which kind of soil would these people belong to?
  
2. In **MATTHEW 14:1-12**, we read that *Herod* beheaded *John the Baptist*. Read the following extract from J. C. Ryle's Expository Thoughts on this passage:

**Let us learn, in the first place, from these verses, the great power of conscience.** King Herod hears of "the fame of Jesus," and says to his servants, "This is John the Baptist — he is risen from the dead." He remembered his own wicked dealings with that holy man, and his heart failed within him. His heart told him that he had despised his godly counsel, and committed a foul and abominable murder. And his heart told him, that though he had killed John, there would yet be a reckoning day. He and John the Baptist would yet meet again. Well says Bishop Hall, "a wicked man needs no other tormentor, especially for sins of blood, than his own heart."

There is a conscience in all men by nature. Let this never be forgotten. Fallen, lost, desperately wicked as we are all born into the world, God has taken care to leave Himself a witness in our bosoms. It is a poor blind guide, without the Holy Spirit. It can save no one. It leads no one to Christ. It may be seared and trampled under foot. But there is such a thing as conscience in every man, accusing or excusing him; and Scripture and experience alike declare it. (Rom. 2:15.)

Conscience can make even kings miserable, when they have wilfully rejected its advice. It can fill the princes of this world with fear and trembling, as it did Felix, when Paul preached. They find it easier to imprison and behead the preacher, than to bind his sermon, and silence the voice of his reproof in their

own hearts. God's witnesses may be put out of the way, but their testimony often lives and works on, long after they are dead. God's prophets live not forever, but their words often survive them. (2 Tim. 2:9. Zechariah . 1:5.)

Let the thoughtless and ungodly remember this, and not sin against their consciences. Let them know that their sins will "surely find them out." They may laugh, and jest, and mock at religion for a little time. They may cry, "Who is afraid? What is the mighty harm of our ways?" They may depend upon it, they are sowing misery for themselves, and will reap a bitter crop sooner or later. Their wickedness will overtake them one day. They will find, like Herod, that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. (Jeremiah 2:19.)

Let ministers and teachers remember that there is a conscience in men, and work on boldly. Instruction is not always thrown away, because it seems to bear no fruit at the time it is given. Teaching is not always in vain, though we fancy that it is unheeded, wasted, and forgotten. There is a conscience in the hearers of sermons. There is a conscience in the children at our schools. Many a sermon and lesson will yet rise again, when he who preached or taught it is lying, like John the Baptist, in the grave. Thousands know that we are right, and, like Herod, dare not confess it.

**Let us learn, in the second place, that God's children must not look for their reward in this world.** If ever there was a case of godliness unrewarded in this life, it was that of John the Baptist. Think for a moment what a man he was during his short career, and then think to what an end he came. Behold him, that was the Prophet of the Highest, and greater than any born of woman, imprisoned like a malefactor! Behold him cut off by a violent death, before the age of thirty-four — the burning light quenched — the faithful preacher murdered for doing his duty — and this to gratify the hatred of an adulterous woman, and at the command of a capricious tyrant! Truly there was an event here, if there ever was one in the world, which might make an ignorant man say, "What profit is it to serve God?"

But these are the sort of things which show us, that there will one day be a judgment. The God of the spirits of all flesh shall at last set up an assize, and reward every one according to his works. The blood of John the Baptist, and James the apostle, and Stephen — the blood of Polycarp, and Huss, and Ridley, and Latimer, shall yet be required. It is all written in God's book. "The earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain." (Isaiah 26:21.) The world shall yet know, that there is a God who judges the earth. "If you see the oppression of the poor, and violent taking away of justice and righteousness in a district, don't marvel at the matter — for one official is eyed by a higher one, and there are officials over them." (Eccles. 5:8.)

Let all true Christians remember, that their best things are yet to come. Let us count it no strange thing, if we have sufferings in this present time. It is a



season of probation. We are yet at school. We are learning patience, gentleness, and meekness, which we could hardly learn if we had our good things now. But there is an eternal holiday yet to begin. For this let us wait quietly. It will make amends for all. "Our light affliction which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4:17.)

(a) What have you learnt from the extract?

(b) Why did *Matthew* include this episode of *John's beheading* right after the episode of *Jesus' rejection* at Nazareth?

3. In **MATTHEW 14:13-33**, *Matthew* included two accounts of miracles performed by *Jesus*: *He fed the five thousand* (**verses 13-21**) and *He walked on water* (**verses 22-33**). These two accounts depict *faith* and *worship*, and they stand in sharp contrast to the earlier two episodes of unbelief and rejection.

(a) What can we learn about (i) *Jesus*, and (ii) faith in *Jesus*, from the account of *Jesus feeding five thousand*?

(b) What can we learn about (i) *Jesus*, and (ii) faith in *Jesus*, from the account of *Jesus walking on water*?

4. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 13:53-14:36** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**MATTHEW 15.**

You may use Questions 1-4 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 15** or  
you can go straight to Question 5 after reading the text.

1. Which tradition of the elders had the disciples of *Jesus* transgressed? (**Verses 1-2**)
  
2. According to *Jesus* . . .
  - (a) When do traditions of men become wrong? (**Verses 3-9**)
  
  - (b) When does worship become vain? (**Verses 8-9**)
  
  - (c) What constitutes true moral defilement? (**Verses 11,16-20**)
  
3. What is the overall message of **MATTHEW 15:1-20**, and how should your life change in light of this message?
  
4. **Verse 21** states that "*Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon*" so we know that the healing of the Canaanite women's girl (**verses 22-28**) took place outside of Judah & Galilee (Jewish land).

Although the words of **verse 29** is rather vague (*Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there*), we can safely assume that the healing of the mute, maimed, lame and blind (**verses 29-31**), as

well as the feeding of the four thousand (**verses 32-30**) also took place outside of Judah & Galilee (Jewish land)!

(a) What is the significance of *Jesus* healing the daughter of the Canaanite woman?

(b) Why is it significant that **verses 29-31** took place in Gentile land?

(c) What is the significance of *Jesus* feeding four thousand Gentiles with seven loaves and a few fishes?

5. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 15** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 16**.

You may use Questions 1-5 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 16** or you can go straight to Questions 6 & 7 after reading the text.

1. From **15:39**, we know that *Jesus* came to the region of Magdala. In other words, He is back in Jewish territory. The first group of people to meet Him were the Pharisees and the Sadducees (**16:1**)

(a) Take some time to find out some facts about . . .

The Pharisees:

## The Sadducees:

- (b) Despite the differences they may have with each other, they were united in their opposition to *Jesus*. Hence they came to test Him, demanding that He show them a sign from heaven.

What was the reply of *Jesus* to their demand, and what lessons can we learn from it?

- 2. (a) Why did *Jesus* rebuke the disciples for having little faith in **verse 8**?

- (b) How can “*little faith*” be changed to “*big faith*”?

- 3. (a) Who did *Peter* confess *Jesus* to be? (**Verse 16**)

- (b) How did *Peter* gain this insight into the identity of *Jesus*?

- (c) What did *Jesus* say He would build and upon what would it be built? (**Verse 18**)

- (d) What is “*the keys of the kingdom*”? (**Verse 19**)

- (e) Why did *Jesus* forbid His disciples from telling others His real identity? (**Verse 20**)
4. (a) What will happen to *Jesus* in the coming days? (**Verse 21**)
- (b) Why was *Peter* upset and unable to accept what *Jesus* said in **verse 21**?
- (c) Why was *Jesus* so strong in his rebuke of *Peter* **verse 23**?
5. (a) What must one do to follow *Jesus*? (**Verses 24-26**)
- (b) What is the reward mentioned in **verse 27**?
- (c) What is the meaning of **verse 28**?
6. (a) Have you made the confession stated in **verse 16**? If not, why not?
- (b) Have you denied yourself, taken up your cross, and followed *Jesus* (**verse 24**)? If not, why not?

7. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 16** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **MATTHEW 17**.

You may use Questions 1-4 as an aid in reading and understanding **MATTHEW 17** or you can go straight to Question 5 after reading the text.

1. The central figure of the transfiguration event (**verses 1-13**) is *Jesus*.

In **verse 3**, we read that *Moses* and *Elijah* appeared and talked with *Jesus*. *Moses* represents the law of God while *Elijah* represents the prophets. The former reflects God's glory while the latter proclaims God's glory.

Standing between these two men is *Jesus*. The first thing we can learn about *Jesus* from this transfiguration event is that He is the glory of God (**verse 2** cf. **JOHN 1:14b-d, HEBREWS 1:3a-b**).

- (a) What else can we learn about *Jesus* from this event?

**Verse 5:**

**Verses 11-13:**

- (b) What does "*Hear Him*" (**verse 5**) mean to you?

2. (a) Why did the disciples fail to heal the epileptic (**verse 20**)?

- (b) According to *Jesus*, how serious is this failure? (**Verse 17**)
- (c) What steps can we take to avoid committing this serious failure like the disciples?
3. The words of *Jesus* in **verses 22-23** are the second major prediction of His suffering and death (cf. **16:21-23**).
- (a) Why do you think *Jesus* repeated this prediction?
- (b) How can (i) you, and (ii) Shalom Church reflect this emphasis of *Jesus* in your personal life/our corporate life?
4. What was *Jesus*' attitude toward the political powers of His day (**verses 24-27**), and how should it impact how we live as Christians in Singapore today?
5. Share one lesson you have learnt from **MATTHEW 17** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

### **Acknowledgement**

Whatever the weaknesses of this Read-The-Bible-Together guide, they would have been far greater without the kind help of brother Andrew PANG and sister Sarah SOH. They gave their time and energy to review the entire guide, asking questions all the way and giving many valuable suggestions. Thank you!

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another!* (Proverbs 27:17, ESV)

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Questions or comments concerning this RTBT guide?  
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