

This week's reading:

January 22: Matthew 16 – 19

January 23: Matthew 20 – 22

January 24: Matthew 23 – 26

January 25: Matthew 27 – 28

January 26: Exodus 1 – 4

January 27: Exodus 5 – 7

January 28: Exodus 8 – 10

January 29: Exodus 11 – 13

Summary:

January 22: Matthew 16 – 19

Matthew 16 has the religious leaders attempting (failing) to trap Jesus; which is a low point. But we also see Peter's confession of Christ, which is a high point and leads to Jesus directly teaching about His death and Peter's rebuke; which is a low point. **(Note:** The declaration of Peter is what the church is built upon; the confession of Christ. Peter was never the cornerstone, his confession was.)

Matthew 17 depicts the Transfiguration of Jesus and more demonstration of divine power and teaching. **(Note:** The appearance of Moses & Elijah as the 2 Old Testament types (deliverers) continues Matthew's theme of connecting Jesus and His ministry to the Old Testament and the continuing work of God. Also see the providence of God, and knowledge of Jesus, in paying the tax.)

Matthew 18 begins a teaching section of the Gospel wherein Jesus teaches about: discipleship, spiritual disciplines, and Kingdom living. **(Note:** Connect to the previous chapter: the littleness of faith of the disciples was insufficient for them to heal, but it was sufficient for God to act. Jesus is pointing to a simple, open coming to Him; as a child would. It is a message that calls for rejection of the world and her standard, and reception of God and His standard.)

Matthew 19 continues the discourse and expounds on personal relationships in light of divine relationship. **(Note:** Jesus connects marriage to the Old Testament and the creation by God. When the world wonders why we cling to the definition and function of marriage; it is because marriage is grounded in the Creation order and ordained by God.)

January 23: Matthew 20 – 22

Matthew 20 contains teaching on the Kingdom of heaven by way of comparison. You have Jesus again explicitly teaching about His death & resurrection, and the disciples not getting it. **(Note:** As with the parable of the workers, John & James' mother has misunderstood the reward of the Kingdom. It is not prestige, but holiness that is granted by God.)

Matthew 21 is the Triumphal Entry and all it entails: shouting Hosanna's, cleansing the Temple, questions from the elite, and Jesus teaching in the Temple. **(Note:** This is the 2nd Temple cleansing; the first being in the beginning of John. Pay attention to the result of Jesus' works and the response of the leadership; Jesus is attacking the false system of the day and those who are its outcasts are rejoicing.)

Matthew 22 continues this Temple teaching, as Jesus answers every challenge and

confounds all the illegitimate leaders of the people.

January 24: Matthew 23 – 26

Matthew 23 is the woes upon the Pharisees and lamenting over Jerusalem as Jesus exposes prideful law keeping for the false way of salvation that it is. **(Note:** Jesus pulls no punches with the religious leaders. They are wolves leading the people astray and Jesus publically denounces them and their false doctrine.)

Matthew 24 contains the discourse on Jesus' return and what it will look like and when He will return. **(Note:** While much is made of this discourse, setting definitive signs of Jesus' return is almost impossible with the information given. Rather we should realize that what Jesus describes is life in a fallen world; a world that will continue in sin until He returns in triumphant judgment.)

Matthew 25 continues the readiness theme of chapter 24, because judgment is coming and believers are to be always ready. **(Note:** Our ministry priorities do not change. Our 1st ministry is at home, then among fellow believers, then among the nations. Pay attention to who the least of these are; they are brothers of Christ, therefore fellow believers first and foremost. Our charge is to faithfully minister in constant readiness for either the return of Christ, or our earthly life to be completed.)

Matthew 26 is a long chapter that sets the stage for the arrest of Jesus. It then goes right into: the "last supper", the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' arrest and trials. **(Note:** There is failure everywhere in this chapter: the leadership, Judas, Peter, the disciples who slept. Yet in the midst of this, the plan of God is perfectly brought about. The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world is going to be delivered at the right time, for the right reason.)

January 25: Matthew 27 – 28

Matthew 27 continues the march to the cross as Jesus is presented to Pilate before being finally condemned, crucified, and buried. **(Note:** The hypocrisy, they can pay Judas to get Jesus killed, but they can't keep the money when given back. This is the problem with man-made law; it always becomes inconsistent.)

Matthew 28 begins with the resurrection of Jesus and Jesus' appearance to the disciples; before concluding with the Great Commission. **(Note:** Again the inconsistency; lying is a sin, but bribery to a Gentile so he will lie is apparently alright.)

January 26: Exodus 1 – 4

Exodus 1 picks up where Genesis 50 left off; Israel is in Egypt, being blessed by God. We have the promise of a nation fulfilled, but that nation is in slavery and is being oppressed, mistreated, and murdered. **(Note:** Why our trust is to be put in God and not the world; the world and her systems can change quickly—God never changes. You also see the standard of God over the world; when the world commands evil—you refuse.)

Exodus 2 gives us a glimpse into one Israelite (Hebrew—meaning from Eber from Genesis 10). Moses is born, placed in the river, adopted into the palace, grows, kills an Egyptian, escapes to the wilderness (all in 15 verses). **(Note:** Moses story is very condensed; because his story is not about him, but about God working through him. The hero of every story in our Bible is always God.)

Exodus 3 sees God call Moses and sent back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites. **(Note:** This is the first time since Abraham and Jacob that God has appeared to His people.)

Exodus 4 begins with more questions from Moses and God's provision for all of Moses'

objections. **(Note:** See the patience of God on display as Moses proves himself unworthy and borderline unwilling to serve God.)

January 27: Exodus 5 – 7

Exodus 5 gets the deliverance off to a rocky start as Pharaoh rejects Moses and takes his wrath out on the Hebrew slaves. **(Note:** The heart of the people is not with God; they would rather be comfortable slaves than the redeemed of the Lord facing difficulty. This is what sin does; it lies and creates an idea of comfort where there is truly wrath.)

Exodus 6 however, promises action from God and God restates the promises given to the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). **(Note:** The unfolding of God's plans and promises. The Israelites have shown themselves as undeserving or even wanting of God's deliverance; but God will save His people because that is who God is and what God does.)

Exodus 7 sees the action pick up as Aaron & Moses demonstrate God's power and the plagues begin. **(Note:** Each plague demonstrates a power and control of God over a different aspect of His creation. No force of nature or creature of the earth is outside God's sovereign rule and the plagues against Egypt demonstrate this.)

January 28: Exodus 8 – 10

Exodus 8 – 10 all continue the plagues upon Egypt and the affliction of God upon the Pharaoh. **(Note:** Did Pharaoh harden his heart or did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Both are described as happening during the plagues and both are correct. Remember the sinfulness of man; it is only through the work of God that humanity does any good and responds rightly to God. God hardened Pharaoh's heart by leaving him to his own desire.)