

### **The Halftime Report from Matthew**

We have reached the half-way point in the gospel of Matthew, having now studied 14 chapters out of 28 total. This week we will take some time to reflect on what we have learned so far.

1. Matthew's first two chapters tell us about events surrounding the birth of Jesus. What is the purpose of the detailed genealogy in 1:1-17? Why does it matter that the events of ch. 2 took place in the "little town" of Bethlehem?
2. Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist, arrived on the scene in chapter 3 and was removed in ch. 14. What were his main message (3:2), his prophetic role (3:3; 11:10), and his main ministry (3:5-6)? Summarize John's life, ministry, and death; how did the Lord use him in each of these? Why do you think Jesus said what He did about John in 11:11a?
3. Skim the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7). What one or two statements by Jesus stand out the most to you personally? How have these statements blessed, challenged, or encouraged you in your life as a Christian?
4. Jesus ministered to His people in certain repeated patterns. What common threads do you find in these passages about Jesus' public ministry (4:23-25; 8:16-17; 9:35-36; 12:15; 14:13-14; 14:35-36)? Why do you think He kept doing these same things for people?
5. Matthew often appeals to his fellow Jews by showing them how Jesus fulfilled certain OT prophecies. Review these OT prophecies from the first half of Matthew, and pick one that speaks to you personally (1:22-23; 2:4-6; 2:14-15; 2:16-18; 2:21-23; 3:1-3; 4:12-16; 8:16-17; 11:7-10; 12:17-21; 13:34-35). How does the prophecy you picked give evidence that Jesus of Bethlehem/Nazareth is the promised Jewish Messiah?
6. What speaks to you about how Jesus called His disciples in Matthew (4:18-22; 9:9-13; 10:1-4)? Briefly share with the group how Jesus called you to be His follower.
7. Trace the steps that led to increased opposition to Jesus from the Pharisees (3:1-2, 7-13; 9:10-13, 33-34; 12:1-2, 13-14, 22-24, 38-40). What was their main accusation against Jesus in these verses, and why does that accusation not make any sense (12:24-29)?
8. Why did Jesus begin speaking to the crowds in parables (13:13-15, 34-35)? What were the keys Jesus gave His disciples so they could understand His parables (13:9-12, 16-17)?