

# The Gospel

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Week 2

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

To maintain a healthy group, focus on four key components: Word, prayer, relationships, and outreach. This guide will help you study a biblical passage through observation, interpretation, and application. As you explore Matthew 3-4, keep in mind this week's big idea: **our perfect Christ pioneers the way for his imperfect people.**

## CONNECT

Ask this ice-breaker: "Share about a time when someone went ahead of you to prepare the way—maybe blazing a trail, setting an example, or handling a challenge first. How did that make things easier or inspire you?"

## INTRODUCTION

Matthew 3-4 introduces John the Baptist's call to repentance, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, and Jesus' baptism, where God affirms Him as His beloved Son. Jesus then faces temptation in the wilderness, succeeding where Adam and Israel failed, and begins His ministry by preaching repentance and calling His first disciples to become fishers of men. These chapters portray Jesus as the perfect pioneer—fulfilling Scripture, identifying with sinners, securing divine acceptance, achieving victory over sin, and calling us to mission. As the true Messiah, He leads us in repentance, holiness, and purpose, inviting imperfect people to follow Him into God's kingdom.

## OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

**Read:** Matthew 3:1-3, 13-17

- John preaches, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (v. 2), fulfilling Isaiah 40:3. What does this teach us about preparing for the Messiah through repentance?
- Jesus insists on baptism "to fulfill all righteousness" (v. 15), and God declares Him "my beloved Son" (v. 17). Why does Jesus, who is sinless, participate in a baptism of repentance?

**Read:** Matthew 4:1-11

- Jesus is tempted after fasting, responding each time with Scripture (vv. 4, 7, 10). How do these temptations echo the failures of Adam and Israel, and what does Jesus' victory reveal about His role as our pioneer?
- The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness (v. 1). Why?

**Read:** Matthew 4:17-22

- Jesus preaches the same message as John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (v. 17). How does this continuity emphasize the urgency of repentance in entering God's kingdom?
- Jesus calls the disciples to "follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (v. 19). What does their immediate response (vv. 20, 22) show about the cost and commitment of discipleship?

## APPLICATION

- How does Jesus' victory over Satan empower you to walk in victory this week? What is one scripture you can stand upon as Jesus did?
- Jesus calls us to mission. How can you "fish for people." Who has God put into your life to disciple?
- Have you truly repented of your sin, turned, and trusted Christ?

## **PRAYER**

Take time to thank Jesus for being your perfect pioneer in the faith, opening the way to God and enabling your victory over sin. Pray for those in your life who don't yet know Jesus and ask God for an opportunity to reach out to them.