

STUDY THE BIBLE 7 (STB 7)
“The Book of Matthew” (the Kingdom of Heaven)
Matthew is NOT God’s doctrine for the Christian.

Questions:

Isn't the Book of Matthew in the New Testament? Isn't the Book of Matthew about Jesus Christ?

Doesn't Matthew have the Lord's prayer in it? Doesn't Matthew teach us how to live the right way? Doesn't Matthew have The Sermon on the Mount in it? Doesn't Matthew show us how to be like, and follow, Jesus?

Answer: Yes, to all of the above, but it's **NOT** God's instructions for the **CHRISTIAN** or the **UNSAVED!**

You got me! I give up! I'm missing something here!

Jesus Christ comes solely for the salvation of the Jew (Rom 15:8) and he preaches **the kingdom of heaven**.

Christ says to the Jews "Look, I am the Messiah you have been waiting for. I am here so that we can have **heaven here on earth**. Let's call it the kingdom of heaven shall we?"

"Oh yes!" they replied excitedly "that will be excellent! What do we have to do?"

The Sermon on the Mount

So Jesus sits them down and gives them the **set of rules** that will be needed to have this kingdom of heaven down here on earth. He gives them the **Constitution** of how this thing will operate. He gives them **The Sermon on the Mount** as contained in Matthew chapters 5-7. When he finishes, they are in disbelief!

"Those rules are **too strict!**" they said "we will never be able to keep them in a million years! Really Jesus!? God won't forgive us our sins unless we forgive others!?" "Who can be pure in their heart!? Who can do that? No, Jesus, you're not the Messiah we were looking for. Go away. In fact we will crucify you. We want someone who will get rid of these Romans who are crushing us to death. This is our immediate concern."

Jesus says "Not only that, you'll also have to do the following. The kingdom of heaven is pure works!"

1. Must be **pure in heart** to see God (5:8)
2. Righteousness **needed to exceed** the Pharisees' (5:20).
3. Saying "**Thou fool**" with no good cause will mean **hell fire** (5:22)

4. **Lusting** after women is adultery and equal to the act (5:27-28)
5. **Pluck your eye out if necessary** if it causes you to sin (5:30)
6. **No oaths** using heaven's name (5:33)
7. **Limit agreements** to a 'yes' or 'no' (5:37)
8. **Don't pay back evil for evil** (5:38-44) but go the extra mile (5:41)
9. **You have to be perfect like God** (5:48)
10. Give **Alms** in secret (6:1-4)
11. **Pray** in secret (6:5-8)
12. **Forgive** others or God won't forgive you (6:14-1)
13. **Fast** in secret (6:16-18)
14. No **hoarding** up **money** or **goods** (6:19-21, 24)
15. No worrying about **food and drink** (6:25-33)
16. Take no **thought** about tomorrow (6:34)
17. No **hypocrisy** (7:1-5)
18. Beware of **false prophets** (7:15-23)

Now the people were **astonished** (Matt 7:28)! They couldn't believe their ears! These were **impossibly strict rules**. As the disciples exclaimed "**Who then can be saved?**" (Matt 19:25). Jesus answers "No-one, but **it's possible with me**" (Matt 19:26). These were code words for "I am God in the flesh."

Christ continues "Now if you do all these **works**, when you die you will go to the 'half-way house' called **Abraham's bosom**. It's not actually his bosom, but it's simply a place in the earth called that, where Abraham is waiting for you. People in the fires of hell will be able to see you, but you won't see them. It will be impossible for you to visit any friends or relatives that will have gone there (Luke 16:26). Now, Abraham's bosom won't be heaven, but it will still be pretty good. You'll wait there until I am resurrected after the cross. Then I'll come and get you and take you into **the kingdom of God** which is **the actual heaven** where God the Father lives. If we begin this kingdom of heaven on earth, it will be a training ground for the real heaven – the kingdom of God. God is a Spirit and lives in that spiritual place called heaven."

"You can have the **kingdom of heaven** down here **on earth**, but it **won't be the kingdom of God**. If you believe I can keep the rules for you **PLUS** you do the animal blood sacrifices for your sins, I guarantee you'll go to Abraham's bosom as a temporary stop over, and then to heaven."

Summary: Jesus says "Correct. You won't be able to keep these rules. In fact I gave you these rules to show that you **can't** keep them. **BUT I WILL DO IT ON YOUR BEHALF!** But you will need to constantly believe that I can fulfil and satisfy the rules. By the way, you will still have to go up to the temple to offer blood sacrifices for your sins. It will be a double combination of **believe in me + animal blood** for your sins."

Now at this point, Jesus started to sew the seeds of suspicion and doubt into the minds of the Jews. Not the ordinary person though, but with the priests and the Jewish rulers, who saw their empires about to crumble. No, the ordinary Jew just loved Jesus. And why wouldn't they? He healed them, fed them, raised their dead and 'nursed them like babies'.

So why did Jesus come for the Jews to give them an impossible set of rules?

Good question. God was getting fed up with Israel.

When **Moses** gave the laws at **Mt Sinai**, they were to put Israel under the curse of God (Galatians 3:10) as **these laws were also impossible to keep** as well (Matthew 22:37-40). Keeping the law was two things 1. The act itself eg sacrifices and so on 2. Right heart attitude. They were simply going through the motions but their hearts weren't in it. So when **Christ** gives his laws with the **Sermon on the Mount**, they were **also** given to put Israel under a curse, as **these laws couldn't be kept either**. These laws were just a strict and **much stricter again** in demanding **internal obedience** (thought-life, heart attitudes and motives). In the Old Testament they knew all this, but God was in heaven and they couldn't see him and secondly, it wasn't as clear perhaps. But with the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, God himself in the flesh, is face to face with them. Furthermore, he is speaking the words of internal purity.

The purposes of the Sermon on the Mount are as follows:

1. Christ deliberately gives them **impossible** laws.
2. By **not** being able to keep these laws, the Jews were to recognise that he was God the Saviour.
3. To demonstrate that he is **God in the flesh**.
4. For the Jews to **crucify** him to **fulfil** Old Testament **prophecy**
5. For the **Gentile**, the rest of the world, to have **access** to God the Father, through his shed blood.

Why 'good godly' people end up in hell

The three chapters of Matthew 5-7, contain all the foundational beliefs of many '**good**' people who have died and rocketed straight into the fires of **hell**. In

fact, it is the **misunderstanding of these three chapters**, that probably has been responsible, for more people going to hell than any other chapters in the Bible. These are your unsaved volunteers, 'charity' workers, good and kind and helpful people that inhabit the suburbs eg pro-abortion, save the whales, fight pollution, save the planet, 'climate warmers' and so on. **They also include people who attend a church thinking** they will go to heaven because of how good they think they are in going to church, taking the Lord's supper, and trusting the pastor and what he says. These include the Catholics who believe the Last Rites will get them there. They call themselves Christians, but they are not. They fight for causes for the betterment of humanity, hoping their 'ever-so-small' contribution may make a difference in leaving the planet a better place.

Matthew 5-7 is wrongly understood by the self-righteousness and pious do-gooders (Catholics, SDA's, Mormons, the cults, people who think they're Christians and like most 'Christian' churches today) who think that "the kingdom of heaven" is the same as "the kingdom of God". **They are not.** All the unsaved showing off their voluntary humility and being vainly puffed up in their fleshy mind (Colossians 2:18) just adore and love these three chapters in Matthew.

The sermon on the mount are misunderstood as the rules for getting into heaven.

As stated, the kingdom of heaven is **not** heaven. It is not the kingdom of God. There's not one Christian in the book of Matthew. Millions go to the fires of hell because they got their 'Christian' doctrine from Matthew. They wrongly believe that **works are needed** for entry into heaven and that **you can lose your salvation.**

Where are the Christians' rules of behaviour?

These are the **commandments** of Paul (1 Corinthians 14:37) also known as Paul's doctrine, and are set out in the books of Romans to Philemon. **Do Christians follow Christ? Absolutely!** And Paul shows us how to as Christians, not as Jews. We are to be **followers of Paul** as he follows Christ (1 Corinthians 1:1)

Why do people get all upset that we follow Paul instead of Christ.

They shouldn't. Christians today cannot **directly** follow Christ, as you'd have to become a Jew. Why? Christ was a Jew fulfilling the law, who didn't eat pork and went to the synagogue on Saturday. Isn't it strange though? Paul, the Christian, shows us how to follow Christ, the perfect Jew. Following Paul, we become more like Christ with love, peace, joy, longsuffering, goodness, gentleness, faith, meekness and temperance (Galatians 5:22).

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(STB 8 – “The Book of Acts”)