

ST. MATTHEW

The Gospel according to

7

INTRODUCTION

“Show me!” Missouri residents call their home the “Show Me State.” For a Missourian, seeing is believing.

How can we prove that Jesus is the Christ? How can we be sure that God’s word is true? How can we know what happens after death? Prove it! Show me!

The Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign . . . then another. They were always seeing, yet they never believed. God works through his word in human hearts, and his word alone can convince the most stubborn unbeliever. Jesus himself is all the sign we need. He himself is the proof.

POPULARITY WITH PERSECUTION IN THE FORECAST

Read Matthew 14:1-12

How did Herod get pressured into taking the life of John the Baptist?

Why was the death of John the Baptist timely and appropriate in God’s plan of salvation?

Read Matthew 14:13-21

How did Jesus react to the news of John’s death? Why?

Why do you suppose the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand marks the height of Jesus’ popularity?

What attribute of God does this miracle especially teach?

Read Matthew 14:22-36

Why was Jesus out walking on the water? (You can find additional clues by searching John 6.)

What request did Peter make? Why does this seem so characteristic of Peter?

When did Peter start to sink?

What lesson do we learn from Jesus and his dealing with Peter?

Read Matthew 15:1-20

This section illustrates how hung up the Pharisees were on obedience to outward rules. Why was their ceremonial washing before eating an example of utter hypocrisy?

Give several examples of how the Pharisees showed that in spite of their outward washing, they were still not right with God.

According to Jesus, what makes a person clean or unclean?

Jesus says, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men” (15:8, 9). How can we fall into similar patterns of human rulemaking and false worship with our lips but not our hearts?

Read Matthew 15:21-39

Why did Jesus treat the Canaanite woman as he did – associating her with a dog unworthy of the children’s bread?

We have seen two examples where Jesus commends people for their faith. Neither of them is a Jew. Who are the two?

Some liberal commentators associate the feeding of the 5,000 with the feeding of the 4,000, saying that they are one and the same event recounted twice. Matthew makes it very clear that they are different miracles at different times.

Read Matthew 16:1-12

We saw this request previously in Matthew 12. Once again, why was the request from the Pharisees and the teachers of the law for Jesus to perform a sign so absurd? Why did Jesus refuse – with the exception of giving them the sign of Jonah?

What is the point of Jesus’ weather analogy in verses 2-3?

VERSE TO REMEMBER

Matthew 15:8 *These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

For next time read Matthew chapters 16-19.