

the Royal

MAKING SENSE OF THE BIBLE

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2:9

Week 3: "Seven Wonders of the Word"

This week as Pastor Miles is in the Cayman Islands for the Miles Ahead/Do Something outreach, Pastor Mickey gave us deep insight into the "Seven Wonders of the Word". He showed us the miraculous ways God reveals Himself through His creation, conscience, Scripture, and through His Son by examining Psalm 19.

What we will look at this week in our Small Groups is:

- ▶ How we can tie the text of Psalm 19 in with some of the genres that Pastor Miles will walk us through over the next several months.
- ▶ The difference between general revelation and natural revelation as defined in Psalm 19.
- ▶ An in-depth study of Saturday's devotional exercise in Matthew 13, and how we can properly apply the text.
- ▶ Optional homework assignments designed for personal enrichment.

The study this week really challenges us to read a text of Scripture outside of our typical Bible study methods. It will simply challenge us to look at the character of God from the author's perspective.

Have fun and we pray that God will truly bless your time in fellowship together through the study of His Word.

In Him,

Rock Church Small Group Team

Part 1: Opening/Recap Weekly Challenge/Small Group Sermon Discussion

Opening:

- Open in Prayer
- Worship (optional)
- Recap Week 2 Homework
- Small Group Sermon Discussion

Recap Week 2 Weekly Challenge:

- 1. Recite 2 Cor. 12:9.**
- 2. Discuss experiences practicing the **Discipline of Submission**.**

Small Group Sermon Discussion:

- 1. Psalm 19:1-6 reveals the general revelation of God.**

- ▶ General revelation is how God reveals Himself through His creation. This can be manifested in history (cf. Acts 17:26), physical nature (cf. Ps. 97:6), and human nature (cf. Gen. 1:27).
- ▶ We can also learn a lot about the various attributes of God by general revelation.

Read Rom. 1:20 as a group, then discuss how you have experienced the general revelation of God.

- 2. Psalm 19:7-14 reveals the special revelation of God.**

- ▶ Special revelation is how God directly reveals Himself to His creation. This is His speech to prophets (cf. 1 Pet. 1:20-21), the incarnation (Heb. 1:1-3), and the Bible (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16).
- ▶ It is through special revelation that we can know God personally.

Read Romans 10:17 as a group, and discuss what this passage suggests about special revelation.

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – Matthew 13

Read Matthew 13:

- ▶ Matthew was traditionally written sometime between 70-80 AD in Syria-Palestine.
- ▶ The work of Matthew is quite similar to the Gospel of Mark, and some scholars believe Matthew may have even used some of Mark's content to draw upon his own content.
- ▶ Matthew is written in what is called a "topical" biographical style, as opposed to a "chronological" style we are used to. This was typical for biographies in the 1st century. An example of a chronological biography is the book of Luke, followed by the book of Acts.
- ▶ Matthew was specifically written to Israel in defense of why Christ is the Messiah.
- ▶ Most scholars believe that Matthew was probably written in Greek, but there are others that suggest it may have been revised by Matthew in the original Hebrew language as well.
- ▶ Leading up to Matthew 13 there is a cycle of different teachings being revealed by Christ. Christ starts in chapter 5 by delivering His "Sermon on the Mount" and explaining the 10 Beatitudes.
- ▶ These beatitudes would supply support for much of His upcoming teachings.

Matthew is revealing the fulfillment of Christ as Messiah to Pharisees and Sadducees that were so puffed up with pride and corruption. The Hebrews were well aware of that. In revealing Jesus as the Christ, Matthew uses a writing style called *inclusio*, which simply means that there is a common theme that is commonly revisited through the book. The *inclusio* in Matthew is stated in Matt. 1:23, 28:20; God "with us".

- ▶ Read Matthew 13 as a group.

Reflect Matthew 13:

Matthew 13 brings us to Jesus' teachings in parables. These are simply stories designed to display a heavenly message. Because we do not know what heaven or the Kingdom of God is truly like, Christ explains it in a way that we can have a glimpse of what it is like. Christ presents 7 different parables in this portion of the gospel: "The Parable of the Sower", "Tares Among Wheat", "The Mustard Seed", "The Leaven", "Hidden Treasure", "A Costly Pearl", and "A Dragnet".

1. What do these parables reveal about the concern Jesus had for His followers?

- ▶ These parables have a heavenly theme. He is explaining the state of believers, or those that have professed the faith, and then have fallen away.

Part 2: Read, Reflect, and Respond – Matthew 13**(continued)****Respond Matthew 13:**

1. Do you know anybody that has fallen in the category of verses 18-23? If so, have you been in prayer for them, or tried to minister to them at all?
2. Read 13:44-46 as a group. Have everyone go around and mention if they treat the pursuit of heaven like a treasure or a costly pearl?
 - ▶ These parables talk about the glory and prize possession that heaven is. The hope is that after going through this chapter the group will have a renewed passion for heaven and the pursuit for it. Remember the context of the chapter and try to guide the discussion accordingly.

Part 3: Weekly Challenge

- ▶ **Scripture Reading Guide:** Go through the devotions that correspond with each day. These are given to everyone in their lesson plan every week. (May 17-22)
- ▶ **Scripture Memory:** “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells that he has and buys that field.” **Matt. 13:44 (NASB)**
- ▶ **Bible Study Tool:** Navigate through www.crosswalk.com and discover the great resources available for free for your personal gain.
- ▶ **Spiritual Formation Practice:** Each week we will introduce a “spiritual discipline” that each person can try to adapt to their personal devotion. This week is the **Discipline of Service**.

With the Rock being a “Do Something” church and many of our Rock family being in Cayman for the Miles Ahead event, it seems like the proper week to discipline ourselves in service. The discipline of service is essentially what “Do Something” is all about. Service is a fundamental concept for Christian living. When Christ was in the midst of His ministry He stated simply, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).” To serve is similar to submission except submission is more of a personal act, where service is a public act. Serving is about building community. It cares for the needs of others, as well as healing, building, and strengthening others that lack such ability. Our service should always be to draw others to a relationship with the Christ.

Part 3: Weekly Challenge

(continued)

The challenge is for you to understand what it means to serve. We encourage you to join a ministry or do something on your own. Pray with someone who is hurting, feed the homeless, etc. Simply serve and give of yourself for the benefit of others. When we do acts of service as a Christian, the hope is that we would be preaching the gospel as well. In the famous words of St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."