

Harbour Lake Baptist Church
“Through The Bible In One Year”

Introduction to “The Gospel of Matthew”

1. The Old Testament Canon ended with The Book of Malachi in 397 B.C. After the warnings of the prophet Malachi, there were 400 years before the Lord spoke to Jews again through the coming of the one Malachi promised would “*come to prepare a way for the Lord, whom you seek*” (Malachi 3:1). Matthew introduces John the Baptist as the “*the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord...’*” (Matthew 4:3). The Gospel of Matthew was written by a Jew to Jews to present Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews, the long-awaited Messiah. Through a carefully selected series of Old Testament quotations, Matthew documents Jesus Christ’s claim to be the Messiah. His genealogy, baptism, messages, and miracles all point to the same inescapable conclusion: Christ is King. Even in His death, seeming defeat is turned to victory by the Resurrection, and the message again echoes forth: the King of the Jews lives.

2. Matthew was an admitted “publican” (Matthew 10:3), a Jew who had become a tax collector for the hated Romans and is thus classified with the “publicans and sinners”, which indicated his choice of professions was characterized by Jews of being of the lowest moral levels in their culture. He became a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 9:9) then his apostle (one sent forth) in Chapter 10:2-3.

3. The name “Matthew” means “Gift of the Lord”. At an early date, this gospel was given the title *Kata Matthaion*, “According to Matthew”. Matthew was also known as “Levi” in Luke 5:27 and Mark 2:14.

4. The Central Message of The Gospel of Matthew is: “*That it might be fulfilled*” (Matt 1:22, 2:15, 2:17, 2:23, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 26:56, 27:9, 27:35). This expression is used at least 12 times to show that Jesus Christ is a fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah that was to come to His people, the Jews.

5. The Gospel of Matthew is the first of what is called the three “Synoptic” gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), which means that they present a “similar” or “collective” view of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
The book of John is a gospel presentation of Jesus Christ that is separated both in time and character. The Synoptic gospels present the outer, human and public, aspects of Jesus’ life. The gospel of John reveals the inner, Divine and private, aspects of His life.

6. The Gospel of Matthew can be divided into seven major sections:

- a. **The Presentation of the King** (Chapters 1 – 4:11)
- b. **The Proclamation of the King** (Chapters 4:12 – 7:29)
- c. **The Power of the King** (Chapters 8:1 – 11:1)
- d. **The Progressive Rejection of the King** (Chapters 11:2 – 16:12)
- e. **The Preparation of the King’s Disciple** (Chapters 16:13 – 20:28)
- f. **The Presentation and Rejection of the King** (Chapters 20:29 – 27:66)
- g. **The Proof of the King** (Chapter 28:1-20)

7. Matthew, the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14), occupied the unpopular post of tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government. As a publican, he was no doubt disliked by his Jewish countrymen. When Jesus called him to discipleship (Matthew 9:9-13), his quick response probably meant that he had already been stirred by Jesus’ public preaching. He gave a large reception for Jesus in his house so that his associates could meet Jesus. He was chosen as one of the twelve apostles, and the last appearance of his name in the Bible is in Acts 1:13. Matthew’s life from that point on is veiled in tradition.

8. Like all the gospels, Matthew is not easy to date. Most conservative scholars date this book somewhere between 50 to 68 AD, because Matthew makes no mention of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem which took place in 70 AD.