

New Testament Survey—Matthew

I love the Bible, and this love is an expression of my love for the Giver of the Bible, the God who created and saved us. That's why we gather on Wednesdays, because our gracious God has given us an invaluable gift, the Scriptures, which He intends to use in our lives so that we might know Him better.

A mark of a strong Christian (and solid church) is a solid, growing knowledge of God's Word. Our aim on Wednesday evenings is to expand our grasp of the Bible. Each week we will do as we did this past year in our OT survey: one book a week (read ahead if possible); get a handle on the big picture of each book by addressing the following questions...

- **Who wrote the book?**
- **When was the book written?**
- **Why was the book written?**
- **What is the outline of the book?**
- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**
- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

The Bible is one book, yet it is also a series of 66 books. Each book contributes to the overall message: God is forming a people for Himself. Yet each individual book has a message of its own. God used a particular author to address a particular group of people at a particular time.

Discuss: What are the Gospels? (to be differentiated from the *gospel*) Why are there four? How do the four gospels relate to each other?

- **Who wrote the book?**

--Matthew

Though the Gospel does not name its author, from the earliest times it has been attributed to Matthew. Who was Matthew? See Matt. 9:9ff.

Q: What was Matthew's occupation before he met Jesus? V 9

Q: What kind of reputation did Matthew have, as evidenced by the friends he kept? V 10

Q: What did Matthew become after v 9? An apostle

Discuss: What else do we know about Matthew? A Jew; his name means "gift of God;"

Note: Realize that as the result of modern critical studies, some have abandoned Matthean

authorship. The reason relates to the "synoptic" gospel question.

Discuss: What does the term "synoptic" mean?

If you examine the four gospels carefully, you will discover that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar, while John is different. The first three use similar language, include similar material, and present a similar chronological order. Hence, "synoptic" (*syn*, "together with"; *optic*, "seeing"; thus, "seeing together").

Observation (see NIV Study Bible, 1431): Doing mathematical comparisons...

>91% of Mark's gospel is found in Matthew

>53% of Mark is found in Luke

This agreement raises questions. Did the authors rely on a common source? Were they interdependent? Which gospel was written first? Remember, Luke said he did research and checked with eyewitnesses (1:1-4). Apparently, the gospel writers used oral tradition, written fragments, and in Matthew's case, personal memory of events to record their biographies of Jesus' life.

The question of debate concerning Matthew is: Why would Matthew depend so heavily on Mark's account if he himself was an eyewitness of the Lord's life? The NIV Study Bible gives this answer: "The best answer seems to be that he agreed with it and wanted to show that the apostolic testimony to Christ was not divided." (1433)

• **When was the book written?**

It's difficult to determine for sure; the possibilities are:

--A.D. 50 (due to Jewish flavor of book)

--Late 50's or early 60's (if dependent on Mark)

--70's (assuming Mark was written between 65-70)

Note: The Twelve Apostles and the early church expected Jesus to return in their lifetime. When it became apparent that He might not, efforts were made to record the biography of Jesus' life for the generations that had not seen Him personally.

Q: Where was Matthew when he wrote this gospel? Due to the Jewish nature of the book, many think he was in Israel at the time of writing. Another possibility is Syrian Antioch.

Why was the book written?

--Matthew's main purpose is to prove to his Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah.

Discuss: What evidences do you see in the book that support this purpose?

>Many quotations of OT, showing Jesus as fulfillment

>Although all the gospel writers quote the OT, Matthew includes 9 additional prooftexts

Q: What's the relationship between Jesus and the Law? 5:17-20

Q: Why did Jesus say He came? 20:28

- **What is the outline of the book?**

(taken from R. T. France)

I. The Birth and Preparation of Jesus (1:1-4:16)

II. The Public Ministry of Jesus in and around Galilee (4:17-16:20)

III. The Private Ministry of Jesus in Galilee: Preparing the Disciples (16:21-18:35)

IV. Jesus' Ministry in Judaea (19:1-25:46)

V. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus (26:1-28:20)

- **What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

Matthew gives us a picture of the life of Jesus and shows that He is the Messiah.

- **What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

1. *Matthew gives us information about Jesus found nowhere else in the Bible.*

The following material is found only in Matthew (from Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible; p. 474):

Parables

The tares/weeds

Hidden treasure

The pearl

The net

The hard-hearted servant

The workers in the vineyard

The two sons

The marriage of the king's son

The ten bridesmaids

The talents

Miracles

The two blind men

The dumb man who was possessed

The coin in the fish's mouth

Incidents

Joseph's dream

The visit of the wise men

The escape to Egypt

Herod's massacre

Pilate's wife's dream

The death of Judas (also in Acts)

The 'saints' resurrected in Jerusalem

The bribing of the guard

The great commission

Discuss: What is the significance of this? What conclusions can we draw in light of this observation?

2. Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Observe: Matthew arranges his material around five main sermons (discourses) of Jesus. Some feel that he structured his book after the pattern of the Pentateuch.

1st Discourse: Chapters 5-7

2nd Discourse: Chapter 10

3rd Discourse: Chapter 13

4th Discourse: Chapter 18

5th Discourse: Chapters 24-25

Matthew uses narrative to lead up to these five discourses, and concludes each discourse with a statement like: "When Jesus had finished saying these things."

Discuss: Why would Matthew arrange his material following the structure of the Pentateuch? He may be presenting the gospel as the new Torah and Jesus as a new and greater Moses (NIV Study Bible, 1434).

Discuss: How should the book of Matthew affect our lives? What are some practical things we should do in light of what we have learned this evening?