

Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

Bible Survey Lesson 61: The Book of Matthew

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Introduction: *The Jews waited for a leader, a savior, a king!*

After four hundred years of silence, with no direct word from the Lord they still waited for the Messiah, the "anointed one," promised centuries before by the prophets.

He would come to fulfill the covenants of God to Abraham and David providing a new land, a new Jerusalem, and a new King who would, after more than six hundred years of vacancy, sit on the throne of David forever (II Samuel 7). But, more importantly to them, for they were a practical people, --***he would deliver them from the oppression of Rome.***

What would warp their view, however, was their unwillingness to see the whole prophetic picture. This same king would first be a suffering servant, rejected by His royal subjects, and even executed.

No wonder they didn't recognize Jesus, the Christ. After all, how could one born in a stable, living a simple lifestyle, teaching humility and servant-hood, and dying like a criminal, be The King of the World?

Someone had to deal with this dilemma, and that someone was Matthew.

Author:

Matthew (Levi) was a Jew who sold himself to the cursed Romans as an agent to collect taxes from his own people. Tax collectors were hated, not just because they worked for the oppressor, but because of the tax system.

Tax collectors were allowed to collect taxes, using the power of Rome and, as long as the Roman government received the amount it specified, the agent could collect whatever amount he chose.

So, tax collectors became rich at the expense of their own people. He even called himself a "publican," a term we might place next to politician, or lawyer today. He himself was amazed that Jesus chose him as one of his chosen inner circle of disciples.

Matthew was an educated Jew. He was well acquainted with Jewish history, culture and customs. He was also a business man who collected taxes from farmers, fishermen, shop keepers, and landowners. He knew how to communicate with his people so they could understand.

He also was convinced that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy spoken concerning the Messiah. Fifty-three times he quotes directly from the Old Testament, and thirteen times he says an event took place "*so that it might be fulfilled what was spoken of the Lord by the prophet.*"

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His goal is to prove that Jesus is the Messiah sent to offer the Jewish people one more opportunity to accept their Lord as their savior, not just in the physical sense of ruling a kingdom, but also in a spiritual sense, by becoming their substitute sacrifice as well.

Note: Keep in mind that *Matthew is written especially for the Jewish nation* and he is seeking to present Jesus to them as the one who fulfills the Old Testament description of the Messiah and will yet fulfill His covenant.

It is wise to consider this book as covering a transition period that includes a renewed rejection of the kingdom by Israel, bringing about the crucifixion of their King. His resurrection opens up salvation to all, Jew and Gentile, who believe and, by faith, become members of His body, the church.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

If you refer to typical sources for an outline of the book of Matthew you will find them to be long and complex reaching up to two and a half pages. I don't have the luxury of space or time to outline in such detail so, as you will note, I have broken the book down into four major considerations.

I. THE KING REVEALED (Chapters 1-9)

The book of Matthew starts with a presentation of the Messiah King.

He is presented in a form that documents Jesus' authenticity.

A. His Person (1:1-4:11)

Matthew begins by giving the genealogy of Jesus whom he calls "the Christ," the "anointed one," the Messiah." **How dare he?**

Because he is "*the son of David, the son of Abraham.*" (v. 1) Then, just to nail down his claim, he follows with a daunting pile of evidence based on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy:

1. Jesus has the royal heritage. (1:1-17)

His genealogy establishes that He is a legitimate descendent of David and rightful candidate for the royal throne.

2. Jesus' birth announcement is unique. (1:18-25)

The entire narrative is comprised of five quotations from Old Testament Scripture

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3. Jesus' birth and infancy fulfill prophecy in every detail. (2:1-12)

The visiting wise men will be seeking the "King of the Jews."

4. Jesus has supernatural protection. (2:13-23)

Even present royalty, the alleged King Herod (title provided by the Roman Emperor) was used to fulfill prophecy in regard to the destruction of the male children and bring Jesus' move to Egypt.

5. Jesus receives conformation from the Lord and His prophet. (3)

God's New Testament "Elijah" becomes the forerunner of the promised Messiah, and God himself announces who Jesus is. *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (v 17)

6. Jesus responds to Satan with power. (4:1-11)

Jesus and Satan both use O. T. Scripture in this battle to the spiritual death. Jesus wins, showing his power over Satan. So, even before looking at His ministry, Jesus is proven to be the very answer to the prayers of the Jews and their leaders. And yet, as He unfolds His purpose for coming, most of them cannot believe Jesus is their Messiah. In fact, even the ongoing display of His miraculous power will not convince them.

B. His Purpose (4:12-7)

When John was arrested, it was obvious that things were going to be rough, but Jesus went ahead with His ministry according to God's plan . . . continuing to fulfill Scripture (12-16). From then on His message never varied, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Many followed Him and He began to choose a few.

With Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God's saving reign was inaugurated in the hearts and lives of those who followed Him. World wide acknowledgment of His sovereignty will have to wait

His second coming, but His kingdom had begun in the hearts of those who repented and followed Him.

What is this kingdom made up of?

1. Kingdom People (5:1-16)

The "Sermon on the Mount" explains what it is like to be a kingdom person and what a kingdom person is like.

2. Kingdom Precepts (5:17-48)

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

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Then Jesus explains the spirit of the Law as opposed to the letter of the law. Interestingly, that just makes it even harder to keep. But that is only fair, since the purpose of the Law is to show us our complete helplessness and inability to save ourselves and drive us to the mercy and provision of God.

3. Kingdom Practices (6-7:12)

Next, Jesus applies the precepts to the world of everyday living.

The spirit of the Law effects everything: giving, praying, self-control, finances, worry, judging, common sense, etc., etc.

4. Kingdom Proof (7:12-29)

All of the above will affect the way we live. They are proofs of a living faith.

C. His Power (8-9:35)

If they can't believe the witness of prophecy, or the witness of His Word, perhaps a display of power will reach them. So, Matthew piles up an impressive list of supernatural acts by Jesus:

1. Power over disease (8:1-22; 9:27-35)

Jesus healed the infected, the paralyzed, the sick, near or far away, he healed them all.

2. Power over nature (8:23-27)

"What kind of man is this, that even the winds obey Him?"

3. Power over evil (8:28-34)

Demons begged for mercy when He came near.

4. Power over sin (9:1-13)

He could heal and He could forgive sins (*"which is easier?"*). He could even forgive the chief sinner, the IRS man.

5. Power over tradition (9:14-17)

He invented fasting, surely he knows how to use it properly.

6. Power over death (9:18-26)

The coup de gras, He can even raise people from the dead.

Now surely His people will listen, see, and believe. If they had, the Bible could have ended right here. But God knew what man did not. He would have to die before they would even notice, let alone respond.

So, instead of accepting their Messiah King . . .

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II. THE KING RESISTED (Chapters 9:36-16:12)

A second sermon might be referred to as the "Sermon on the Mission."

It begins with the statement,

"And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion on them, because they were downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'"

Along with this challenge He presented a realistic assessment of the response they would find. They would be persecuted and their message would be resisted.

A. Predicted (10)

Jesus names His twelve apostles, empowers them to do miracles, explains their mission, then warns them, *"A disciple is not above his teacher."* He told them to expect persecution, but not to fear. The God who knows the sparrow knows them intimately.

B. Present (11-13)

The persecution Jesus predicted for the apostles followed Him also.

These chapters chronicle the hatred and harassment of Jesus by the Pharisees and others, especially those in religious leadership.

His persecution grew as He:

1. Comforted John's followers
2. Condemned the evil cities.
3. Debated the legalism of priests regarding the Sabbath
4. Condemned the Pharisees for committing the unpardonable sin
5. Refused to do signs to prove Himself
6. Taught parables which pointedly separated the self-righteous from the righteous.

C. Promoted (14-16:12)

Starting with chapter 14, the heat was turned up.

1. A paranoid Herod heard about Jesus and thought He was a resurrected John the Baptist come back to haunt him with miracle powers. He had, of course, killed John to please his wife and stepdaughter. (14)

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2. The Scribes and Pharisees started following Jesus accusing Him of breaking the traditions of the elders. (15)

3. Again the Scribes and Pharisees challenged Him to do tricks. (16)

His response was to go about His business, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, teaching the people and confronting His accusers. Their hatred for Him was so intense, they could not understand a thing He did or said.

III. THE KING REJECTED (Chapters 16:13-27)

The crux of the matter is well stated in chapter 16, verse 13. *"When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that the Son of Man is?'"*

We have prophecy. We have supernatural conformation from God. We have miracles. We have teaching with authority. WHO IS JESUS?

Well. He preaches repentance. He must be John the Baptist.

No? He does miracles. He must be Elijah.

No? He confronts the religious leaders. He must be Jeremiah.

Shoot, he seems to speak for God, so He must be *one* of the prophets.

Peter knows. With the eyes of faith, and the revelation of God, he says,

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (v. 16)

Now that we got that straight, bring on the band, bring on the royal robes, bring on the army, BRING IN THE KINGDOM!

Sorry, that's not the plan. What is the plan, God's plan.

A. The Plan (16:21-20:28)

1. Cross before Crown (16:21-17:27)

" . . . Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things . . . and be killed, and [then] be raised up on the third day."

In fact, the plan includes the fact that the disciples must also be ready to experience persecution and even die (All but one would eventually be killed.).

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2. Humility before Exaltation (18-20:28)

This includes teaching on childlike faith, mutual accountability, continual forgiveness, marriage, divorce, children, and wealth, before any word on kingdom rewards and recognition.

Jesus Approached

B. The Presentation (20:29-25:46)

1. The King is coming and the people respond with pomp and circumstance, palm leaves and shouts, and He acts like a King:

-He purifies the temple. (trajectory)

-He confronts the priests and elders. (by what authority) He continues to do miracles

-He teaches royal retribution (son killed/wedding invitations)

-He answers hard questions (taxes/much married brothers)

-He confronts the Pharisees (the David question/hypocrisy)

2. The King is counseling and the disciples listen in confusion to what will become clear later.

-The temple will be destroyed

-There are accurate signs of the end of the age and His return

-Illustrations of those signs:

Fig tree, days of Noah, faithful steward, wise servant, ten virgins, stewards of talents, judgment of gentiles.

C. The Preparation and Prosecution (26-27)

1. The Times

Jesus spent his last days with his disciples. A woman anoints His feet. He eats the Passover Feast with them and institutes communion. He is betrayed by Judas Iscariot.

2. The Trials

Jesus is seized and led before Caiaphas, the high priest and his advisors where they attempt to frame Him. While there Peter denies even knowing Him. Next morning He is before the entire Sanhedrin who are officially deciding He should die.

He is sent to the governor, Pilate who washes his hands of the matter and puts His fate in the hands of an incensed mob.

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3. The Travesty

The Pretorian guards mock and torture Jesus, prepare Him to die and lead Him to Golgotha where they crucify Him. He dies in front of a hostile mob, a frightened Centurion, His religious enemies, family and friends.

HE IS DEAD AND BURIED!

IV. THE KING RAISED (Chapter 28)

BUT, "IT IS FINISHED" DIDN'T MEAN THAT HE WAS!

A. The Conquest (1-10)

Mary and Mary came to mourn at a grave and found an empty tomb and an angel who told them, *"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come see the place where He was laying."* (v 5)

B. The Conspiracy (11-15)

The guards, the chief priests and the elders plotted to accuse the disciples of stealing the body and spread that rumor far and wide.

C. The Commission (16-20)

The ending of the book of Matthew is the beginning of a new mission for the disciples and for us in the church.

READ MATTHEW 28:18-20

Lessons:

1. There is a unity between the Old and New Testaments which is explained in the person of Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus is the one who fulfills the Old Testament prophecy and brings ultimate salvation to everyone.
2. While Jesus is the promised King, with all the power and authority that implies, He is also the Servant King, whose kingdom is established on His redemptive work rather than His power.
3. Followers of Jesus are citizens of the kingdom of God who, *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* (6:33)