

From the Garden to Glory

Matthew

Author: Matthew, also called Levi, one of the twelve apostles

Written to: a predominantly Jewish audience

Timeline: c. 4 B.C. - 30 A.D.

Theme: Christ the Messiah-King

Purpose of writing: Matthew wrote to prove that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies.

Introduction:

The Gospel of Matthew is the historical *connecting link* between the Old and New Testaments. Matthew, whose pre-conversion name was Levi, had been a publican, or tax collector under the Romans in Capernaum; he left everything, money, position and relationships, to follow Jesus (Luke 5:27-28). It has been said that the book of Matthew was written by a Jew about a Jew to Jews. Matthew's main purpose was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, the King of Kings, the Son of David. Matthew quoted from the Old Testament twenty-nine times; in thirteen of these instances he stated that the reason for the event was *so all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet* (Matthew 1:22).

As we begin our study of the book of Matthew consider the following questions and write your responses:

1. Matthew presented Jesus as the King of the Jews, the long awaited Messiah. What do you think of when you think of a king? In what specific way(s) is Jesus Christ *your* King?

2. Matthew's name means *Gift of the Lord*. How is *your* life a gift from the Lord? Take some time today to thank Him for His gift of new life.

3. Before becoming one of Jesus' disciples, Matthew occupied the unpopular position of a tax collector. From what unpleasant past did the Lord call *you*? List one way that your life has changed radically since you became a Christian.

The King Is Born

Read Matthew 1:18-2:23

1. Read 1:23. What is the translation of the name *Immanuel*? Look at the following verses and note all that you learn about the Lord's divine presence:
 - Psalm 16:11

 - Psalm 139:7-18

 - Zechariah 2:10-11

 - Matthew 18:20

 - Matthew 28:20

 - Revelation 21:3

2. When the magi saw Jesus they *fell down and worshiped Him* (2:11). Briefly describe how you fall down and worship the Lord.

3. Look at 2:13-15. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, and Joseph *immediately* obeyed the angel's instructions. What was the result? Share a time when immediate obedience brought blessing in your life.

The King Begins His Ministry

Read Matthew 4:1-25

1. Look at verses 4, 7 and 10. In each of these verses Jesus used the Word of God to respond to satan's temptations by saying, "It is written." How has the Word of God brought victory in your life when you faced temptation?
2. Read verse 17. Look up the word *repent* in a dictionary and write the definition. In practical terms, how did you *repent* when you first became a Christian? How do you *repent* on a daily basis?
3. In verse 19 Jesus called Peter and Andrew to follow Him. Look up the following verses and write down the blessings and responsibilities of those who follow Jesus.
 - Luke 14:27
 - John 8:12
 - John 10:27

The King States Kingdom Laws

Read Matthew 5:1-48 and 6:19-34

1. As you read 5:1-12 reflect on the word *blessed*. The Greek word translated *blessed* is *makáριοι*. It means to be *fully satisfied*. Share a time when one of the situations/experiences listed in these verses caused you to be *fully satisfied*.

2. Read 5:13-16. In biblical times, salt was used as a preservative and to prevent putrefaction. As you consider these verses, how can *you* be salt in our world? How can *you* be light?

3. As you look at 6:19-21 answer the following questions:
 - What is your greatest treasure?

 - How can a woman *lay up* for herself treasures on earth?

 - How can a woman *lay up* for herself treasures in heaven?

 - Re-write verse 21 in your own words.

The King and His Followers

Read Matthew 10:1-33

1. In verse 16 Jesus told His followers to be *wise as serpents and harmless as doves*. How can you do this? Be specific.

2. Jesus told His followers "do not fear," three times in this chapter

(v. 26, 28 and 31). Share a verse that encourages you to be a fearless woman.

3. Look at verse 28. Jesus taught His followers that they should not fear man but instead they should fear God. Read the following verses and note what you learn about the fear of the Lord:

- Psalm 25:12-13

- Psalm 31:19

- Psalm 103:13

- Psalm 147:11

- Proverbs 1:7

- Luke 1:50

The Kingdom Parables

Read Matthew 13:1-52

1. Read verses 10-17. Why did Jesus tell His disciples that He spoke in parables?

2. Jesus told His followers the *Parable of the Wheat and the Tares* in verses 24-30 and explained it in verses 36-43. Even today the enemy plants *tares* in the Church to deceive people and pervert the Word of God. How do you protect yourself from those who would draw you away from the truth?

3. Look at the parables in verses 44-45. How important is the kingdom of heaven to you? What *price* have you paid for it?

The King Offers Himself as King

Read Matthew 21:1-11

1. Look at verse 5. What does this verse tell you about the Lord's character? How can you emulate this character trait in your own life?
2. Verse 8 says that *a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road*. In the ancient world, this was an act of respect which was reserved for royalty. By what action(s) do you show respect to your King?
3. *Hosanna* means *save now* or *we pray*. Although the word has come to be associated with praise, originally it was probably a cry for help. What is one thing that you would like to cry out to your King for today?

The King Will Return

Read Matthew 25

1. In verses 1-13 Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom's return. Look at verse 13. In what way(s) are you a wise woman watching for your King's return?
2. Read verses 14-30. The *Parable of the Talents* illustrates the blessings of faithful stewardship and the tragedy of wasted opportunity.

What are you doing today to assure that you will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord"?

3. What do you learn about your King's return in verses 31-46?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Matthew consider the following questions and write your answer:

1. What is the most significant thing that you have learned from your study about the Lord, His character, or His attributes? How does this encourage you? Take a few moments to thank and praise the Lord for the things that you learned about Him.

2. What is the most important lesson or new insight that you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?