***Providence Bible Church***

**New Testament Survey**

October 29th, 2023

A Study Paradigm for the Gospel of Matthew

1. **The *human* Writer & *original* Recipients**

**Who wrote the Gospel?**

**Neither the name, *Matthew*, nor the name Levi, is included in the original text of this Gospel.** For the most part, **the identities of the Gospel writers have been communicated down through the centuries by tradition** – word of mouth. That tradition, however, has deep roots and a nearly unanimous position. **Dating all the way back to the 2nd century**, after all of the Apostles had died, **the clear conviction of the Early Church Fathers** (those who had known the Apostles, and who were continuing the leadership of the Church), **all accepted this Gospel as written by Matthew**.

'In the case of the first gospel, **the church Fathers [ \* ] from earliest times unanimously testify that Matthew**, **the apostle of Christ, wrote it** … all the early copies of the first gospel have the heading 'according to Matthew.'' *Benware,* p.74

\* 'Eusebius [4th century leader of the Church in Caesarea] (c. A.D. 265-339) quotes Origen [Early Church Father] (c. A.D. 185-254): 'Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism.' Eccl. Hist., 6:25 in *MSB,* p.1111

'The earliest description of this Gospel … attributes it to Matthew … **no positive evidence that the book ever circulated without this title** … the title cannot without hesitation be regarded as part of the original text.' *NTI*, p.33

'To name anyone else as the author is to affirm that the name of its true author was forgotten within a comparatively short time … and another name substituted … especially since Matthew was not especially prominent either among the Twelve or in the early church … there seems to be no reason for assigning to [Matthew] such an important writing unless in fact he wrote it.' *Morris*, p.13

**Scripture tells us very little about Matthew**, or as he was originally known, **Levi**. In fact, **the lengthiest treatment that he ever receives in the Gospels occurs in context with his calling to become a disciple of Christ**.

**Matthew 9:9–13** (Mark 2:14–17, Luke 5:27–32)

:9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew [note: both Mark and Luke refer to him here as 'Levi'], sitting in the tax collector’s booth; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he got up and followed Him.

:10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?”

:12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

:13 “But go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

His call to follow Jesus is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. Likely, Matthew had need of much humbling at the hand of the Lord. He was a publican – a tax collector. These were often harsh, callous and even corrupt. And God's work of grace must have humbled him – because even in his own account of his calling, he avoids detail that only Luke provides. Luke says that he left everything to follow Jesus. Perhaps Matthew thought it would seem boastful to include that detail.

**Other than a passing mention of Matthew when the twelve Apostles are listed, he isn't even mentioned again in Scripture.**

'If we may judge from the silence of the Gospels, **the position which Matthew held among his fellow-disciples was a humble one**. He was not among the chosen three [Peter, James, and John]. No incident connects itself with his name … No one word of his to Christ is recorded. Even when he was called, he rose and followed in silence. We may picture Matthew to ourselves as **a silent, unobtrusive, contemplative man**.' *CGT,* pp. xv-xvi

All three of the Synoptic Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) also point out that **this man was a tax collector**. These were not just any tax-collectors, these men collected taxes **for the Roman government** – a government with whom there was **great friction, even great dislike among Jews**. So, especially since tax-collectors dishonest and ruthless, such men would have been hated.

It is fascinating to note that **none of the other Gospel writers** (or any other New Testament writers for that matter), **ever call attention to Matthew's shameful past – that of a tax-gatherer**. But **Matthew does** so again even when his name is mentioned among the Twelve Apostles. **It is an unmistakable sign of humility that he not only does not hide the fact that he once had been a tax-collector, but neither does he attempt to hide the fact that such men were utterly despised** …

Jesus puts them in **the same company as drunkards and sinners** …“

Matthew 11:19 –The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

Jesus also puts them **among the unbelieving Gentiles** when He set forth the Church's ultimate punishment of sinners …

Matthew 18:17 “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

But Jesus also puts them in the same category as those **sinners who are not beyond God's wonderful grace** …

Matthew 21:31 “Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.

Truly, Matthew knew that he had been an undeserving recipient of God's saving Grace!

'We marvel at the Grace of God in choosing such a man to be the author of what is said to be 'the most widely read Book in all the world …' *Halley's,* p.413

**The *original* Recipients – primarily Jewish converts to Christianity**

Immediately as a reader begins to interact with Matthew's Gospel, they must notice that **Matthew is constantly referencing the Old Testament**. The number of citations is staggering …

'**Matthew has 129 references to the Old Testament (from 25 books)** … Psalms (29x), Deuteronomy (27x), Isaiah (26x) [etc.] … **Matthew used the term 'fulfilled'** (fulfill) ['to fill completely, to accomplish, to make full, to complete, to end'] fifteen times of Christ …' *Geisler,* p.52

'This Gospel **quotes more than sixty times from OT prophetic passages**, emphasizing how Christ fulfills all those promises.' *MSB,* p.1111

Matthew's purpose quickly becomes evident – **he is writing – primarily, but not exclusively – to converts to Christianity from Judaism**. His intended audience (more accurately, his readership) is mainly Jewish. Setting forth the evidence for this conclusion, one scholar notes …

'Matthew's Gospel was **primarily intended for the use of the Jewish converts** in Palestine. It is this fact that gives its special character to this Gospel. **No other of the Evangelists [Gospel writers – Mark, Luke, and John] has so completely developed the idea …**

* **that in Christ the nation lived again,**
* **that towards Christ all prophecy moved,**
* **that in Him all national aspirations were centered and satisfied.**

**No other inspired writer has pictured so vividly the critical interest of the Messianic days as the meeting-point of the world's past and future**.' *CGT,* p.xvii

Using the Old Testament Scriptures, **Matthew's goal is to confirm to Jewish Christians that Jesus Christ is the promised Savior**.

'Early [Church] Fathers said the people of Judea were the audience … Whether directly to Jewish Christians or to the Gentile Christians working with them, it seems clear that Matthew has an apologetic purpose to confirm that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah.' *Geisler,* p.51

1. **The *special* Theme & *Divine* Intention**

**Matthew's particular emphasis is Jesus as the Messiah who was clearly prophesied by God's prophets in the Old Testament.** This he constantly seeks to prove by quotes and allusions to those prophecies. In doing so, Matthew achieves credibility and a greater effectiveness with a Jewish reader.

**'Matthew formed a connecting link between the Old Testament books and the writings of the New Testament** … how the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.' *Benware,* p.77

'**The special emphasis of Matthew is that Jesus is the Messiah foretold by Old Testament Prophets**. He quotes from the Old Testament repeatedly. He seems to have had Jewish readers particularly in mind.' *Halley's,* p.413

'**The Old Testament prophets predicted and longed for the coming of the Anointed One who would enter history to bring redemption and deliverance. The first verse of Matthew announces that long-awaited event:**

**The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1)**

**'Matthew provides the essential bridge between the Old and New Testaments**. Through a carefully selected series of Old testament quotations, Matthew documents Jesus Christ's claim to be Messiah.' *W&B,* p.307

'Matthew presents **Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the King of the Jews** … [he] develops his theme of Jesus as King from the very beginning of his gospel … that Jesus has the right ancestry to be king … that Jesus fulfills the prophecies concerning the Messiah.' *Benware,* p.79

'The most striking feature of the first Gospel is its Jewish emphasis … He strongly stresses the fulfillment of messianic prophecies in the life of Christ … Jewish customs and traditions …' *W&B,* p.310

**The *Divine* Intentions – to declare Jesus Christ as *the* Messiah**

The plainly evident design of Matthew's Gospel is **to present Jesus Christ, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, as the promised Messiah**. Matthew (Levi), himself a Jew, exceptionally well-acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, writes to his fellow Jewish brothers.

'Matthew is the gospel **written by a Jew to Jews about a Jew**.

**Matthew is the writer,**

**his countrymen [Jewish Christians] are the readers,**

**and Jesus Christ is the subject**.

Matthew's design is to present Jesus as the King of the Jews, **the long-awaited Messiah**.' *W&B,* p.308

1. **The *unique* Position & *enduring* Contribution**

**'He makes no attempt to follow a strict chronology … Matthew freely places things out of order. He is dealing with themes and broad concepts, not laying out a timeline**.' *MSB,* pp.1114-1115

'Its arrangement is **not strictly chronological, but topical**, grouping together the works and sayings of Christ according to their similarity.' *Schaff's,* p.552

'[1] … **its narratives are generally more concise** …

[2] It was natural for the early Christians to have an absorbing **interest in the Old Testament predictions which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ**, and Matthew's Gospel demonstrates this in marked degree.

[3] The Jewish interests of the author are seen in many other respects besides the appeal to the Old Testament. His Gospel often reflects the more restricted outlook of Jewish Christianity.

[4] Matthew, alone of the Gospels, records any **specific teaching about the Church [16:18, 18:17f, 18:20, 28:19-20]** …' *NTI*, pp.21-23

Matthew 16:18 “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Matthew 18:17–20

:17 “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

:18 “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

:19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

:20 “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

Matthew 28:19–20

:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

1. **The *writing* Date – most likely sometime between AD 55 and 65**

'**Matthew, an apostle, wrote first,** and thus established an authority for both Mark and Luke.' *Benware,* p.71

'Conservative scholars are generally agreed that Matthew wrote **prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70**, because he speaks of that event as future … Although an exact date is impossible to give, **a date somewhere around A.D. 45-55 would be reasonable**.' *Benware,* p.77

'Like all Gospels, **Matthew is not easy to date; suggestions have ranged from A.D. 40 to 140** … The likely time frame for this book is A.D. 58-68.' *W&B,* pp.308-309

'Matthew was written between 50 and 55 AD … written after the events Matthew wrote about … before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 … the early and ancient church said Matthew wrote before Mark …' *Geisler,* p.50

'… written by Matthew between AD 50 and AD 70 …' *Panorama,* p.36

'… written at a relatively early date – prior to the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 … as early as A.D. 50.' *MSB,* p.1111

'Some of the ancients [early Church Fathers] give the year after the Ascension as the date, others the fifteenth … between AD 60 and 66 …' *Schaff's,* p.553

'… no later than the early sixties.' France, in *Morris*, p.8

'A.D. 75-80 … the earliest possible date … cannot be placed much later than A.D. 85-90.' *CGT*, p.xxxv

'… the probable date of Matthew is AD 80-100 … it affects our understanding of the Gospel as a whole very little …' *NTI*, pp.45-46

1. **The *access* Codes – keys to understanding Matthew's Gospel**

**Matthew has also been called *'the Gospel of the Kingdom.'* This is due to the fact that Matthew so frequently uses the phrase, 'Kingdom of Heaven.'** Matthew uses it thirty-two times – and yet the phrase is not found anywhere else in all of Scripture.

'… [Matthew's] gospel speaks often of the kingdom (about thirty-eight times) … it contains **three basic elements:**

**1) a ruler with adequate authority and power;**

**2) a realm of subjects to be ruled;**

**3) the actual exercise of the function of rulership**.' *Benware,* p.82

1. **The *significant* Passagesand *major* Chapters**

1. Genealogy

2. Wise men

3. John the Baptist

4. Temptation

5. Sermon on the Mount

6. " "

7. " "

8. Miracles

9. " "

10.

11.

12.

13. Parables

14. Major Miracles

15.

16.

17. Transfiguration

18. Sinning and forgiving

19.

20.

21. Triumphal entry

22.

23. Rebuke of hypocrisy

24. Olivet Discourse

25. " "

26. Betrayal and Arrest

27. Crucifixion and Burial

28. Resurrection / Sending

1. **The *basic* Outline**

**The Ministry of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ**

1. **1:1-4:11 – His Inaugural Ministry – Birth and Preparation**
2. **4:12-14:12 – His Foundational Ministry – in Galilee**
3. **14:13-18:35 – His Developmental Ministry – *departing* Galilee**
4. **19:1-20:34 – His Instructional Ministry – in Perea**
5. **21:1-27:66 – His Sacrificial Ministry – in Jerusalem**
6. **28:1-20 – His Resurrection Ministry – Appearances and Commission**

Compare *Benware's* outline*,* pp.78-79, *Geisler's* outline, pp.54-55

**Bibliography, with Abbreviations**

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