

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 25TH-26TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW WHO WAS MATTHEW?

We don't actually know much about him, other than his actual name was "Levi" - Matthew ("gift of God") may have been His Greek name or a nickname Jesus gave him.

- Matthew was a disciple of Jesus who had been tax-collector for the Roman government and would have been despised because he robbed and betrayed his own people (Matt. 9).

HOW AND WHEN WAS MATTHEW WRITTEN?

Matthew was a disciple of Jesus, and probably kept a careful record of Jesus' teaching and actions.

- Most scholars believe that Mark's gospel had been written first and was used as a template
- Some time in the A.D. 50s or 60s, Matthew took the template of Mark's gospel, his own eyewitness records and his understanding of how they fulfilled the Old Testament, and produced this Gospel account.

WHO WAS MATTHEW'S AUDIENCE?

Matthew wrote primarily to a Jewish audience.

- Mark focused on Romans, Luke on Greeks, and John on everyone, but **Matthew was led to make the case for Christ** to the Jewish people.
- Matthew connects the OT and NT- and without it, neither can be completely understood.
- We see a mini version of the entire story of God's plan of redemption.

Matthew refers back to the OT about 60 times, connecting it to what Jesus is doing.

- Matthew also looks forward by dealing with the Messiah's 2nd coming and Kingdom, as well as His design for His Church.
- We see in Matthew's gospel a concern for the OT and its fulfillment, for Judaism redeemed & reborn, and the new reality of God's work over old, dead orthodoxy.

HISTORICAL SETTING OF MATTHEW

The setting for most of Matthew is Galilee and Judea, which was all under Roman control under the emperor Tiberius.

- While Israel was allowed to continue their religious practices, they paid dearly in taxes and in the loss of national freedom & identity. Herod the Great was appointed as vassal king of Judea and his son Herod Antipater was the one before whom Jesus stood trial.

BETWEEN MALACHI AND MATTHEW, THERE WERE 400 YEARS OF PROPHETIC SILENCE.

- During this time the Jewish people struggled to maintain their identity as God's people and hold onto hope that God was sending Messiah.
- In this 400 years, God was preparing the perfect stage for His Son to start the redemption of humanity and His planet

Because of the Persians... a location was established for the ministry of Christ.

Because of the Greeks...a language was given to spread the message of Christ.

Because of the Romans...there were unifying roads travel was free and unrestricted.

WHAT IS MATTHEW ABOUT?

- Identity** (to prove that Jesus was the Messiah-King of Israel)
- The Law & Righteousness** (to show how Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant)
- The Kingdom** (a phrase used 32 times in Matthew's gospel)

A GENEALOGY (MATTHEW 1:1-17)

Genealogies, or records of ancestry, were nothing new to Jewish audiences- the Old Testament is filled with them! (Gen. 5:1-32, 10:1-32).

- They were very important to the Jewish people, for without them one could not prove tribal membership or their rights to inheritances.**
- Many of these names would have been familiar, since much of the list contains a roll call of very famous men (Abraham, David, Solomon).

The most important thing about this genealogy was that it links Jesus by blood to both Abraham (vs. 1, 2) AND David (vs. 1, 6).

- Because the Jewish prophecies claimed that the Messiah must be descended from both of those key historical figures, this documentation of Jesus' lineage was very important.
- When it comes to Kings, where they come from matters!

Four names in the genealogy would've caused Jewish readers to raise an eyebrow, not simply because they were women, but because of who these women were.

- Tamar (vs. 3) deceived her father-in-law, who slept with her (Gen. 38:11-18).
- Rahab (vs. 5) helped Joshua's spies in Jericho, but she was a prostitute (Josh 2:1-24).

Ruth (vs. 5) was the Moabite who married the Jewish Boaz, and the "wife of Uriah" (vs. 6) was Bathsheba, the beautiful Hittite woman whom king David seduced.

- What these 4 women have in common is two-fold- firstly, they were the victims of scandal, shame, & condemnation because of their sin, brokenness, or social stigma.
- Jesus chooses to be associated with broken people who might even be social outcasts!

But secondly (and maybe more to the point), these four women share a non-Jewish descent and they were all married to Jewish men.

- Though Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels, he's still emphasizing for his readers that there is a place for the Gentiles in the future God has planned for His people.
- They have a part in the future because they had a part in the past.

There are some names omitted from the genealogy, but most likely this is just a systematic summary of three periods of Israel's history-before the monarchy, during the monarchy, after the fall of the monarchy to Babylon.

- In each period, 14 generations are listed. A couple of possibilities for why- 1) a memory aid to help us remember the list, 2) the numerical value of the Hebrew letters for "David" = 14.

The 1st group begins with Abraham (vs. 2), whose son Isaac he was willing to sacrifice.

- The 2nd group begins with David (vs. 6), the great king whose throne and name are connected with Jesus, the "Son of David" (Matt. 9:27).
- The 3rd group isn't connected to a person, but to an event: the Babylonian exile (vs. 12).
- What was done in the exile will ultimately be undone in Jesus.

In the exile, the Jewish kingdom was defeated and a national identity was lost.

- But Jesus will establish a new kingdom and people, fulfilling a promise made to David of an eternal throne (1 Kings 2:45).

Abraham was promised innumerable descendants, and David an eternal throne. Jesus will perfectly fulfill these promises as the long awaited Messiah.

THE BIRTH OF THE KING (MATTHEW 1:18-25)

Vs. 16 & 18 make it abundantly clear that Jesus Christ's birth was different from that of any other Jewish boy named in the genealogy.

- Joseph isn't listed as the father of Jesus in vs. 16, but as the "husband of Mary..."
- Jesus was born of an earthly mother without the need of an earthly father- He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (vs. 18).

If He had been conceived just like any other baby, then He COULDN'T have been God.

- Every child born into the world is a totally new creature, but Jesus is eternal God (John 1:1) and He existed before Mary & Joseph and any of His earthly ancestors.
- Matthew is proving that Jesus was fully man and fully God (the virgin birth).

This idea that the Bible clearly states that Jesus is God still needs to be repeated in a world that perfectly fine with Jesus being a good man, but not God (Liar, Lunatic, or Lord).

- Marriage customs were different in this culture- when a couple was betrothed (vs. 18), it was as legally binding as marriage, but they weren't sexually active until their wedding.
- The fact that Mary was pregnant was scandalous and she could've been punished.

Here we see the character of Joseph- v19 not only says that he was a righteous, but that he wanted to spare Mary any public shame by divorcing her secretly.

- But to stop Joseph from divorcing Mary, God sent an angel to him in a dream confirming Mary's story and telling him to not be afraid of marrying her (vs. 20-21).

Joseph was told that the child would be a son who would be called, "Jesus" (vs. 21).

- Jesus was actually a very common name, and was the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew name "Yeshua" (Joshua), which means "God is salvation".
- Yeshua was as common of a Jewish name as Mike or John in modern times- it shows that God works in quiet, every day places and ways.

In vs. 23, Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14, as a way of showing that this fulfilled OT prophecy.

- His title, "Immanuel" shows just what God was doing in sending Jesus the son- God had come to earth in Jesus to save His people.
- God was breaking down the separation man and God suffered since the fall, and building a bridge between God and man.

Joseph's dream ends in vs. 24-25 with him waking and choosing to obey.

- He took Mary as his wife, but they remained celibate until after the birth of Jesus (vs. 25).
- Here we see the strong character and obedience from these "kids"- Mary was probably 14-16, Joseph in his early 20's. God uses people who are willing to be obedient.

"WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?" (MATT. 16:15)

Like the leaders, will you completely **reject** Jesus? Like the crowds, will you casually **observe** Jesus?

Like the disciples, will you **unconditionally follow** Jesus?