

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – OUTLINE OF TEACHING AND AUTHOR

The Gospel of Matthew is directed to Jewish Christians. It is appropriate that it is the opening book of the New Testament for in it the promises of God to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament are recalled, and their fulfillment in Christ, the Messiah of God and King of the Jews in the New Testament, is formally declared – Christ's birth fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies. The Gospel of Matthew opens with the genealogy of Jesus on Joseph, His adoptive father's side, tracing back to King David, fulfilling God's Covenant with David that his Kingdom would be everlasting, and the announcement of His virgin birth (CP Mt 1:1-25. See also author's comments on Mt 1 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein). Mt 2 describes the visit to the baby Jesus by the *Magi*, or wise men, who acknowledged Jesus as King of the Jews, of whom it was prophesied in the Old Testament would come to save His people, and they worshipped Him. Herod, the reigning King, sought to kill the baby Jesus, but God provided for His safety by directing Joseph in a dream to take the baby and his mother, Mary, to Egypt until the death of Herod (CP Mt 2:1-23. See also author's comments on Mt 2 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

In Mt 3 and 4 Jesus ushers in the Kingdom of God at His baptism by John the Baptist, where the Triune God is revealed, after which Jesus fasts for forty days and forty nights and then resists the temptations by the Devil. John the Baptist is cast into prison and Jesus commences His public ministry. He chose the first four of the twelve Disciples who would accompany Him and He went throughout the region preaching salvation through repentance from sin, demonstrating the power of the coming Kingdom by healing all who were sick of their sicknesses and diseased, and delivering others of their torments by demons; He cast out demons from those they possessed. Multitudes followed Him and His fame spread throughout the region (CP Mt 3:1-4:25. See also author's comments on Mt 3-4 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

Next in Mt 5-7 Jesus instructs His followers how to live Godly lives in this present evil world in His *Sermon on the Mount*. In this sermon, Jesus is outlining the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven – a standard of ethics and code of conduct which He expects all who follow Him to abide by. They define the characteristics of Christians as expressed by Jesus, and constitute the conditions of entry onto Heaven, which He has laid down. Christians are to be salt and light in the world, otherwise they will forfeit their place in the Eternal Kingdom; only Spiritual riches really count. The clear teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is that nobody who merely professes faith in Christ for salvation will be saved. Unless they are also totally consecrated to the service of God completely surrendered to the authority of Christ, and doing the work of God's word, they will be eternally damned (CP Mt 5:1-7:29. See also author's comments on Mt 5, 6 and 7 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of**

the New Testament, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

After delivering His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus performed many miracles in Mt Ch 8-9, again fulfilling Old Testament prophecies and demonstrating again that God's Redemptive Plan is all-inclusive; that it provides for physical, as well as Spiritual healing. Jesus' healings in His earthly ministry simply foreshadowed the healings in His atoning death on the Cross. The miracles He performed even included exercising His authority over the elements and the forces of nature – He stilled an underwater earthquake in Ch 8. He called Matthew to follow Him in Ch 9, and foretold His fulfilling of the Old Covenant and its complete abolition in His parable of *Old and New Cloth and Wineskins*. Speaking in parables was an integral part of Jesus' teaching. Parables are sayings that teach by comparison. They are stories drawn from nature or human circumstances to teach moral or Spiritual truths. It is not the story that is of value, but the lesson it teaches (CP Mt 8:1-9:38. See also author's comments on Mt 8-9 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

Following upon those events, in Mt 10-11 Jesus gathered His twelve Disciples and gave them power over Demons, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease. He sent them forth after warning them of the dangers they faced, even from members of their own families. Their mission was to take the Gospel of Salvation to the Jews, but not the Gentiles. The Disciples had to trust in God's provision for their needs to be met through the generosity of the people they witnessed to. Jesus also teaches here that just as there are rewards in Heaven for Believers, so too there are degrees of punishment for unbelievers in Hell. He also impresses upon New Testament Christians here that they must be prepared to self-sacrificially serve God to the end of their earthy lives. They must put the interests of God's kingdom above all else and renounce all self-interests and ambitions. In short, they must be prepared to forsake all for Jesus, to ensure their eternal security. Jesus also impresses upon Christians in His teaching here of their individual responsibility to seek unceasingly in all its manifestations the Eternal Kingdom, to strenuously contend for the things of God and to reject all things that cause enmity with God. He calls all who want to be saved, to come to Him (CP Mt 10:1-11:30. See also author's comments on Mt 10-11 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein. Also see *The Doctrine of Salvation* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**).

Next, in Mt 12-13, Jesus teaches that the Old Testament Sabbath has nothing to do with New Testament Christians. It was merely an Old Testament shadow or type of which Jesus Himself is the New Testament fulfilment. Jesus declares that His true kin are all who do the work of God's Word. There was such a multitude of people following Him that He had to board a ship and stand off from shore to speak to

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them. He taught them about the Kingdom of Heaven in parables. Among many things, He taught that what Christians receive in the future Eternal Kingdom, will be in proportion to their dedication and consecration to the service of God in the present earthly aspect of the Kingdom. After this Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth but he could not perform any miracles there because of their unbelief. They were offended by His teaching. We learn from this visit to Nazareth that Jesus did have four half-brothers and at least three half-sisters – children of Mary to Joseph (CP Mt 12:1-13:58. See also author's comments on Mt 12-13 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

The fame of Jesus' ministry spread rapidly. In Mt 14-15, the regional ruler thought He was John the Baptist, who he had beheaded, come back to life. Here the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed over five thousand people is recorded. This miracle is a Spiritual lesson for Jesus' Disciples of every generation. All they have to do is trust in His provision for their every need to be met in witnessing to His Saving Grace, and He will do exceeding abundantly even above all they could ever ask or think. Soon after this Jesus walked on water, which is humanly impossible, and He bid Peter to do the same. Peter started out to walk on the water, but then he became overwhelmed by his circumstances instead of keeping his eyes on Jesus, and he began to sink. Jesus had to rescue him. This is yet another Spiritual lesson for Jesus' Disciples of every generation. They must keep their eyes upon Jesus and trust implicitly in His faithfulness to His word – God's word has the power within itself for its own fulfilment, and if He bids you to walk on water, He will enable you to do so. You must see your circumstances as being under His Dominion and He will sustain you throughout. In Ch 15 Jesus fed another four thousand plus people this time with seven loaves and a *few* little fish, and again did exceeding abundantly above all that anyone could ask or think. Prior to this He also made blind people see, the dumb to speak, cripples to be made whole, and the lame to walk. (CP Mt 14:1-15:39. See also author's comments on Mt 14-15 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

In Mt 16-17 following, after rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees for asking Him for a sign from Heaven proving who He was, Jesus pronounced the great foundational truth upon which He would build His Church – this is the first mention of the Church on Scripture. Peter's confession of faith in Jesus as *the Christ, the Son of the Living God*, was that truth. Jesus Himself though is the Rock upon which the Church is built, not Peter, as so many in the contemporary Church are taught. Neither was he given any precedence in authority over Jesus' other Apostles, as is also taught. Six days later, in Ch 17, Peter, James, and John were given a preview of Jesus' future glory in God's Eternal Kingdom at His transfiguration on a nearby mountain top. He instructed the Disciples not to reveal to anyone what they had witnessed until He had risen from the dead. He then foretold His death at the hands of the Jewish

religious leaders. Jesus also taught here on mountain moving faith, and once more showed the Disciples how to speak things into being, in the question of the **Tribute Money**. (CP Mt 16:1-17:29. See also author's comments on Mt 16-17 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein. See also author's study *The New Testament Church – Its Essential Nature and Composition According to Scripture* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 3)**).

Next, in Ch 18-19 Jesus used a little child to characterize a true convert to Christianity. He pictures true conversion as the simple, helpless, trusting dependence of those who have no resources of their own, such as little children. He teaches that greatness in the Kingdom is based upon childlike humility of spirit. To impress upon His Disciples the seriousness of sin and the need for self-discipline in their lives, He taught that if any part of their body causes them to sin they should drastically rid themselves of that part and enter into Eternal life without it rather than go to Hell with their bodies intact. Sin is so serious, and Hell so terrible, that sin must be dealt with in a radical way if need be to save oneself from Hell. Every influence of sin in the lives of Christians must be opposed and rejected, whatever the cost. Jesus also lays down the rules here for conflict resolution in the Church. Regardless of how they are treated by others, Christians are to forgive them, irrespective of how often they have been offended against. Forgiveness is a matter of life or death for Christians. As God has forgiven them so too they must forgive others, even their enemies, or they will forfeit their place in God's Eternal Kingdom. In Ch 19 Jesus speaks against divorce and remarriage except on the ground of sexual immorality. He also teaches that celibacy is not required for Christians; it only applies to those who have been given a special Grace to forego marriage (CP Mt 18:1-19:30. See also author's comments on Mt 18-19 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

In His next parable, *The Labourers in the Vineyard*, in Mt 20-21, Jesus teaches that salvation is by Grace alone, not by merit. Nobody will be saved simply because they worked long and hard in the service of God. New Christians in their service to God are just as important to Him as those who have served Him the longest. Jesus determines to go to Jerusalem where He will die, but will be raised up to life again after three days. Jesus also teaches here how greatness is defined in God's Eternal order as opposed to how it is defined by worldly standards. In the world it means having dominion and authority over others. In God's order it means being servant of all, as Jesus Himself was. As well, He was ready to die as the Atoning Sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, yet He Himself was sinless. On the way to Jerusalem Jesus restored sight to the eyes of two blind men. Though they could not see Him, they acknowledged who He was and they then followed Him on His journey. They represent all in faith who believe in Jesus and cry out to Him for healing and salvation, without ever having seen Him. They will be both healed and saved. As He approached Jerusalem Jesus sent two Disciples to

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bring Him an ass, upon which He will enter Jerusalem, fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy by Zechariah over the Jews that their King would come to them riding an ass. The multitude that followed Jesus to Jerusalem also acclaimed Him as the Messiah; they spread garments on the ground for Him to walk on, while others cut branches off trees and strewed them in the way.

Jesus went into the Temple in Jerusalem and cast out those who were using it for trading goods. Many who were blind and lame came to Him in the Temple and He healed them. Here Jesus declared His Deity. The next morning, feeling hungry, He saw a fig tree, but it only had leaves on it, no fruit, He cursed the tree and it died from the roots up. Jesus used this as an object lesson in faith for Christians who trust implicitly in God. Not only will they perform miracles like Jesus did with the fig tree, they can cause literal mountains to move if they will but act out their faith, without doubting anything. (CP Mt 20:1-21:46. See also author's comments on Mt 20-21 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

Next, in Mt 22-23, Jesus told the *Parable of the Marriage Feast* which illustrates the central truth that although there will be many professing Christians in the contemporary Church, not all will be truly committed to the service of God, or yielded to the authority of His word. They want to partake of the Kingdom benefits, but do not want to be bound by the rules of entry into the Kingdom laid down by God in Scripture. The Jewish religious leaders then tried to entrap Jesus with trick questions. In responding to them Jesus teaches first up that Christians must be scrupulously honest in fulfilling their civic responsibilities as well as giving to God what belongs to Him. He also teaches that in the Eternal state after their resurrection, husband-wife relationship will not continue. Because they will no longer be subjected to death, there will be no need to procreate life, which is what the purpose of marriage is, so in that sense they will be like the Angels of God in Heaven, who are neither given nor taken in marriage. Next, Jesus teaches on the immortality of the Soul, and the fact that God is the God of living, not the dead – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are all alive – proves the resurrection will take place as Scriptures clearly teach. In Ch 23 Jesus denounces the Scribes and the Pharisees, and strictly forbids the use of titles by Christians in the New Testament Church. He mourns over the impending destruction of Jerusalem and foretells His Second Coming (CP Mt 22:1-23:39. See also author's comments on Mt 22-23 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

The teaching in Chapters 24-25 next in the Gospel of Matthew, is entirely prophetic; it points to Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, the End Times and the Second Coming of Christ. The events predestined to overtake the earth then will not affect Christians. The New Testament Church will already be in Heaven, having been translated there by Jesus at least seven years previously in the First Resurrection. The events of Mt

24-25 are directed to the inhabitants of earth still living in that era and concerns Israel and her enemies more than any other nation. However, the parables Jesus told are applicable to Believers in all eras (CP Mt 24:1-25:46. See also author's comments on Mt 24-25 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

In Ch 26 next in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds His Disciples that the Feast of the Passover would be in two days after which He will be betrayed and then crucified. Soon after this the Jewish religious leaders met to plot how to kill Him. Jesus went to Simon the leper's house in Bethany where an obviously Spiritually discerning woman anointed Him with expensive perfume, foreshadowing His appointed death and burial. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, arranged with the Jewish religious leaders to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Jesus celebrated the Passover with the disciples, during which He instituted the *Lord's Supper* or *Communion*, as Christians also call it. Soon after in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss so the mob with him could take Jesus captive, thus fulfilling Old Testament Scripture. All that happened to Jesus was predestined by God and foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament. This all forms part of God's Redemptive Plan for fallen man. Next, in Ch 27, we learn that, remorseful for what he had done to Jesus, Judas Iscariot kills himself. We also learn here that while the Romans physically killed Jesus, the Jews instigated it, and in so doing called down a curse upon Israel which will remain until they accept Christ Nationally as their Messiah King (CP Mt 26:1-27:66. See also author's comments on Mt 26-27 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and all related cross-reference scriptures and studies referred to therein).

Finally, Mt 28 teaches the reality of the future resurrection of every one of God's children, Old Testament and New Testament alike, as God has already decreed. Christ being raised up from the dead prefigures and ensures their resurrection as well, in due course. Immediately prior to His ascension to Heaven, in closing the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gave three distinct and separate commands to His followers from that day forth. They are to preach the Gospel, baptize new converts to Christ, and teach them the importance of doing the work of God's Word. These commands are directed to the entire New Testament Church, not only to those in public ministry, as many in the contemporary Church are taught. Every New Testament Christian throughout all generations has this authority.

Although the author of the Gospel of Matthew is not positively identified in Scripture, Church tradition teaches that it was Matthew or Levi, as he was also named, the tax collector - one of the original twelve disciples Jesus called to follow Him (CP Mt 9:9-13, Mk 2:14, Lu 5:27-29 with Mt 10:1-4). The instant readiness of Matthew in response to Jesus' call to follow Him, and then preparing a banquet in his own house in His honour, indicates that Matthew knew who Jesus was, and that he had already decided to follow Him and become one of His disciples. Apart

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from being named in the lists of the Apostles, no further mention of Matthew is made in the New Testament (CP also Mk 3:13-19 and Ac 1:13).