

Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew

Date: 30th March 2025

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Section 1: Introduction – Why Study Matthew?

Today we're starting a Bible study, focusing on the Gospel of Matthew. I've chosen Matthew because it was the first Gospel written to record the works and teachings of Jesus Christ. At that time, no New Testament books existed—only the Old Testament scriptures were available, in scrolls or handwritten copies.

Matthew's Gospel would have been copied and circulated among the early believers. It draws heavily upon the Old Testament, showing its fulfilment in Christ.

Section 2: Who Was Matthew? (Matthew 9:9)

Matthew was appointed by Jesus to be an apostle. The word *apostle* means “one who is sent”. Matthew was one of the twelve men Jesus sent out to preach the gospel.

Matthew 9:9 tells us:

> “And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.”

Matthew was a tax collector—sitting at the “receipt of custom,” meaning he collected taxes for the Roman government. The Jewish people, under Roman rule, deeply resented tax collectors. Yet Jesus chose Matthew, a man most Jews would have despised, and said: *Follow me.*

Section 3: The Calling of the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:2–4)

Matthew was not alone in this special calling. Jesus selected twelve apostles to serve as His close companions and messengers.

Matthew 10:2–4 lists them:

> “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter... and Matthew the publican...”

Matthew is listed among the twelve. This wasn't just a symbolic act. Jesus was appointing representatives of His kingdom—men who would carry His message

with authority.

Section 4: Judas' Betrayal and the Meaning of 'Apostle'

Among the twelve was Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Jesus. Even today, the name "Judas" is synonymous with betrayal.

> "And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him." (Matthew 10:4)

After Judas' death, the eleven remaining apostles continued Christ's work. The term *apostle* speaks of someone sent out—and that's exactly what Jesus did with these men.

Section 5: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20)

Following His resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples a final command:

> "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost..." (Matthew 28:19)

This is called the **Great Commission**. Jesus gave these apostles the authority to teach, baptise, and make disciples across the world. Their teaching became the foundation of Christian doctrine.

Section 6: Why Matthew's Gospel Is So Significant

Matthew's Gospel was likely the **first written record** of Jesus' life and teachings. It was authored by a man who:

- Walked with Jesus,
- Heard His sermons,
- Saw His miracles,
- And was commissioned by Him personally.

It was the only written Gospel at the time, making it a vital source for the early church and for us today.

Section 7: Timeline – When Was Matthew Written?

Jesus died around **30 AD**, and Matthew likely wrote his Gospel between **31–38 AD**. This places it within just a few years of the resurrection. It was the earliest New Testament book and likely written during a time of great upheaval in

Jerusalem—when Christians were being persecuted and the apostles were spreading the gospel with urgency.

Section 8: The Role of the Old Testament in Matthew's Writing

Matthew draws heavily from the Old Testament. His Gospel constantly refers to the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. He uses phrases like:

> “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet...”

This shows how Jesus' life fulfilled ancient prophecy. Matthew bridges the Old and New Testaments.

Section 9: The Genealogy of Jesus (Matthew Chapter 1)

Matthew opens with a genealogy:

> “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1)

He then lists **42 generations**, divided into three groups of fourteen. This genealogy:

- Proves Jesus' royal and covenantal lineage,
- Shows God's faithfulness through history,
- And includes unexpected names like Rahab and Ruth — highlighting God's grace.

Section 10: Why Genealogies Matter – David, Abraham & Covenant Promises

Matthew ties Jesus to **Abraham** (father of the Jews) and **David** (king of Israel). This is to show Jesus fulfils the covenants made to both:

- Through Abraham, all nations would be blessed.
- Through David, God promised an eternal throne.

Matthew draws from Old Testament sources to trace these lines, showing that Jesus is the rightful heir of the promises.

Section 11: Tracing Back to Genesis (Genesis 25:19)

Matthew's genealogy echoes the structure of Genesis:

> “These are the generations of Isaac...” (Genesis 25:19)

By writing “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ”, Matthew is aligning Jesus with the great redemptive history of Scripture.

This also affirms the “reliability of the book of Genesis”, which Matthew clearly treats as historical and foundational.

Section 12: Matthew's Source Material & Authority

Matthew, being a Jew, would have known the Old Testament well. The genealogies he uses come from books like Genesis, 1 Chronicles, and Ruth.

More importantly, Matthew was:

- An “eyewitness” of Jesus,
- A “commissioned apostle”,
- And “inspired by the Holy Spirit” to write.

His Gospel carries the full weight of apostolic and divine authority.

Section 13: Understanding the Gospels Chronologically (Before 70 AD)

The Gospels were written “before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD”. Matthew's Gospel, in particular, contains prophecies of judgment on the temple (e.g., Matthew 24:2), which were yet to happen at the time of writing.

This early date means the Gospel of Matthew was circulating among believers “while eyewitnesses were still alive”.

Section 14: Other New Testament Books & Their Dates

- “Matthew”: c. 31–38 AD
- “Mark”: c. 40–45 AD
- “Luke”: c. 50–60 AD
- “John”: c. 60–65 AD

- **Acts**: before 64 AD
- **Paul's letters**: AD 48–66
- **Revelation**: likely before 70 AD

All were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, showing a unified and urgent testimony of Jesus Christ during the “final decade” of the Jewish age.

Section 15: Controversy – Was Mark Written First?

Some scholars say Mark came first because it's shorter and simpler. But:

- Early church fathers affirmed **Matthew was first**.
- Matthew was an **apostle**; Mark was not.
- Matthew's Gospel has a **Jewish focus**, while Mark is more Gentile-oriented.

The theory that Matthew copied Mark is modern and speculative. The early church always honoured Matthew as the foundational Gospel.

Section 16: Matthew as a Foundation for the Whole New Testament

Matthew lays the groundwork for:

- Jesus' identity as Messiah,
- The ethical teachings of Christ (e.g., Sermon on the Mount),
- The kingdom of heaven,
- And the Great Commission.

The rest of the New Testament builds on themes and truths first introduced in Matthew. It is a foundational text for Christian faith and theology.

Section 17: Closing Reflection – The Importance of Matthew for Believers Today

Matthew's Gospel remains vital because:

- It shows us **who Jesus is**,
- Grounds our faith in **fulfilled prophecy**,

- Teaches us **how to live**,
- And calls us to **make disciples**.

To study Matthew is to hear the voice of Christ through the pen of one who walked with Him. It remains a faithful, Spirit-inspired witness to the gospel — a book every believer should know well.

Let us read it with reverence, faith, and a readiness to follow the One it reveals.