

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

May, 1990

I. The book of Matthew.

- A. Matthew is the gospel written by a Jew, to Jews, about a Jew.
- B. Matthew's objective is to present Jesus as the King of the Jews, the long awaited Messiah.
- C. By a careful selection of Old Testament quotations, Matthew documents Jesus Christ's claim to be Messiah.
- D. His genealogy, baptism, teaching, and miracles all point to the same conclusion: Christ is the King of the Jews.
- E. At an early date, this gospel was given the title *Kata Matthaion*, "According to Matthew."
- F. As the title suggests, other gospel accounts were known at that time (the word gospel was added later).
- G. Matthew was placed first in the canon of New Testament books by the early Church because it is a natural bridge between the Testaments.

II. The author of Matthew.

- A. The early Church uniformly attributed this gospel to Matthew, and no tradition to the contrary ever emerged.
- B. This book was known early and accepted quickly.
- C. No Aramaic Gospel of Matthew has been found, and it is evident that Matthew is not a Greek translation of an Aramaic original.
- D. Matthew, the son of Alphaeus (Mk.2:14), occupied the unpopular post of tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government.
- E. Matthew ("gift of the Lord") was also surnamed Levi, Mk.2:14; Lk.15:27.
- F. As a tax collector (publican) he was not well received by his Jewish countrymen.
- G. When Jesus called him to discipleship (9:9-13; Mk.2:14; Lk.5:27, 28), his response was immediate.
- H. He gave a large reception for Jesus in his house so that his friends and associates could meet Jesus.
 - I. He was chosen as one of the twelve apostles, and the last appearance of his name in the Bible is in Act.1:13.
 - J. Matthew's life from that point is veiled in tradition.

III. The time of Matthew.

- A. Like all the gospels, Matthew is not easy to date: suggestions have ranged from 40AD to 140AD.
- B. The expression "to this day" (27:8; 28:15) indicates that a substantial period of time has passed since the events described in the book.
- C. The events also point to a date prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD; the Olivet Discourse (24-25) anticipates this event.
- D. If Matthew depended on Mark's gospel as a source, the date of Mark would determine the earliest date for Matthew.
- E. The likely time frame for this book is 58-68AD.
- F. It may have been written in Palestine or Syrian Antioch.

IV. The Christ of Matthew.

- A. Matthew presents Jesus as Israel's promised Messianic King, 1:32; 2:2, 6; 3:17; 4:15-17; 21:5, 9; 22:44, 45; 26:64; 27:11,27-37.
- B. To show that Jesus fulfills the qualifications for the Messiah, Matthew uses more Old Testament quotations and allusions than any other book (almost 130).
- C. Jesus is the climax of the prophets, 12:39, 40; 13:13-15, 35; 17:5-13; "*the Son of Man*", 24:30ff; the "*servant*" of the Lord, 12:17-21; and the "*Son of David*" (the Davidic reference occurs nine

times in Matthew, but only six times in all of the other gospels).

V. Some keys to the Gospel of Matthew.

- A. Jesus is presented as a King.
- B. The doctrine of the Church is first mentioned directly in the confession of Peter, Mt.16:16-19.
- C. The Great Commission is given to the Church, Mt.28:18-20.
- D. The twelfth chapter is the turning point of Matthew when the Pharisees, acting as the leadership of the nation of Israel, formally reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah, saying that His power comes not from God but from Satan.
- E. Christ's ministry changes immediately with His new teaching in parables, increased attention given to His disciples, and His repeated statement that His death is near.
- F. There are five major discourses in the book.
 - 1. The Sermon on the Mount, 5:37:27.
 - 2. Instructions upon the sending out of the twelve, 10:5-42.
 - 3. Parables of the kingdom, 13:3-52.
 - 4. Terms of discipleship, 18:3-35.
 - 5. The Olivet Discourse, 24:4-25:46.
- G. Matthew's structure is seen in the phrase that concludes all five discourses, "*when Jesus had finished.*"
- H. In the first eleven chapters, the focus is upon the offer of the King to the nation of Israel, 11:2; the focus in the rest of the book is the rejection of the King by the nation.
 - I. The phrase "*the kingdom of heaven*" appears twenty eight times in Matthew but nowhere else in the New Testament.

VI. An outline of Matthew.

- A. The birth and infancy of Messiah, 1:1-2:23.
 - 1. Genealogy, 1:1-17.
 - 2. Birth narratives, 1:18-2:18.
 - 3. Removal from Nazareth, 2:19-23.
- B. Prelude to the Messianic ministry, 3:14:25.
 - 1. Preparatory ministry of John the Baptist, 3:1-12.
 - 2. Baptism of Jesus, 3:13-17.
 - 3. Temptation of Jesus, 4:1-11.
 - 4. Summary of the Galilean ministry, 4:12-25.
- C. Discourse 1: righteousness of the kingdom 5:1-7:29.
- D. Narrative 1: miracles of the kingdom, 8:1-9:38.
- E. Discourse 2: proclamation of the kingdom, 10:1-42.
- F. Narrative 2: rejection of the kingdom, 11:1-12:50.
- G. Discourse 3: parables (mystery) of the kingdom, 13:1-58.
- H. Narrative 3: crisis of the kingdom, 14:1-17:27.
 - I. Discourse 4: discipleship in the kingdom, 18:1-35.
 - J. Narrative 4: conflict on the way to Jerusalem, 19:1-23:39.
- K. Discourse 5: future of the kingdom, 24:1-25:46.
- L. Passion of the King, 26:1-27:66.
- M. The resurrection, 28:1-20.

A Jewish tax collector named Matthew writes to a Jewish audience to convince them that the King of the Jews has come.