



**MATTHEW**

*The Prophecy Fulfilled*

**The Anglican Parishes of Whittington,  
Weeford and Hints**

*What the Lord requires of you is to do justice and to love mercy and to  
walk humbly with your God*

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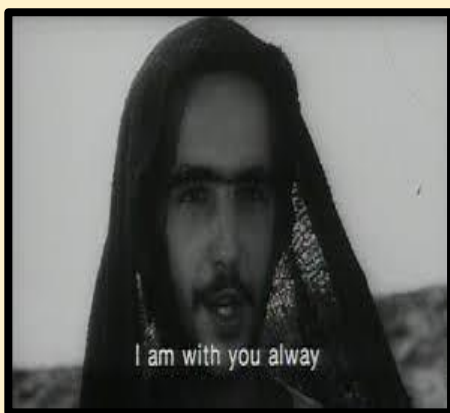
**The Gospel of Saint  
Matthew**

**An Introduction to this  
sacred text**



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## Who is St. Matthew?

He is Matthew (Levi), the Galilean tax collector who became one of Jesus' disciples. He collected taxes at station in Capernaum (Matthew 9:9). Matthew makes few appearances in Scripture. We first meet him when Jesus calls him to be an apostle:

“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. ‘Follow me,’ he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him” (9:9).

Luke reports that when Jesus called him, Matthew “got up, left everything and followed him” (Luke

5:28). Some scholars think that “Matthew,” which means “gift of God,” may be a new name given by Jesus, just as he had renamed



Simon as Peter. As a “tax collector,” Matthew worked for the hated Roman government, thus, he would have been seen as a collaborator with the enemy. In addition to make their living, tax collectors were allowed to add their commission to the taxes. Many were quite wealthy.

Soon after this dramatic calling, Matthew hosted a dinner for Jesus and the other disciples. The dinner guests also included “many tax collectors and ‘sinners’” (9:10). Evidently Matthew wanted to introduce Jesus to his friends and associates. This disturbed the Pharisees and teachers of the law (the religious establishment), who wondered why Jesus would associate with such undesirables. Jesus answered that he had not come “to call the righteous, but sinners” (9:13). Matthew is next mentioned in the list of the twelve disciples, where he is called “Matthew the tax collector” (10:3, see Acts 1: 13).

Tradition holds that St. Matthew preached the gospel for eight years throughout Judea and then traveled to Persia, Parthia, and

Ethiopia, where he died as a martyr in about A.D. 62.

### **When Did He Write His Gospel?**

St. Matthew must have written his account prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because there was no hint in Matthew's record that Jerusalem was in ruins. Some scholars state that since Matthew wrote to the Jews he must have written his account in Aramaic the language they would understand. This makes it the earliest Gospel. Others say, Mark's account is the earliest. Matthew's gospel was probably written from Antioch (in Syria) in about A.D. 60 to meet the needs of the Jewish Christians in Judea and those dispersed around the Roman Empire.

### **How Important Is Geography?**

Matthew's Gospel focuses on Jesus' ministry in Galilee and ends with his resurrection appearance there and his promise to be forever present with those who believe in

him. Galilee of the foreigners is where Jews and Greek met with Jesus.

Matthew saw many correspondences between the places in Jesus' life and Israel's past history. The geography involved in Jesus' birth in Bethlehem overlays Israel's past history of King David's birth. The killing of the babies in the Bethlehem area revived the horrors of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Jesus' trip to Egypt and return to Israel retraced Israel's ancient descent into and exodus from Egyptian bondage. Jesus' wandering in the Judean wilderness for forty days followed the pattern of Israel's forty-year wilderness wanderings. Jesus' sermon from the mountain (Matthew 5–7) and his glorious appearance on the mountain (Matthew 17) linked back to Moses' declaration of God's laws and the radiance of his face. But the



correspondence between where Jesus and Israel went was designed to show what kind of man Jesus was. In all the places where Israel failed, Jesus was perfectly obedient and powerful. Circumstances and geography combine to reveal Jesus' perfect authority.

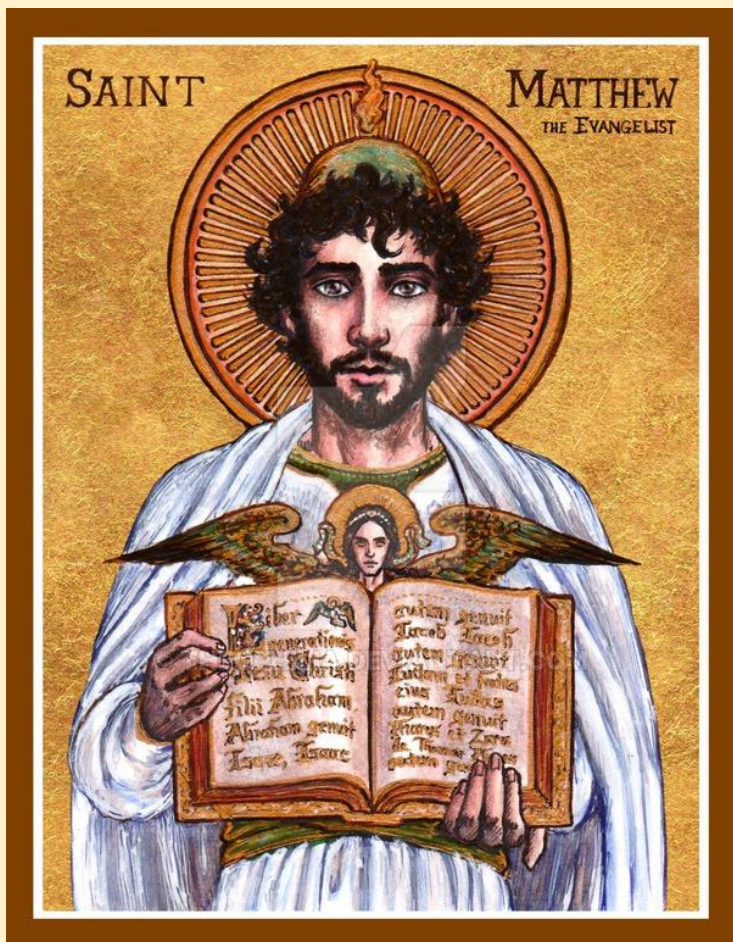
### **Who Did He Write To?**

He wrote to the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians: Matthew doesn't explain Jewish customs (for example, ceremonial cleansing and Passover)—that would be expected for a Jewish audience. But he does stop to interpret words like “Immanuel” (1:23), “Golgotha” (27:33), and Christ's prayer on the cross (“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’—which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”—27:46). This also indicates that the primary language of these readers probably was Greek.

This Gospel is saturated with citations from the Old Testament Scriptures. Fifty-three of these references are quotations and seventy-six are allusions. Usually these references are



used to prove a point, especially regarding Jesus as the Messiah who fulfills Old Testament prophecies.





## **What Message Did He Want to Convey?**

### **• JESUS CHRIST THE KING**

Jesus is revealed as the King of kings: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (1:18-25); as a baby, he received gifts and worship from the kings of the east (2:1-12); he was endorsed and affirmed by God the Father (3:16-17); he defeated Satan (4:1-11); he taught with authority (7:28-29); he demonstrated his power over sickness (8:1-13), death (9:23-26), nature (8:23-27), and demons (8:28-34); he triumphed over death (28:1-10). These dramatic and profound incidents show Jesus' true identity.

Importance for today: Too often we live as though Jesus were merely an impressive historical figure, or we treat him as just a traveling companion on our journey through life. Instead, we should give him his rightful place as king of our lives, our sovereign ruler to whom we give our total devotion and obedience.

## • THE MESSIAH

Jesus fulfilled the inspired predictions of the prophets concerning the Messiah, the one for whom the Jews had been waiting for centuries. Yet tragically, they didn't recognize their Messiah when he came because they were expecting a conquering king, one who would deliver them from Roman oppression. If they had read deeper, they would have realized that the "Son of Man" must first suffer and die (17:22-23) as the "suffering Servant" (Isaiah 53) before returning in power and glory. They would have realized that the true purpose of God's anointed deliverer was to free people from sin's oppression, not merely to defeat the Romans and rule an earthly empire.

Importance for today: Because Jesus fulfilled the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament, we can see that the Bible is true and reliable. Because Jesus was sent by God,

we can know that we can trust him with our lives. He is our Messiah, our Saviour.

## • **KINGDOM OF GOD**

Jesus came to begin his kingdom. This kingdom, however, is not earthly, determined by geography, military might, political power, or financial influence. God's kingdom is a kingdom of the heart. Eventually, God's full kingdom will be realized at Christ's return when he comes to annihilate the forces of evil and gather his loyal subjects to himself.

Importance for today: Because Christ's kingdom is first a kingdom of the heart, we enter the kingdom through heartfelt faith—believing in Christ as God's Son and our Saviour, trusting in him alone to save us from sin and to change our lives. Once we belong to him, we must do the work of his kingdom, living for him and spreading the good news about Christ to others. And we must always be prepared for his return.

## • JESUS' TEACHINGS

Jesus was a master teacher, teaching with authority and reaching people at their point of need. Jesus taught the people through sermons, illustrations, parables, and personal example. Through these teachings, he revealed the true ingredients of faith, how to be fruitful, and how to guard against hypocrisy. Those who were listening and were open and ready understood Jesus and gladly received and responded to the truth.

Importance for today: We can know what God is like by looking at Jesus (see John 14:6-10). And we can know how God wants us to live by listening carefully to what Jesus taught. His teachings show us how to live for him right now and how to prepare for life in his eternal kingdom. Jesus lived what he taught, providing the perfect example for us to follow. Who forms your way of thinking? politicians, celebrities, philosophers, friends, family or Jesus?

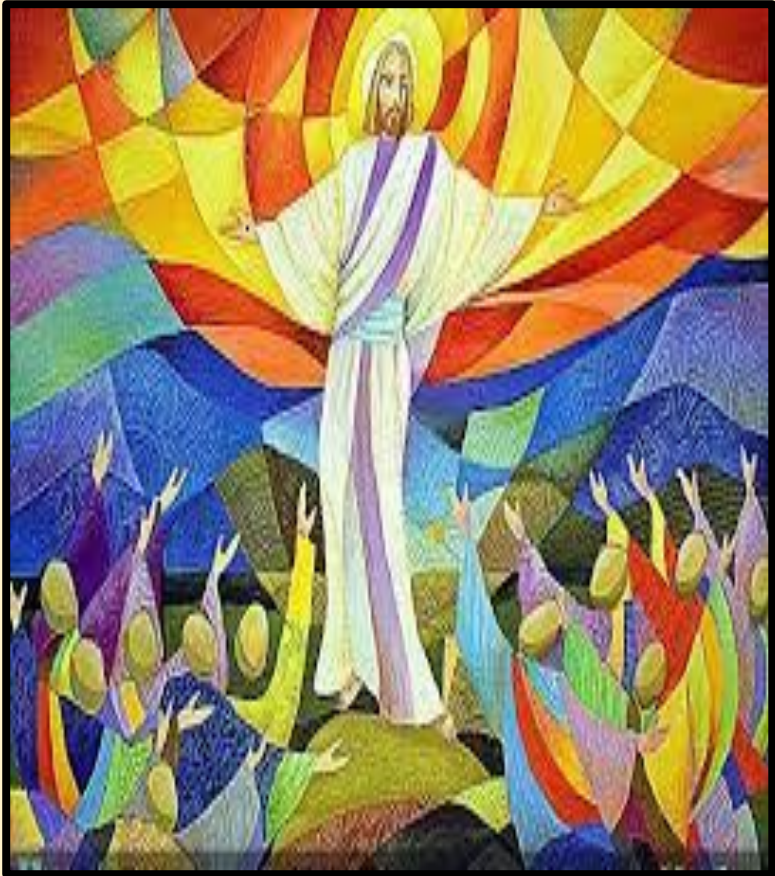
## • RESURRECTION

When Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin and death, he rose in power as the true King. With this incredible victory, the most important event in history, Jesus proved that he truly was the Son of God and that what he lived and taught was true. He also established his credentials as King with power and authority over evil. Jesus does not lie in a grave in Palestine—he is alive!

Importance for today: Christ's resurrection shows that not even death could stop God's plan of offering eternal life. Jesus is true and alive; we serve a risen Saviour! The Resurrection also gives hope to all who believe in Jesus—we know that we will live with him and that one day we will experience a resurrection like his. No matter how bleak the outlook or difficult and painful our situation, we can hope in him. In the meantime, our role is to tell his story to all the earth so that everyone may share in his victory. This world is dying and passing

away, but Jesus is alive and people can live forever.

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## Books You May Want to Read

J.T.Caroll ( 2016) Jesus and the Gosepls

Max Lucado (2007) Life Lessons :The Gospel of St Matthew

Kenneth McKintosh (2017) The Winged Man the Good News According to Matthew (Celtic)

Henrey Wandsborough (2002) the Gospel According to Matthew

Walter Wilson (2014) Healing in the Gospel of St Matthew

N.T.Wright (2209) Matthew 25 Studies

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