

AN OVERVIEW

Below you will find an overview of the sections to be covered each week. Reading the text ahead of each week's study will be helpful, but not essential to the discussion. The readings vary in length to group similar materials together for study.

| Week | Passage | General Topic |
|------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 1:1-2:23 | Genealogy and Birth |
| 2 | 3:1-4:16 | Baptism and Temptation |
| 3 | 4:17-6:34 | Jesus begins to teach |
| 4 | 7:1-9:34 | Jesus exercises authority |
| 5 | 9:35-11:30 | Jesus sends out his disciples |
| 6 | 12:1-13:52 | Preaching with Parables |
| 7 | 13:53-16:20 | Jesus' miracles by the sea |
| 8 | 16:21-17:27 | Preparing for his passion |
| 9 | 18:1-35 | The kingdom of heaven |
| 10 | 19:1-20:34 | Jesus in Judea |
| 11 | 21:1-25:46 | Jesus in Jerusalem |
| 12 | 26 | Last Supper and Crucifixion |
| 13 | 27-28 | Resurrection |

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TO FULFILL WHAT HAD BEEN SPOKEN



**A THIRTEEN WEEK STUDY
OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

TO FULFILL WHAT HAD BEEN SPOKEN

This Bible Study assumes little or no current knowledge of the Gospel of Matthew. During the 13-week study, we will explore this Gospel's unique way of presenting Jesus' story. We will not compare passages in Matthew to other Gospels. Instead, we will concentrate on hearing Matthew's unique voice.

ABOUT MATTHEW

The first Gospel is attributed to Matthew, the tax collector who became one of Jesus' disciples. The book itself does not make this claim, but it has been referred to as The Gospel According to Matthew at least since Papius wrote of it in A.D. 125. However, Papius referred to it as according to Matthew. The Greek word is *kata*, which can mean "by" or "according to," so it is possible that a scribe wrote down the stories Matthew told.

The highly structured account also lends itself to the idea that the book was written by a skilled scribe. One way to see this is how the book breaks down into three sections of text:

- 1:1 to 4:16 Introduction to the person of Jesus
- 4:17 to 16:20 The ministry of Jesus to Israel and Jewish repudiation of him
- 16:21-28:20 Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, his death and resurrection

This outline stems from the passages of 4:17 and 16:21, each of which begins "From that time..."

Other scholars point to an outline for the book in which there is a prologue, five books (each with a section of narrative followed by a section of discourse), ending with an epilogue. Whichever outline you prefer, it is hard to miss the fact that Matthew has carefully arranged the way the story is presented.

The established church has long loved the Gospel of Matthew. For seventeen centuries, the Gospel has come first in the Bible and has been favored for public readings on feast days and other special occasions.

MATTHEW'S USE OF HEBREW SCRIPTURE

Matthew alludes to or quotes Old Testament scripture 123 times. Matthew continually connects Jesus ministry to prophecies concerning the Messiah. The Gospel shows how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures. Matthew clearly loves Jewish law and sees Jesus as the new Torah. Jesus is the clearest picture possible of what it means to walk in the Jewish teachings of Torah.

Matthew, unlike the other Gospel seems to be translating the Hebrew himself rather than relying on the Greek translation (known as the Septuagint), which the other Gospels quote. These and other clues within the text point to Matthew as the most Jewish of the Gospels. In light of this, it is important not to hear Matthew as anti-Semitic (which is a 19th century term for people who are against the Jewish race). Instead Matthew is pushing his understanding of Jesus as Messiah over and against the assertions of Jews who did not follow Jesus.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR READING

Notice the ongoing pattern of prophecy and fulfillment. Matthew is building a case to convince Jews that Jesus is their promised Messiah. Matthew stands inside Jewish tradition, not against it.

Look for ways in which Matthew's Gospel highlights mercy. Hosea 6:6 is quoted twice, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." For Matthew, the Good News of Jesus comes with ethical demands on the believer, but these are tempered by God's love and mercy (see Mt. 18:21-22).

Notice how Matthew asserts Jesus' authority. Jesus teaches as one with authority and in chapters 8 and 9, we see Jesus exercising authority over demons, sins and the wind. In 10:1, Jesus' conveys authority to his disciples. This is repeated and amplified in The Great Commission of 28:18-20. Jesus' authority becomes the church's authority. This is not surprising as Matthew is the church's book. Only Matthew uses the term *Ekklesia* (meaning an assembly or a group called out), which is our term for church.

—The Rev. Frank Logue