

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW - INTRO

WHAT IS A "GOSPEL"?

THERE ARE A FEW TYPES OF LITERATURE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THERE ARE 21 LETTERS (EPISTLES) WHICH SERVE AS THE BULK OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE GREEK SCRIPTURES AND OF COURSE THEY CONCLUDE WITH PROPHECY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION. THE NEW TESTAMENT OPENS WITH 4 BOOKS CALLED GOSPELS WHICH COULD BE DESCRIBED AS HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHIES OF JESUS. GOSPELS ARE NARRATIVE (OR STORIES) AND DISCOURSE (DIALOGUE OR TEACHING).

THERE ARE 4 GOSPELS - MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE AND JOHN. MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE ARE KNOWN AS THE "SYNOPTIC GOSPELS" BECAUSE THEY FOLLOW A SIMILAR PATTERN OF TELLING THE STORY AND LIFE OF JESUS AND INCLUDE MANY OF THE SAME STORIES. SYNOPTIC MEANS "SEEN TOGETHER" OR "SEE THE SAME". JOHN'S GOSPEL IS NOT "SYNOPTIC" BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN VERY DIFFERENTLY AND INCLUDES STORIES AND TEACHINGS EXCLUSIVE TO HIS WORK.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL?

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL IS THE FACT THAT MATTHEW WROTE IT. MATTHEW AND JOHN WERE THE ONLY APOSTLES WHO WE HAVE GOSPEL WRITINGS FROM. (MARK AND LUKE WERE LATER DISCIPLES OF JESUS BUT NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL 12). WHY IS THIS SIGNIFICANT? MATTHEW WAS THERE FOR MUCH OF WHAT HE WILL RECORD AND PROVIDES EYEWITNESS CREDIBILITY TO HIS WRITING.

WHO WAS MATTHEW?

MATTHEW 9:9-13 - MATTHEW, A TAX COLLECTOR, BECOMES A DISCIPLE

THIS LIKELY OCCURRED IN THE CITY OF CAPERNAUM (V. 1)

MARK 2:1-2, 13-17 - SIMILAR ACCOUNT, TAX COLLECTOR CALLED "LEVI SON OF ALPHEUS"

LUKE 5:27-32 - DINNER TOOK PLACE IN LEVI'S HOUSE

MATTHEW & LEVI ARE THE SAME PERSON - A FORMER TAX COLLECTOR CALLED BY JESUS TO BECOME A DISCIPLE. IT COULD BE MATTHEW WAS HIS GREEK NAME AND LEVI WAS HIS JEWISH NAME OR THAT JESUS GAVE HIM A NEW NAME LIKE HE DID SIMON/PETER.

TAX COLLECTORS WERE CONSIDERED TRAITORS TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY WORKED FOR THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT TO COLLECT TAXES FROM JEWISH CITIZENS, THEIR OWN PEOPLE. IF THAT WEREN'T ENOUGH OF AN OFFENSE, TAX COLLECTORS WERE KNOWN TO MAKE THEIR LIVING BY COLLECTING MORE THAN JUST WHAT WAS REQUIRED BY ROME. MANY TAX COLLECTORS WERE RICH. (CONSIDER THAT MATTHEW HAS A HOME AND IS ABLE TO GIVE A "BIG RECEPTION" FOR JESUS (LUKE 5:29).

Q - WHY DO YOU THINK MATTHEW JUST GOT UP AND LEFT?

MATTHEW 10:1-4 - MATTHEW IS ONE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (SIMILAR LISTS IN MARK 3 AND LUKE 6)

MATTHEW IS A PART OF THE INNER CIRCLE OF JESUS. THINK ABOUT WHAT THIS SAYS ABOUT JESUS' LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE AND HOW HE REDEEMS OUR PAST. WHEN HE IS LISTED WITH THE OTHER APOSTLES IN MATTHEW 10, HE IS CALLED "MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR"! EVEN MORE AMAZING IS HOW THIS STANDS OUT IN LIGHT OF OTHER DISCIPLES.

IF TAX COLLECTORS WERE CONSIDERED ROMAN SYMPATHIZERS WHO RATHER THAN WANTING TO END ROME'S OCCUPATION OF ISRAEL JOINED FORCES WITH THEM - THE ANTI-TAX COLLECTOR WOULD HAVE BEEN A ZEALOT - A ZEALOUS JEWISH POLITICAL GROUP THAT WAS COMMITTED TO OVERTHROWING THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT - BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY. TAX COLLECTORS TOOK THE PEOPLE'S MONEY FOR ROME AND ZEALOTS WANTED TO STIR UP THE PEOPLE TO VIOLENTLY REBEL AGAINST ROME.

AND WHO IS SITTING AT DINNER EACH NIGHT WITH JESUS AND WALKING TWO BY TWO THROUGH THE DUSTY ROADS OF GALILEE? MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR ~~AND~~ SIMON THE ZEALOT. THEIR CALLING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS NOT ONLY TRUMPED THEIR PREVIOUS IDENTITIES, IT TRANSFORMED THEM - AND UNITED FORMER ENEMIES AS BROTHERS.

ACTS 1:9-14 - MATTHEW WITH OTHER APOSTLES AFTER ASCENSION (AND BEYOND)

THERE IS NOTHING ELSE RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE ABOUT MATTHEW. HE NEVER SPEAKS IN THE GOSPELS OR ACTS BUT HIS GLORIOUS GOSPEL WORK SPEAKS PLENTY. AND HE HAS REMAINED WITH THE 12 AFTER THE DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION! AND HIS FORMER JOB AS TAX COLLECTOR MAY HAVE PREPARED HIM FOR THIS WORK.

"HIS OCCUPATION AS A TAX COLLECTOR IMPLIES THAT HE HAD TRAINING IN SCRIBAL TECHNIQUES AND WAS THUS ABLE TO WRITE, WHILE HIS IDENTITY AS A GALILEAN JEWISH CHRISTIAN SUGGESTS HIS ABILITY TO INTERPRET THE WORDS AND ACTIONS OF JESUS IN LIGHT OF OT MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS.(INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW, ESV STUDY BIBLE)."

FEATURES OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

MATTHEW WILL MOVE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN STORIES ABOUT JESUS AND THINGS JESUS SAID. THERE ARE 5 LENGTHY DISCOURSE SECTIONS

- 1 - DISCIPLESHIP 101: SERMON ON THE MOUNT (5-7)
- 2 - DISCIPLESHIP MISSION: SENDING DISCIPLES TO PREACH (10)
- 3 - DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS: PARABLES (13)
- 4 - DISCIPLESHIP TEACHING: GENERAL TEACHING ON BEING HIS FOLLOWER (18-20)
- 5 - DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE FUTURE: THE END OF THE AGE (24-25)

WE CAN SEE WHERE THESE SECTIONS BREAK BY MATTHEW REPEATING THE PHRASE: "WHEN JESUS HAD FINISH THESE WORDS..."

(END OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT)

MATTHEW 7:28 - WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED THESE WORDS, THE CROWDS WERE AMAZED AT HIS TEACHING:

(AFTER PREPARING DISCIPLES FOR MISSIONARY WORK)

MATTHEW 11:1 - WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES, HE DEPARTED FROM THERE TO TEACH AND PREACH IN THEIR CITIES.

(AFTER PARABLES)

MATTHEW 13:53 -WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED THESE PARABLES, HE DEPARTED FROM THERE.

(IN THE MIDDLE OF THREE CHAPTERS OF HIS TEACHING)

MATTHEW 19:1 WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED THESE WORDS, HE DEPARTED FROM GALILEE AND CAME INTO THE REGION OF JUDEA BEYOND THE JORDAN;

(AFTER TEACHING THEM ABOUT THE END OF THE AGE)

MATTHEW 26:1 WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED ALL THESE WORDS, HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES,

MATTHEW 1:1

THE FIRST VERSE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL GIVES US A PREVIEW OF MATTHEW'S PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE FOR WRITING. HE WILL REPORT STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS AS WELL AS RECORD A LARGE COLLECTION OF JESUS' TEACHING. THROUGH THESE STORIES AND COMMANDS, MATTHEW IS SHOWING THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH - THE PROMISED DESCENDANT OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID, THE FATHERS OF TWO OF THE GREAT COVENANTS OF SCRIPTURE.

SCHOLARS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT BECAUSE OF HOW FOCUSED MATTHEW IS ON CONNECTING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS WITH THE EXPECTATIONS AND PROMISES OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES (AKA THE OLD TESTAMENT), IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HIS INITIAL AUDIENCE WAS PRIMARILY JEWISH. (A QUICK FLIP THROUGH MATTHEW IN THE NASB SHOWED AN OLD TESTAMENT QUOTE ON NEARLY EVERY PAGE).

BUT HIS GOSPEL IS NOT JUST FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE, IT IS FOR ALL PEOPLE BECAUSE THE CENTRAL THEME AND FIGURE OF HIS WORK IS JESUS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID WHO ALMIGHTY GOD HAS SENT TO BE THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. AND THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, THOUGH IT DID NOT GIVE EVERY DETAIL OF EVERY SECOND OF JESUS' LIFE AND MINISTRY, GIVES AS A BEAUTIFUL AND INSPIRED TELLING OF THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS WHICH SPEAKS TODAY AS POWERFULLY AS WHEN IT WAS FIRST WRITTEN.

MAY WE HAVE EARS TO HEAR, EYES TO SEE AND HEARTS TO UNDERSTAND.