



~THE BOOK OF MATTHEW, PART 4~
~AN OVERVIEW AND SURVEY~
~ROUTE 66~



Book: Matthew was one of Jesus' disciples. He was chosen by Christ (**Mt. 10:1-3**) and was a tax collector by profession. A tax collector was considered on the lower level of society, named with the "Gentiles" (**Mt. 18:17**). See also **Lk. 18:11-12**.

We really don't know much about Matthew. After being listed in **Acts 1:13** he disappeared for the most part from the history of the church. He was, according to church tradition, martyred for his faith.

When It Was Written: Some believe the date is really unknown. There are reasons though to look at 50-55 A.D. as the date. **One**, it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 70 A.D. (**Mt. 24:1-2**). **Two**, it was some time after many of the events that Matthew writes about (Probably dated 27-33 A.D.) as seen from **Mt. 27:8** with the phrase "to this day." **Three**, the early and ancient church said it was written before Mark and they would have been in a better position to state that.

Who Was It Written To: Since Matthew focuses on Jesus as the King of the Jews, his audience was most likely Jewish Christians. Matthew has numerous Old Testament references (129 from 25 OT books). He focuses on the Kingdom and the Kingdom of Heaven, which is both a spiritual and physical Kingdom and Jews would be familiar with the idea specifically of the physical reign of the Messiah.

Why Was It Written: **One**, it was written to present Christ as the fulfillment of OT prophecy as an apologetic to unbelieving Jews. **Two**, it provided the teaching content of Jesus' ministry for use in the church as seen by the long discourses He gave. **Three**, it gave hope in the impending judgment that Christ would return and set up His kingdom (**Mt. 19:28; Mt 24:30**).

Breaking Down Matthew – We will break Matthew down into several different sections. We will show the outline as we go.

4. The Propagation (Spreading And Growth) Of Christ The King (Continued) – Matthew 10:1-25:46

G) Mt. 21:1-10 is Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Note that **vs. 5** shows that this event includes a fulfillment of prophecy (**Zech. 9:9**). Though all four Gospels mention the "Triumphal Entry" as it is called, only Matthew mentions both a donkey and a colt. The following gives an explanation for what we read here,

"A simple explanation of what some call a contradiction is that when Jesus rode the colt, the mother donkey naturally went along. Perhaps He rode each animal part of the distance (v. 7)."

Christ came in humility. This event is also known as “Palm Sunday” as the people spread cloaks and palm branches on the ground (vs. 8). At this point the crowd is cheering for Christ (vss. 9-11).

Mt. 21:12-17 is a second time that the Lord cleansed the Temple. This passage also notes that He healed people and we see the anger of the religious leaders (vss. 15-16).

In **Mt. 21:18-22** Jesus curses the fig tree. This was a lesson in faith for the disciples along with a parable about Israel. Some see the fig tree, not as a symbol of Israel as a nation, but of Jerusalem and the leaders of Israel, especially the Temple leaders (**Cornerstone Commentary**). Note these couple of quotes,

“Fruitless fig trees are used in OT prophetic texts as symbols of judgment (Isa 34:4; Jer. 8:13; 24:1-10; Hos 2:12; Joel 1:7).” – Cornerstone Biblical Commentary - Cornerstone Biblical Commentary – Volume 11: Matthew and Mark.

Note the following from another commentary,

“Jesus did not curse this fig tree because he was angry at not getting any food from it. Instead, this was an acted-out parable intended to teach the disciples a lesson. By cursing the fig tree, Jesus was showing his anger at religion without substance. Jesus’ harsh words to the fig tree could be applied to the nation of Israel and its beautiful Temple. Fruitful in appearance only, Israel was spiritually barren. Just as the fig tree looked good from a distance but was fruitless on close examination, so the Temple looked impressive at first glance, but its sacrifices and other activities were hollow because they were not done to worship God sincerely.

After Jesus spoke these words, the fig tree withered up. This parable of judgment on spiritually dead people revealed its severity. The early church later applied this parable to the total destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.” – Life Application New Testament Commentary

In **Mt. 21:23-27** Jesus’ authority is challenged. Note how Jesus handles the situation. **Vss. 28-32** is the parable of the two sons which teaches that self-righteousness such as the Pharisees had will not get them into the kingdom. It is also a lesson on repentance. **Mt. 21:33-46** is the parable of the tenants. The son in the parable refers to Jesus and the tenants are the religious leaders or Israel. The servants may refer to prophets who had come to Israel proclaiming God’s Word to the people.

One commentator notes,

“The main elements in this parable are (1) the landowner—God, (2) the vineyard—Israel, (3) the farmers—the Jewish religious leaders, (4) the landowner’s servants—the prophets and priests who remained faithful to God and preached to Israel, (5) the son—Jesus, and (6) the others—the Gentiles. In a vineyard such as this, the lookout tower would have been

for guards who would protect the farm from thieves; the wall would have kept wild animals out.” – Life Application New Testament Commentary

H) **Mt. 22:1-14** is the parable of the wedding feast. Note,

“Continuing the theme of Israel's rejection of him, Christ told a parable comparing God's millennial Kingdom to a royal wedding. All the king's friends were invited to attend, but they refused to come (Matthew 22:1-3). After his second invitation was also spurned, the king ordered their city burned (Matthew 22:4-7) and invited social outcasts to come in their place (Matthew 22:8-9). These newly invited guests responded well, although one of them was banished from the banquet for being improperly attired (Matthew 22:10-14).

The burning of the city may foretell Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70. The replacement guests obviously represent Gentiles. The exclusion of the one ill-attired guest shows the importance of personal choice in responding to the gospel. At royal weddings in that culture each guest would have been provided with a wedding garment bearing the royal imprint. Refusal to wear this garment was a terrible insult. [Luke 14:15-24]”
– Willmington's Bible Handbook

I also think we see here the necessity to accept by faith the invitation God gives to come into the Kingdom of Heaven, which is in our hearts if we know Christ.

Mt. 21:15-22 is a discussion on paying taxes. The Herodians (**vs. 16**) were Jews who were sympathetic to Rome. They and the religious leaders would never get along but saw a common enemy in Jesus. We see the religious leaders trying once again to trap Jesus.

Mt. 21:23-32 has the Sadducees (who denied the resurrection) trying to trap Jesus with a question. **Mt. 21:34-40** are the two greatest commandments – Love God and love our neighbor. **Mt. 21:41-46** shows Jesus confounding the religious leaders with a question concerning Christ, Who is God in human flesh.

I) **Mt. 23:1-36** is Jesus' scathing words to the religious leaders, the “Great Pretenders” we could call them. Not every religious leader in Jesus' day fits the passage here. There were some trying to follow God in the right way. At least **7x** in this chapter Jesus will use the word “hypocrites” or “hypocrisy.” Jesus used this word on occasion and the majority of the time when He used it He was speaking directly or indirectly to or about the religious leaders.