

Mount Pisgah A.M.E Church

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Bible Study, Wednesday, April 8, 2015

Survey of the Bible

Lesson 42: The Gospel According to Matthew

The Name "Matthew"

The name Matthew comes from the "Gift of The Lord." Surely we can see that the subject matter of the book is God's gift to humankind, Jesus Christ

The Times of Matthew

Much has transpired since the final words of the final prophet Malachi. Because even the returning remnant God's people had not fully heeded God's prophetic warnings and emphases, there was a period of 400+ years of what protestants consider to prophetic silence, known as the "intertestamental period" or the "silent years." (Although Catholics believe that certain writings known as apocryphal (hidden) books were also "prophetic" or "inspired"). A simplified timeline is as follows:

Timeline

539 BC	Dawn of The Persian Empire
516 BC	The Completion of The Second Temple
432-425BC	Malachi's Prophetic Career
331 BC	Greece Conquers Persia Under Alexander The Great
323 BC	Alexander dies, Kingdom is Divided
168 BC	Jews revolt and win Independence (168BC-63BC)
63 BC	Romans complete Consolidation of Power and Rule in Judea and Herod the Great is Appointed King
4 AD	Jesus is Born
37 AD	Likely time of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus
58-68 AD	Likely timeframe for the writing of the Matthew's Gospel
70 AD	Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple

Matthew is not easy to date: suggestions have ranged from 40 AD to 140 AD. It appears that some has passed since the events described, since there are some narrator comments that suggest it (27;8 "to this day"; and 28:15 "to this very day.") However, it also appears that the second temple has not yet been destroyed, so it would be prior to 70 AD.

The Gospel writers were not completely original, but they apparently utilized material from other sources. Most scholars believe that Mark was the first Gospel written, and the Matthew and Luke drew heavily upon Mark, as well as some other source materials (there are some passages in Matthew and Luke that do not appear in Mark.

Author

The early church, including many extra-biblical writings attribute the book to Matthew, the son of Alphaeus (see Mark 2:14). Matthew occupied the unpopular post of tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government. As a "publican" (contractor for the Roman government) he was no doubt disliked by his Jewish countrymen. When Jesus called him to discipleship, his quick response could indicate that

he had already been affected by Jesus' public preaching. He gave a large reception for Jesus in his house so that his associates could meet Jesus. He was chosen as one of the twelve apostles.

Overview

Matthew was placed first in the canon of New Testament books by the early church because it is a natural bridge between the Testaments. This gospel describes the person and work of Israel's messianic King. The book of Matthew describes the background, announcement, presentation, principles and reception, rejection, death, and resurrection of this prophesied king. This information is organized around five key discourses (lengthy speeches) by Jesus: one known as The Sermon on The Mount, a second on mission and martyrdom, a third containing parables of the kingdom, a fourth on life under kingdom authority, and a fifth containing predictions about His return (The Olivet discourse). These all interweave to present proof to an apparently Jewish audience that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of the hopes of God's people.

Outline

- I. The Origins of the Messianic King (1:1-4:11)**
 - A. The Advent of the King (1:1-2:23)
 1. The Genealogy of Jesus (1:1-1:17)
 2. The Birth of Jesus the Christ (1:18-1:25)
 3. The Visit of The Magi (2:1-2:12)
 4. Protection of the Royal Child (2:13-2:23)
 - B. John: The Announcer of the King (3:1-3:12)
 - C. The Approval of the King (3:13-4:11)
 1. Royal Sanction (3:13-3:17)
 2. Testing (4:1-4:11)
- II. The King's Kingdom (4:12-7:29)**
 - A. Jesus Begins his Galilean Ministry (4:12-4:25)
 - B. First Discourse: The Sermon on The Mount (5:1-7:29)
 1. Kingdom Norms (5:1-5:16)
 2. Jesus and The Law (5:17-7:6)
 3. On Entering The Kingdom (7:7-7:29)
- III. The Kingdom Extended Through The Power of The King (8:1- 11:1)**
 - A. Demonstrations of Royal Power (8:1-9:8)
 - B. Extension and Inclusion (9:9-9:17)
 - C. Miracles of Restoration (9:18-9:34)
 - D. Delegation of Power (9:35-11:1)
 1. Spreading of The News of The Kingdom (9:35-10:4)
 2. Second Discourse: Mission and Martyrdom (10:5-11:1)
- IV. Preaching And Rising Opposition (11:2-16:12)**
 - A. The Beginnings of Rejection (11:2-11:30)
 1. The Rejection of John The Baptist (11:2-11:15)
 2. Rejection by Jesus' Generation (11:16-11:19)
 3. Rejection by (and of) Unrepentant Cities (11:20-11:30)
 - B. Rejection by (and of) The Pharisees (12:1-12:50)
 - C. Third Discourse: The Parables of The Kingdom (13:1-13:53)
 - D. Continuing Rejection of The King (13:54-16:12)
 1. Rejection at Nazareth (13:54-13:58)
 2. Rejection by Herod and Withdrawal of Jesus (14:1-14:36)
 3. Rejection by Scribes and Pharisees (15:1-15:20)

4. Inclusion of Some That "The Law" Rejected (15:21-15:39)
5. Rejection by (and of) Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1-16:12)

V. Preparation of the King's Disciples (16:13-20:28)

- A. Revelation to The Disciples (16:13-17:13)
- B. Instruction of The Disciples (17:14-20:28)
 1. Healing and Provision as a Cases In Point (17:14-17:27)
 2. Fourth Discourse: Alternative Life Under Kingdom Authority (18:1-18:35)
 3. Further Kingdom Indications (19:1-20:28)

VI. Presentation and Final Rejection Of The King (20:29-27:66)

- A. Blind Men Recognize The King (20:29-20:34)
- B. Public Presentation of The King (21:1-21:17)
- C. The Nation Rejects The King (21:18-22:46)
 1. Conflicts with Priests and Elders (21:23-22:14)
 2. Conflict with Pharisees and Herodians (22:15-22:22)
 3. Conflict with Sadducees (22:23-22:33)
 4. Conflict with Pharisees (22:34-22:46)
- D. The King Rejects The Nation (23:1-23:39)
- E. The Fifth Discourse: Predictions about The King's Return (24:1-25:46)
- F. The Passion of The King (26:1-27:66)

VII. The Resurrection of The King (28:1-28:20)

- A. The Empty Tomb (28:1-28:7)
- B. The Appearance of Jesus to The Women (28:8-28:10)
- C. The First Resurrection Denials (28:11-28:15)
- D. The Appearance of Jesus to The Other Disciples (28:16-28:17)
- E. The Great Commission (28:18-28:20)

Some Keys to understanding Matthew

- Matthew is written in the words of a Jewish tax collector, written to what appears to be a Jewish audience to convince them that the King of Jews has come. He utilizes extensive quotes from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) to attest to the fact that Jesus is in fact the Messiah that the prophets preached about.
- For Matthew, everything about this King is unique: His miraculous birth and obscure yet carefully prophesied birthplace, His flight into Egypt, His announcement by John, His battle with Satan in the wilderness, all support the only possible conclusion - Jesus is the culmination of promises delivered by the prophets over a period of a thousand years.
- In Matthew, Jesus is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," thus Matthew is symbolized by a lion (a symbol of royalty).
- Matthew uses alternating sections of teaching and narrative material to emphasize Jesus as a "rabbi" or teacher.
- A major theme in Matthew is "the kingdom of heaven" or "the kingdom of God" - God's rule in the world and in human hearts
- Other dominant themes are the church (ch. 16, 18), the Second Coming (ch. 25) and the ethical teachings of Jesus (chs. 5 - 7)
- Several categories of opponents to Jesus' Message rose up:
 - Pharisees (name means "separated ones") - a party of legal experts
 - Staunch advocates of the laws of ritual purity
 - Supported the scribes and rabbi's interpretations of the law. These legalistic "interpretations" became more authoritative than the law itself

- Some of their interpretations involved codes of behavior and minute rules that controlled people's every day living
 - Believed in the resurrection
 - Believed in the existence of angels and demons
 - Scribes - a sect of the Pharisees
 - Had knowledge of the law and the traditions of the elders
 - Professionals - had authority to draft legal documents (Other Pharisees were simply landowners)
 - Sadducees - an elite of group of priests in Jewish society
 - Supported the Roman authorities because they enjoyed privileged status.
 - Advocated loyalty to the original law of Moses as opposed to the interpretations
 - "Self sufficient", often denying God's involvement in the affairs of every day life
 - Denied that there was any resurrection of the dead, or any life after death (i.e., the soul ceases to exist), and there are no rewards or penalties
 - Chief Priests - The temple leadership and aristocracy - Levites who were temple leaders
 - Elders - Older men of Jewish society that often served as judges.
 - Herodians
 - King Herod's family members, successors, and other Roman loyalists
- Matthew is not intended to be necessarily a chronological account, but rather a thematic one. The accounts may not necessarily be in time order.

Some Lessons From Matthew's Gospel

- Matthew gives us a kingly account and shows us the tragedy AND victory of human rejection of Christ, and the door that is opened to the Gentiles as a result
- Matthew's focus on demonstrating the distinction between contemporary ethics and the principles of citizenship in the Kingdom of God reminds us that we are not natives (nor captives) of the world around us, however we are responsible for making the Kingdom of God VISIBLE to the world around us. We are "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth." People should be able to get a glimpse of the Kingdom when they encounter us. May "God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
- Confession of Christ and loyalty to the Kingdom of God creates a new, cohesive community. Its citizens must be committed to one another.
- Jesus' concern with "heart faith" (versus "rules religion") reminds us of the kind of righteousness that God is looking for from God's people - a faithfulness that comes from a heart of love for God and neighbor. External behaviors can never cleanse the heart, but a faithful heart will bring about the right external behaviors.
- Increasing manifestation of the Kingdom will always bring underlying Kingdom resistance to the surface.
- The success of the mission Christians are called to, in the following of their Savior, runs counter to the world's definition "mission accomplishment." It requires loyalty to a Kingdom that is not of this world. Kingdom citizenship will require termination of citizenship (detachment from) in the existing order, but will enable participation in the permanent one to come