

Wednesday Night Bible Study

The Gospel of Matthew Introduction – Week 1 – 9/22/2021

- The Gospel of Matthew was written about 37 A.D. according to many competent Biblical scholars. This would make his the first of the four gospels written.
- It is one of the three synoptic gospels. Synoptic means “with seeing” Matthew, Mark, and Luke write of very similar things while John’s gospel is filled with 92% of unique material specifically to his book.
- While John, Luke, and Mark refer to the Old Testament 20, 25, and 36 times respectively, Matthew refers to the Old Testament over 60 times. This is because he is addressing the Jews who only accept the Old Testament.
- Matthew writes how the Jews saw life.
- His position as tax collector required a form of shorthand be learned, so it may very well explain why his was the first account of Jesus’ life written right out of the chute.
- He is referred to as a publican in **Matthew 10:3**. The Word means a tax-farmer, i.e., collector of public revenue. Tax farming means he had to seek out the money and put the necessary pressure on those giving the money.
- The word Publican is used six times in the New Testament and each time depicts a very unpopular person; a negative connotation. The job itself was considered crooked due to the extortion of the taxpayer by the Publican.
- Zacchaeus was a tax collector as well and finds repentance. It seems a better percentage of Publicans repented versus the Pharisees who vehemently looked down upon them. We know of at least two Publicans repenting and you can make a case for maybe one Pharisee and his repentance in Nicodemus.
- Matthew Henry in his commentary states the following: *“This Levi is said to be the son of Alphaeus or Cleophas, husband to that Mary who was sister or near kinswoman to the virgin Mary and if so, he was own brother to James the less, and Jude, and Simon the Canaanite, so that there were four brothers of them apostles”*.
- Cleophas is the Hebrew form of Alphaeus.
- Matthew (Levi) was the brother of James the Less, Simon called Zelotes, and Jude (Thaddeus).
- They were the sons of Alphaeus (Cleophas), making them first cousins with Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus had a sister named Mary and she was married to Alphaeus (Cleophas).
- In **John 19:25**, we see Jesus’ mother (Mary), Mary that was married to Cleophas (Alphaeus)(Jesus’ mother’s sister), and Mary Magdalene.
- James and John were brothers.
- Andrew and Simon (Peter) were brothers.
- Many sources have Bartholomew (Nathaniel) and Philip as brothers.
- Thomas (Didymus) had a twin brother hence the name Didymus (John 11:16) which means twin.
- This leaves Judas Iscariot.

- *As a side note, James and John, The Sons of Thunder, were first cousins of Jesus.⁸ To think that Jesus was the first cousin to John only makes sense. When Jesus turned the care of His mother over to John, it makes sense that it would be a family member; no doubt the closest family member that was a believer. His own brothers were not yet believers.⁹ Next of kin was very specific with Jewish culture as was seen in the book of Ruth. Follow the progression as we look at scripture. James and John were sons of Zebedee.¹⁰ The mother of Zebedee's children was at the cross with Mary (Jesus Mother) and Mary (Cleophas wife).¹¹ Three ladies are mentioned four times at or near the cross and the fourth time the name Salome is mentioned.¹² Salome is the wife of Zebedee thus the mother of James and John. The only connection to be made is Mary to Salome. While it is not clear in scripture, all the Jewish traditions seem to have Salome as the second sister to Mary (Jesus' mother). Because Mary was considered a scorned woman and of ill repute¹³, her sisters with her instead of other women would make perfect sense. This would probably lend a hand in James and John dropping their nets and following their cousin. Even having their mother ask Jesus for special seating in heaven¹⁴ makes sense if they were closely related.*
- Six of the original twelve disciples were Jesus' first cousin.
- When given a nickname, it made perfect sense. Jesus did not see them as they were, but what they could, and would, become. Matthew was given to Levi and means "Gift of Jehovah". The gospel of Matthew does not address him in his original name of Levi. Mark only addresses him as Levi and Luke only uses Matthew once, while using Levi the other three times he is mentioned.
- *It is interesting that John Foxe in his brilliant work "Foxes Christian Martyrs of the World", states that Matthew was born in Nazareth.* Family lived near each other then.
- Matthew's aim was to convince the Jews that Jesus was their Messiah.
- The four gospels are representative of the four beasts in Revelation surrounding the throne of Jesus. Matthew shows Jesus as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Mark shows Jesus as the suffering servant. This explains why there is no lineage in the book of Mark; servants have no pedigree. Luke shows Jesus as the Son of Man. His lineage begins with the first man, Adam. And John, well, he shows Jesus as the Son of God. Therefore, his lineage of Jesus is eternal. Interesting is the fact that these images are used in the wilderness wanderings by the groups of Hebrew children in the Book of Numbers. The standard of Judah was a lion. The standard of Ephraim was an ox. The standard of Reuben was a man, and the standard of Dan was an eagle.
- Three of the four gospel accounts have genealogies. Matthew, being direct to the Jews, begins Jesus' heritage with Abraham, the father of the Jews.
- There are several unique observances in Matthew not seen in other gospel accounts. A few that stand out are Peter's walking on the water, the entire infancy narrative, Judas' remorse and suicide, guarding of Jesus' tomb, bribery of the guards, etc.
- Things in the genealogy of Matthew's gospel that are divisible by seven:
 - o Number of words
 - o Number of letters
 - o Number of vowels
 - o Number of consonants

- Number of words that begin with a vowel
- Number of words that begin with a consonant
- Number of words that occur more than once
- Number of words that occur on only one form
- Number of nouns
- Number of words that are not nouns (there are only seven)
- Number of names
- Number of other kinds of nouns
- Number of male names
- Number of generations

While this may seem easy to do, the above statistics are not in the English translation. These are found in the original language of Greek. The thing that makes it infinitely more difficult is that the Greek language has five conditions that must be met for each word and is very precise.

- Gematrical values occurs when you add the value of each letter. Hebrew and Greek have a numerical value per letter. When adding the values of just some of the occurrences in Matthew's gospel, you get the following:
 - The genealogy has 72 words with a gematrical value of $42,364 = 7 \times 6,052$
 - Each group of letters gematrically is divisible by seven
 - The remainder of chapter 1 (verses 18-25) is $161 = 7 \times 23$
 - In this remainder there are 105 forms of words $= 7 \times 15$
 - There are 77 vocabulary words $= 7 \times 11$
 - There are 28 words spoken by the angel $= 7 \times 4$
 - The words of the angel have a total gematrical value of $52,605 = 7 \times 7,515$
 - The words of the angel have 35 forms $= 7 \times 5$ with a gematrical value of $65,429 = 7 \times 9,347$
- The childhood of Christ in chapter 2 has the following:
 - The number of words is $161 = 7 \times 23$
 - The number of letters is $896 = 7 \times 128$
 - The number of forms of words is $238 = 7 \times 34$
 - The gematrical value of the words is $123,529 = 7 \times 17,647$
 - The gematrical value of the forms of words is $166,985 = 7 \times 23,855$

The type of finding is found throughout the entire Bible. It is impossible for it to have been written by men without God's leading.

- There is vocabulary unique to Matthew's gospel that is not found in the other New Testament writings:
 - The number of words only found in Matthew's gospel is $42 = 7 \times 6$
 - The number of letters of those words is $126 = 7 \times 18$

As a side note, it would be easier to do if you were the LAST author to write an account or letter for the New Testament. The challenge is that the other three gospel writer's share the same type of uniqueness to their writings. They have words that are only used in their gospels while only being divisible by seven. These words are not just unique to the other gospel writers but the other

writers of the New Testament as well. I suppose that they all would have had to have written their accounts last.

- There are four events unique to Matthew's gospel:
 - o The visit of the Magi – 2:1-15
 - o The massacre at Bethlehem – 2:16-18
 - o The flight into Egypt – 2:19-22
 - o The return to Nazareth – 2:23
- There are ten parables unique to Matthew's gospel:
 - o The tares – 13:24-30
 - o The hidden treasures – 13:44
 - o The pearl – 13:45
 - o The dragnet – 13:47
 - o The unmerciful servant – 18:23-35
 - o The laborers in the vineyard – 20:1-16
 - o The two sons – 21:28-32
 - o The marriage of the king's son – 22:1-14
 - o The ten virgins – 25:1-13
 - o The talents – 25:14-46
- There are two miracles unique to Matthew's gospel:
 - o The two blind men – 20:30-34
 - o The coin in the fish's mouth – 17:24-27
- There are nine special discourses to Matthew's gospel:
 - o The sermon on the mount – 5-7
 - o The invitation to the weary – 11:28-30
 - o Idle words – 12:36-37
 - o The revelation to Peter – 16:17-19
 - o Humility and forgiveness – 18:15-35
 - o Rejection of that generation – 21:43
 - o The eight woes – 23
 - o The prophecy in Olivet – 24:1-25, 46
 - o The commission and promise – 28:18-20
- There are six events of the final week unique to Matthew's gospel:
 - o Conspiracy and suicide of Judas Iscariot – 26:14-16, 27:3-11
 - o The dream of Claudius, Pilate's wife – 27:19
 - o Resurrection of Saints (after Jesus' resurrection) – 27:52-53
 - o Pharisees suggested plot about Jesus' body – 27:62-64
 - o The watch at the sepulcher – 27:65-66
 - o The earthquake resurrection morning – 28:2